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SUMMER 2012



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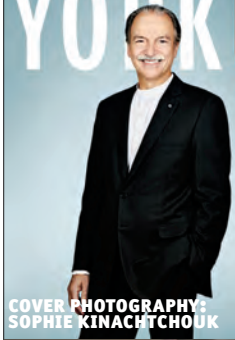


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YORKU

THE MAGAZINE OF YORK UNIVERSITY



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What You Said

We asked, and you certainly answered. A gratifying total of more than 4,000 people responded to the *YorkU* readership survey we circulated by e-mail and via the magazine when the February issue came out. I'm sure this had nothing to do with the fact that we offered an iPad 2 as a prize for one lucky respondent. But I'm pleased to announce the name of the winner: Tonya Currie (BA '97) of Calgary. In fact, Tonya was especially lucky, as she was chosen right around the time that Apple released its new iPad 3, so we were able to upgrade her prize. "Sweet," she said.

So was the survey. Some of the key answers were telling. Even though the vast majority of responses came from people who had signed up for York's monthly e-mail newsletter – meaning perhaps they liked doing most things online – there was a clear preference for reading *YorkU* in print: 59 per cent, in fact. Just 21 per cent wanted to read it online only, while 20 per cent liked the idea of print and online together.

For content, readers liked profiles of alumni, stories about York research and items on campus history and new facilities. There was also a penchant for articles with issues at the centre – environmental, cultural, educational and international. So are we credible? A fifth said we are consistently accurate and objective, while another 36 per cent felt *YorkU* contains some "spin" but is generally accurate and objective. This is a common finding among university magazines across the continent that have run the same survey. Later this year we are planning to refresh *YorkU* – both in print and on the web – and the results of the survey will be very helpful in how we approach our content, writing and design. Part of the review process will also include consultation with a number of stakeholders to get their point of view on how *YorkU* can be improved.

As for Summer 2012, this is my last issue as editor of *YorkU*. I am moving on from York University, but I have greatly enjoyed my nine years here. In that time, York has expanded in every way – in buildings and student population, to be sure, but also in top-ranked faculty and, I think, in outlook and aspirations. York's vision is firmly set on expanding its horizons globally, and yes, there's a lot to be proud of. ■

Send letters, submissions, comments and ideas to editor@yorku.ca.

York's president becomes a student for a day. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

A Mile in Their Shoes

Another academic year is drawing to a close, and what a tremendous success it has been. Our students, faculty and staff all won numerous prestigious awards; we officially opened the newly renovated Osgoode Hall Law School; our Glendon Centre of Excellence for Bilingual Studies opened in May; our Life Sciences Building is almost complete; construction continues on the new subway; and we proudly announced our new Lassonde School of Engineering.

To continue this momentum, it's important we attract and educate the best and brightest students, and provide them with the greatest learning experience so they have the skills to make an impact on the world around us. The challenge, however, is how to build on this success given fiscal restraints, especially

I learned that there aren't

among publicly funded institutions like universities.

After mulling this over, we felt our best option was to learn first-hand about the needs and concerns of our students. So we decided to hold a President for a Day contest – perhaps a first

for a Canadian university – where I and a selected student would switch roles and walk in the each other's shoes for a day.

The President for a Day contest was open to all undergraduate students, who were asked to submit a 500-word essay or video answering the question: "What would be your top three priorities that would directly impact students if you were appointed president of York University?"

The winner, to be chosen by a panel (of which I was not a member), would then become president, taking on all my roles and duties, while I would take on the role of the winning student, participating in their classes and activities.

I must confess, initially I was a bit skeptical, especially since I hadn't been a student in almost 40 years. Technology has changed dramatically; we didn't have laptops and BlackBerrys. But the more I thought about it, the more appealing it sounded.

Mamdouh Shoukri is York's president and vice-chancellor.



After weeks of amusing promotions, witty tweets and a funny video, Rabia Sajun, a third-year biochemistry and education student, who also happens to be

co-president of the Chemistry Society at York, was chosen. Her three priorities for York were to expand our Steacie Science & Engineering Library to better support the future growth of our engineering school, decrease class sizes and enhance campus safety.

After all was said and done, what did I learn as a York University student for a day?

I learned that our students are passionate and incredibly proud to be a part of the York family. I learned that they are keen to enhance school pride and make the University even better.

I also witnessed the passion of our faculty and staff. They are fully engaged with their students and went beyond the call of duty to help them. I could see how they wanted to inform the students and share their knowledge to help them grow.

I learned that there aren't enough spaces for students to work and socialize. I learned that some of our labs are outdated and our libraries are crowded. I also experienced the need for more microwaves, having had to stand in line to heat my lunch.

In the end, our students and their commitment and engagement had an immense impact on me. I am proud to say that they really care about the University, the community and their world.

Would I do it again? Absolutely. ■

UNIVERSE





CONSUMING

Exquisite Acquisitions

Why collecting isn't hoarding

Who hasn't had a collection of one sort or another during their lifetime – be it Dinky Toys or Barbies, or, later in a well-heeled life, perhaps Shakespeare folios or Warhol lithographs? It's hard not to collect something, given the kind of consumer society we live in. Add to that mix the rise of the Internet, and collecting objects – even of the most obscure kind – becomes a simple credit card click away.

How to make sense of modern society's collecting mania? Schulich School of Business Professor Russell Belk's book may help. In *Collecting in a Consumer Society* – the first book of its kind to focus on collecting as an expression of material consumption – Belk explores how collecting, whether by individuals or institutions, is a form of consumption.

"I've been interested in consumer contexts where consumption objects are elevated beyond our everyday regard for them," says Belk. "Collecting and gift-giving are two such instances."

So what's the difference between collectors and hoarders? "Hoarding is not collecting because the objects are generally identical and do not follow the principle of no two alike," says Belk. "When someone merely accumulates objects while failing to dispose of them, this is possessiveness without the acquisitiveness that collecting also involves." ■

BOOKS

What They're Reading

York people reveal what's on the bedside table

Brigitte Kleer

Communications director, Faculty of Fine Arts

"My house is full of stacks of books masquerading as furniture. Tiziano Scarpa's *Venice is a Fish: A Sensual Guide* is a wonderfully quirky, feel-it-on-your-skin evocation of

that magical city, written by a master stylist. The subtitle says it all.

On the fiction front, I'm currently into Swiss author Pascal Mercier. His *Night Train to Lisbon* has kept me reading into the wee hours. It's about an ordinary, unassuming, middle-aged teacher whose chance encounter with a stranger on a rain-lashed bridge triggers an uncharacteristically impulsive act that literally changes his life."

Marcus Boon

English professor

"I spend my days reading and writing on a computer monitor, with stacks of books piling up on either side of the monitor forming a tunnel. For sustained reading, I prefer to read early in the morning or late at night when the computer is switched off. Mostly

I'm reading books about music and sound at the moment. I just finished Steve Goodman's excellent *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect and the Ecology of Fear*, which rethinks dancehall subcultures in terms of the history of military and political uses of sound technology. Goodman's also a DJ who goes by the name Kode9 and runs one of the most interesting British dance music labels, Hyperdub."



ARCHITECTURE

Space Case

Why thoughts need a place to call home

For Shelley Hornstein, place is more than a collection of buildings; it's also a repository for memory, an idea she explores and expands upon in her new book, *Losing Site: Architecture, Memory and Place*.

Hornstein, a professor of architectural history and visual culture in York's Faculty of Fine Arts, argues that while architecture exists as a material presence, it is much more than that. She says we remember places for more than their mere physical presence – that is, the "site" itself – and that any architecture a site may possess becomes an *aide mémoire*, a way of mapping our physical, mental and emotional space.

"I think Ruskin was right when he said our relationship to the built environment, to objects in our everyday surroundings, to buildings and places that take up, surround and affect the space of our lives, must, in some important way, say something more to us than simply shaping where we are," says Hornstein. John Ruskin, the Victorian-era art critic, observed that while we may live without architecture and worship without it, we cannot remember without it. Says Hornstein, "We remember best when we experience an event in a place. But what happens when we leave that place or it no longer exists? My book explores how architecture registers as a place beyond the physical site itself." ■



RESEARCH

Short Changed

How Ontario's Safe Streets Act criminalizes the homeless



Panhandling by the homeless or other people who live in poverty in Toronto is nothing new. Usually “the ask” is non-confrontational, but sometimes a shake of the head isn’t enough, and that’s where Ontario’s Safe Streets Act (SSA) was supposed to kick in.

Since the SSA became law in 1999, police have had the power to issue tickets to panhandlers who are, in their opinion, “overly aggressive”. But Professor Stephen Gaetz of York’s Faculty of Education says the Act contributes nothing to street safety and merely supports the criminalization of homelessness through useless ticketing.

Gaetz and a colleague at the University of Guelph conducted an 11-year statistical review of the SSA and interviewed 244 street youth. They found Toronto police ticketed the city’s

homeless more aggressively post-SSA (ticketing increased 2,000 per cent from 2000 to 2010), even though there was a decline in the number of people who panhandle or squeegee in Toronto.

Gaetz notes there were already laws on the books that allowed police to deal with aggressive and criminal behaviour from panhandlers. “The mayor at the time called these kids ‘thugs and criminals’, and claimed they were chasing away tourists,” says Gaetz. “But I can’t imagine a tourist from Buffalo saying, ‘I’d like to visit Toronto, but what if someone asks me for change?’.”

Those who want more information can access “Can I see your ID? The Policing of Youth Homelessness in Toronto” on the Homeless Hub, the world’s largest repository of homelessness research (and a York project), at homelesshub.ca. ■

PSYCHOLOGY

Get Smart

What IQ tests don’t tell you about brain power

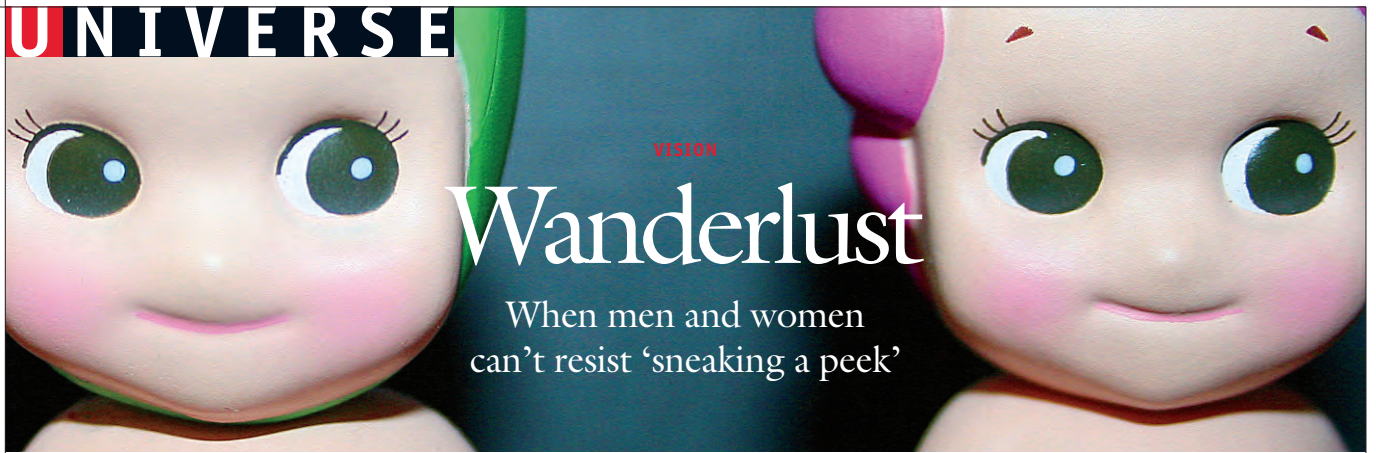
We’ve all known smart people who make dumb decisions based on what seem like obvious facts. Now York psychology Professor Maggie Toplak and her colleagues, Keith Stanovich at the University of Toronto and Richard West at James Madison University in Virginia, have discovered over several studies that rational thinking is a measurable phenomenon not accounted for by traditional measures of intelligence.

They’ve dubbed this phenomenon “RQ” – or rationality quotient. RQ is about being smart in the rational decision-making sense and has to do with achieving an individual’s goals and tracking what is true in the world.

Toplak says people are by nature “cognitive misers”. That is, we tend to take the easy way out in problem solving, and go for the quickest and most obvious solution. “There’s an implicit assumption that intelligence and rationality go together, but we found that isn’t always true. Our research found some people have this tendency and some don’t.”

Toplak says if we’re going to use measures like SATs and IQ results as the basis of making decisions, say, on hiring a new employee or accepting students into university, we should also have RQ testing results in the mix. “IQ is still this concept fixed in our minds – it needs to move over and make room for rationality.” ■





VISION

Wanderlust

When men and women can't resist 'sneaking a peek'

Are you a habitual rubbernecker who can't help gawking at a traffic accident? Well, it's no "wander" – in fact, it's only human, according to recent research by York psychology Professors Joseph DeSouza and Doug Crawford, who, along with a team of investigators at the University's Centre for Vision Research (CVR), have just published a paper in *The Journal of Neuroscience* on our primitive "inner eye". It's that old-brain "eye" that forces us to rubberneck, or glance at an attractive person.

Their study links the all-too-human "wandering eye" to an

ancient visual system lying deep within the brain and inherited from animals such as frogs and toads. The structure – the superior colliculus – helps primitive animals locate food, danger and sexual partners. It also performs similar functions in higher animals like humans. And both men and women equally share the trait, says DeSouza.

The study was funded by a Canadian Institutes of Health Research grant to DeSouza and Crawford, who are based in York's Faculty of Health. ■



GARDENS

Hive of Activity

A York 'beesearcher' gets fêted

Although he's a bee researcher by day, it was, surprisingly, Clement Kent's work with gardens that recently garnered him the august title of Canada's "Pollinator Advocate" of the year from the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign.

It wasn't awarded in some mundane backwater office either. Ceremonies took place in the grand rotunda of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, complete with trumpet fanfare for those being honoured. "The whole ceremony was also enlivened by Henry the African elephant," says Kent. "Many of the guests mistook him for a mammoth, which was a good conversational ice-breaker."

Kent is a tireless promoter for pollinators (bats, bees, birds, butterflies) and pollinator gardens. He's even reprinted his booklet (temporarily sold out after various media appearances) *How to Make a Pollinator Garden*. He keeps up a busy public speaking schedule promoting pollinators, and has appeared on national radio and television stations.

In mid-life, Kent ditched a lucrative career in software to pursue postdoctoral research at York studying bee genomics. "I was looking for an intellectual challenge and a way to give back. Studying social insects is a great way to pursue that." ■



ENVIRONMENT

Growth Opportunity

Why organic farming makes
good business sense

Fact or fiction? True or false? Organic farms are – by necessity or design – inherently less energy efficient than large conventional farms whose economies of scale make them more productive, and hence, less energy consuming.

False. Organic wins the day.

In a study co-authored with lead researcher Derek Lynch and his colleague Ralph Martin at Nova Scotia Agricultural College, York environmental studies Professor Rod MacRae analyzed 130 studies comparing energy use and global warming potential of organic versus conventional farming. He and Lynch concluded from the research, published in the journal *Sustainability*, that organic farms were more energy efficient on a per-hectare and per-product basis (with the exception being fruit and poultry production, due to lack of data).

“We looked primarily at production systems that might be feasible in Canada,” says MacRae. The assumption that the ‘assembly line’ approach is the only way to keep up with food needs as populations expand and available agricultural land shrinks is deeply flawed, he says, pointing out organic yields are not far behind conventional ones, and that south of the equator organic often outperforms conventional farming.

How is their research useful? “This work is part of our effort to identify viable farming systems that will both mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and create better farm resilience in the face of climate uncertainty,” MacRae says. “Our results also confirm that insufficient attention is being paid by Canadian governments to ecological farming systems as viable solutions.” ■

He likes Ferraris and awesome parties. But for mining millionaire Pierre Lassonde, what really matters is giving away large amounts of his personal fortune to help young people realize their dreams.

BY MICHAEL TODD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

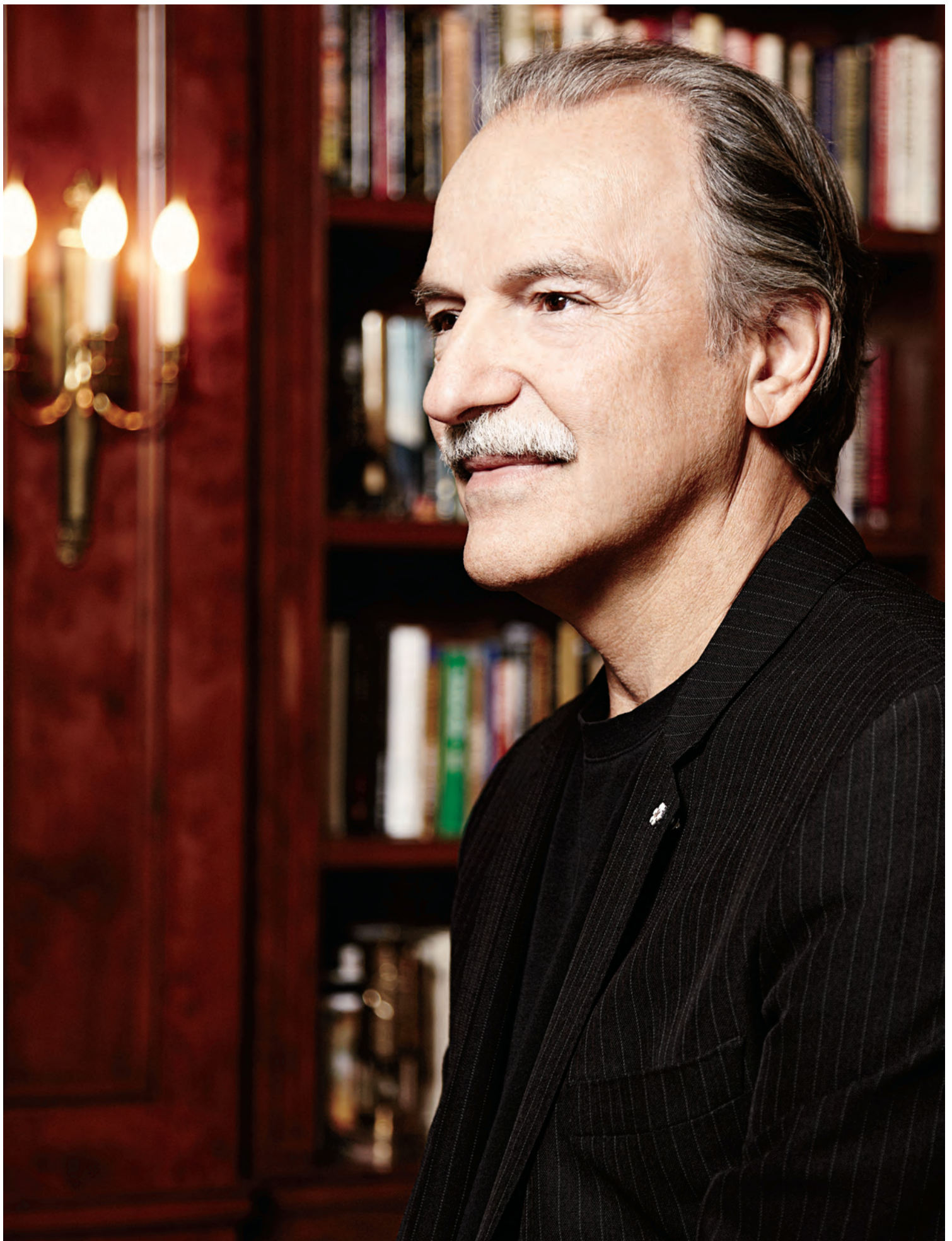
Heart of Gold

COVER

PIERRE LASSONDE IS THE KIND OF MAN who likes to collect art by internationally regarded Canadian painters such as Jean-Paul Riopelle, give awesome birthday parties for his wife, Janelle (he surprised her recently by hiring Sting and his band for her 45th), enjoy his children (his youngest daughter, Laurelle, just turned seven and he has two older children from his first marriage), spend three months a year in France revelling in the food, and take his ice-blue Ferrari out of the garage when there's no salt on the roads (a red one is on back order).

In short, even though he's officially "retired" (his wife claims he's just "rewired"), Lassonde still works hard, but now makes time to enjoy family and go on three-hour-long walks with friends – including York business school benefactor Seymour Schulich. And, like Schulich, he also makes time to give good-sized portions of his considerable personal fortune away – as he recently did when he donated \$25 million to York to create the Pierre Lassonde School of Engineering (see page 16).

Although Lassonde now lives in an upscale Toronto neighbourhood bordering Upper Canada College, he didn't come from money, he says.



There is one thing he did inherit, however: the entrepreneurial gene. It's a trait he attributes to his father, who was a self-made businessman in Saint-Hyacinthe, Que. He was involved in many ventures, from selling Hoover vacuum cleaners door-to-door to securing a military contract to make eating utensils for Second World War troops and, later, producing specialized roofing nails for barns.

“My projects are about students – giving them a tremendous university experience, and a life experience so they can go out and fulfil themselves”

His mother, Juliette Lassonde, was a food journalist for the newspaper *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe* and the *Journal Monday*. While essentially a stay-at-home mother, she was an entrepreneur in her own right, producing four cookbooks as well as her own cooking show on television. She died at 91. Lassonde has also written a book – now out of print – called *The Gold Book: The Complete Investment Guide to Precious Metals*. (At last check on Amazon, it was selling for: “1 new from \$350.00” and “5 used from \$167.97”.)

Lassonde says the nightly discussions that took place around the family dining table in Saint-Hyacinthe, centring on his father's business, were integral to fostering his entrepreneurial spirit. “Those conversations about problems with suppliers and the day-to-day trials and tribulations of running a business fascinated me. They confirmed for me what I wanted to do with my life, which was to be my own boss and run my own show.” As a kid, Lassonde loved “tinkering” with machines, and his first job was working in his father's cutlery factory. “I dipped the red-hot metal in oil after it came out of the furnaces. It was an incredibly dirty and unhealthy thing to be doing. But there were no environmental standards or protections in those days. It was crazy!”

While the family thrived, they were not rich, says Lassonde. “Our family lived as middle-income, but if you walked into our house you would have noticed that by the late '70s the carpets were pretty threadbare. Money was still tight, but not for education. We all went to university, all four kids.” Before he went to university, Lassonde worked in construction for what

he calls fantastic wages at the time – “I made \$1.67 an hour, which was unheard of then!” He revelled in the work because he loved building things. (He once put together a sailboat from scratch.)

Perhaps it's appropriate, then, that Lassonde has now embarked on building and conceptualizing a new building for a new kind of engineering student, literally from the ground up. In fact, one of his early career passions was to be an architect. Before starting university he had applied to several schools to do architecture. He got turned down. “I was finally told by one that I simply had no talent whatsoever. I was devastated! That is why I ended up in engineering.”

Call it a happy accident, fate or serendipity, but that “setback” actually set Lassonde on a career path that would eventually lead to his business partnership with Seymour Schulich, and to both of them making millions with their gold-mining company Franco-Nevada. After receiving his BA from the University of Montreal, a BSc in electrical engineering from Polytechnique Montréal and his MBA from the University of Utah, Lassonde acquired his PEng (Ontario) designation and a Chartered Financial Analyst credential from the University of Virginia.

In 1982 he co-founded Franco-Nevada Mining Corp. with Schulich after the two met at the Bay Street firm of Beutel, Goodman & Co. During the next 20 years, their company provided shareholders with a 36 per cent average annual rate of return. In 2002, Franco-Nevada was acquired by Newmont Mining Corp. But in 2008, Lassonde led a group of investors and former executives in bringing back Franco-Nevada to the public market and became its chair. Today the market capitalization of the company is more than \$5 billion.

His gift to York isn't the first Lassonde has made to universities, both abroad and in Canada. He's particularly fond of giving to projects that cultivate the spirit of entrepreneurship and that foster student entrepreneurship – similar to one he founded at the University of Utah, his MBA alma mater.

The purpose of the Pierre Lassonde Entrepreneur Center, at the University of Utah, is to give students opportunities to learn, first-hand, all the steps required in new business development. Various programs offered at the centre do just that, while also giving students a chance to learn from expert mentors. Lassonde says the mentoring process ensures that





RELAX: Lassonde in one of his favourite spaces, his library

students not only learn from their own experience, but from the diverse experience of industry experts.

Lassonde says both he and his late wife wanted to do something different for their alma mater (he got his MBA there in 1973, and his late wife, Claudette MacKay, received her master's degree in nuclear engineering). One idea they had was to help students find commercial uses for discoveries made by the school's science labs – and so they pledged \$1.5 million to the University of Utah in 1999. That gift was the catalyst for the David Eccles School of Business to open the Utah Entrepreneur Center (UTec) in January 2000. In less than two years, UTec had achieved its goals and had involved hundreds of students in the entrepreneur program. Lassonde later donated a further \$13.25 million, and the name of the

centre was then changed from UTec to the Pierre Lassonde Entrepreneur Centre (LEC). Says Lassonde, “The centre is not the largest in the US, but the one ranking I am most proud of is that LEC ranks number one in America – ahead of MIT – for the most public companies created from the discoveries made at the university!”

It has been results like LEC that have encouraged him to give back, he says. “Education is a place where you can make huge differences in people's lives,” he says. “My projects are about students – giving them a tremendous university experience, and a life experience so they can go out and fulfil themselves. My gifts are also about helping the next generation of Canadians realize their dreams so they can continue to make Canada one of the best places in the world to live.” ■

Renaissance engineers will be environmentally conscious and schooled in business, world affairs and even beauty!

BY MICHAEL TODD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK



From

C ALL IT A RADICAL NEW ACADEMIC APPROACH to producing a radically new kind of engineer needed for a completely different engineering age. Name it the Pierre Lassonde School of Engineering at York University – built and conceived for engineers of the 21st century, according to donor Pierre Lassonde’s wishes. Does York, or Ontario, really need another E-school? Absolutely, says Faculty of Science & Engineering Dean Janusz Kozinski – but with a difference.

Kozinski and Lassonde see it as an engineering education that will flip the previous models and break with traditional molds – and clichés – about engineers and the shape an engineering education “should” take. “The cliché,” says Kozinski, “is that engineers from the past were seen as loners – narrow-minded individuals who were always focused on drawing and trying to solve one single problem at a time. They did not work efficiently as team members. But engineering has changed significantly since that time.”

Kozinski says Ontario does require another engineering school, both to complement existing ones at other institutions and because York University is situated so close to York Region, one of the fastest growing areas in Canada. In fact, the Ontario government has estimated that there’s currently a need for at least another 2,700 places for engineering students in the province. It has shown its support with a \$50-million pledge for the new school, in addition to Lassonde’s \$25 million and the same amount from York. “We have so many students who are eligible and want to get into an engineering program, especially coming from York Region,” says Kozinski. “It’s not so surprising because many of the families who settle there are immigrants and they tend to send their children to professional schools – business, engineering, law, medicine and so on.”

But as the profession evolves, a program and a building to house what Kozinski calls the new breed of “Renaissance” engineers is needed. “The nature of what engineers do and how they practise their profession has changed,” he says. “They’re now

RETHINKING ENGINEERING: Janusz Kozinski has a plan

The Ground Up



ATTENTION CRITICS: Kozinski remains unfazed by engineering traditionalists

working in teams. There's also the growing component of female engineers and they are also changing the culture, while at the same time engineering is becoming highly trans-disciplinary."

York's new Lassonde School is being designed, literally, from the ground up to meet those demands. The \$85-million structure, to be built in three phases, will overlook the recently reconstructed Stong Pond, where the scenic vista across to the Black Creek ravine is flooded with sunlight during the day and takes in the sunsets in the evening. Kozinski says the new building will be conceived with the classical idea of the acropolis very much in mind – lots of open space. It has to be a different kind of structure to accommodate a different philosophy of teaching, he says. "A lot of open space is important because it's very stimulating to have natural interaction among people." The new building will have no confined areas and will be very similar to principles followed at institutions leading in social networking, Kozinski says.

The building will be fully wired to seamlessly support social

media and other educational platforms, now and in the future. "There will be plenty of online content in the curriculum," says Kozinski. "MIT, for instance, has created a model site in that regard and we're talking about partnering arrangements. We're going to flip the model. Formerly students came to big lectures and went home to struggle with problems. We want them to 'attend' lectures at home via Internet e-learning and then bring in problems to solve in small groups or one-on-one with professors."

Kozinski believes buildings send a specific message about the quality and kind of educational experience a student is likely to have, and that experience is carried on into the workplace. "We'll have artwork that reflects the 'innovation crucible' theme of the Lassonde School of Engineering – but also pieces that will encompass, say, the history and future of engineering. It will be a highly esthetic environment designed with class and style, while emphasizing the substance of our new engineering programs. In other words, it will directly reflect that reality isn't a box and that beauty can be in the nonlinear."

To that end, Kozinski wants the final architectural designs to reflect nature itself, where "there are no straight lines," he says, and where beauty is found in imperfection. "Nature, like 21st-century engineering, relies on a kind of fuzzy logic. We want students to realize that while the principles of how something works may seem chaotic on the surface, there is an underlying pattern that makes it work."

The dean plans on hiring up to 70 new professors to staff the program. He says the school is one of the very few that is hiring on this scale. The response to job ads so far? He has had overwhelming interest from top people abroad – the US, Europe, Asia – and in Canada, he says.

What about naysayers? "Some of our more conservative colleagues say we should not emphasize aspects of the curriculum that are not strictly engineering. For instance, our students will also study at Osgoode Hall Law School and take courses with the Schulich School of Business. And some people feel there is no merit in teaching a mechanical engineer about the beauty of a flower or the difference between the old culture of Spain or the new culture of China. But this thinking is from the past."

Kozinski remains unfazed by criticism from traditionalists. For him, engineering is now where medicine was 25 years ago. "When people realized how multidisciplinary medicine needed to be, it was unlocked, and it has made tremendous gains ever since. It will be the same for engineering." ■

Sarah's Journey

Sarah Yankoo explains how York helped her find her roots.

IT'S BEEN A BUSY YEAR FOR YORK STUDENT SARAH YANKOO, what with planning not one, but two electric powwows (think a mashup of traditional Aboriginal song and dance along with dance party electronica), to say nothing of keeping up with school work.

Yankoo hails from Newmarket, Ont., and her Aboriginal roots lie with the Golden Lake Band (Algonquins of Pikwākanagan) located on the shores of the Bonnechere River in Renfrew County. Due to discrimination written into the Indian Act, she was denied Indian status until a year ago, she says. "I think getting older, coming to York and living in Toronto helped me connect more with that part of myself and my heritage. When I was a teen I wasn't really sure how I fit into it all," says Yankoo, a fourth-year environmental studies major.

Yankoo is also president of the Aboriginal Students' Association at York University. Her role is to work on events that spark discussion among York's Aboriginal student population – currently about 170 self-identified members, she estimates – as well as "negotiate a positive relationship with non-native students, faculty and staff." The University recently opened the Centre for Aboriginal Student Services, located on the second floor of York Lanes. What effect did that have? "I think the moment we got a space of our own it really made a difference," she says. "It positively changed how we interact with this campus and each other." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK



LAYTON LEGACY

City councillor Mike Layton is following in his father's path, but walking in his own shoes.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD



MIKE LAYTON. Few knew anything about him before March 5, 2010, when he announced he would run for Toronto city council. Heads turned, necks craned; this was the son of Jack. There's no denying the similarities – father and son studied political science, earned graduate degrees at York, entered municipal politics at age 32. Mike rides to work on his bicycle, plays rhythm guitar, works out at the gym (well, sometimes) and shares an appetite for policy and a drive to make this a fairer world. When Mike speaks, you can hear Jack's timbre.

But Mike is not Jack – in style or temperament. Flamboyance is not a trait he inherited from his father. For sartorial flourish, he might wear a lavender shirt with his understated suit and narrow tie. Sometimes he dons a wool driving cap to tip at old men when he mainstretcs in Little Portugal. He enters rooms with less fanfare and a quieter readiness to engage.

Veteran of countless political campaigns, this bespectacled, slightly balding 33-year-old admits he is more comfortable in the back room, setting the stage for others. "It's not that I'm shy. It's just that I'm not sure I have the Type A personality of most politicians. I'm not sure I have the temperament," he says. "But I'm getting more comfortable in front of the camera."

The guy who grew up behind Honest Ed's, Toronto's legendary discount store, never dreamed of seeking public office, despite his political pedigree – son of Jack, first leader of the federal opposition from the New Democratic Party; stepson of Olivia Chow, NDP MP for Trinity-Spadina; grandson of Robert Layton, a cabinet minister under Brian Mulroney; great grandson of Gilbert Layton, a cabinet minister under Quebec's Maurice Duplessis.

Instead, the scion of politicians enrolled in biochemistry at university because he wanted to develop genetically modified organisms ("in a good way"). "I shifted gears when I got higher marks in Canadian politics." Not sure what to do after earning a BA in political science and environmental management, he entered the planning stream of York's graduate program in environmental studies – and discovered his calling.

Armed with an MES in 2006, Layton left the service industry after six years as a restaurant manager to embark on a career as an environmental activist. Over the next three years at Environmental Defence, a national organization working to inspire change, he spearheaded campaigns to implement Ontario's Greenbelt Act and get the Green Energy Act passed.

He was blissfully drafting policy and helping citizens start green-action projects when Toronto mayor David Miller announced he would step down and Ward 19 councillor Joe Pantalone said he wanted to step up. Layton summoned his buddies to compile a list of potential "progressive" candidates they could support to replace Pantalone in their ward. When

nobody on the list would run, "the bottle spun to me." He agreed to give it a shot.

Not, however, before asking his father for advice. He knew that "just to run can be life-changing in and of itself. The commitment is huge." He'd also had a taste of city hall as a York intern in councillor Janet Davis's office.

"Part of my decision to run was based on what Dad said: 'Choose where you think you can have the biggest impact.' I like making policy. I was making policy at Environmental Defence. You don't need to be a politician to influence policy. I could have had a lifetime of doing that and been happy." He surveyed local business and community leaders "to hear what they wanted to accomplish and see what role I could play." In March 2010, he launched his campaign.

"Because I was the son of Jack, I got more media coverage than most mayoralty candidates. It was daunting." Expectations were high. "People knew what my family politics were, but that didn't mean they necessarily trusted me. I had to go out and build their trust. They needed to know I was more than simply the son of Jack."

For the next eight months, he introduced himself to thousands in the downtown ward – west of Bathurst and south of Bloor – full of students, professionals, artists, rich, poor, Portuguese, Italian, Chinese. Above all, he listened. "Politics is about connecting with people," says Layton. "You can't be afraid to knock on doors. There are 50,000 people living in my ward. Once you meet someone, look into their eyes, shake hands with them and make that personal connection, they can hate your politics but not you." On Oct. 25, 2010, he won with 45 per cent of the vote. Not bad for a rookie. "Then I had to figure out how to be a city councillor."

Jack gave his son this advice: seek expert opinion, be guided by your core values – social and environmental justice – and do what's right, not necessarily what's popular.

"Politics is hyper-local," Councillor Layton told Professor Jose Etcheverry's environment and business class at York one day in March. "At eight this morning, I was taking photos of illegal construction on Euclid Avenue to report to the building inspector." He routinely puts in 12-hour days stickhandling parking and dog complaints, boning up on zoning amendments, fighting closures of women's shelters. He's planning park redesigns and pedestrian bridges and urging his constituents to come out and bike with Mike, skate with Mike, meet Mike at a town hall. "I enjoy that stuff." Sunday afternoons, though, he devotes to his fiancée, Brett Tryon, a bird-banding biologist he will wed in August.

"I always thought politics was a thankless job," admits Layton. But Jack's death last August "proved that the complete opposite is true. We were so lucky to see that not only did our own city open up its heart, the whole country did." ■

ISSUES

THE VIDEO GAME – once considered something of a novelty – began about 1971 with the release of the arcade game *Computer Space*. The following year, Atari, Inc., put out the first commercially successful video game to garner mainstream popularity, *Pong*.

What started as a casual amusement has now turned into a serious industry. In Canada, video games contributed about \$1.7 billion in economic activity in 2011, while in the US, games racked up sales of approximately \$15 billion, significantly outstripping the music industry, according to *The New York Times*.

Unfortunately, women may not have played much of a role in those profits. While three in five Canadians surveyed said they played a video game in the last month, only one was female. But that may be changing. Nintendo Canada estimates women now comprise almost 50 per cent of the users of its \$150 DS portable gaming system for lifestyle programs like *My Weight Loss Coach* or *Quick Yoga Training*.

A common stereotype of female gamers is that they are somehow less adept than men at video game “interfaces” – the controllers used to manipulate games. This is more a matter of historical access than biological predisposition. When computer gaming was invented, there was no male/female division. In fact, Toru Iwatani, who developed *Pac-Man* in 1979, designed it to appeal to both boys and girls. Later, in the 1980s, Atari’s *Centipede* became extremely popular among women players in video arcade culture.

Fast forward to recent games such as *Batman: Arkham City* (which includes such phrases as “I’ll make you meow, bitch”) or *Duke Nukem Forever*, a first-person shooter, and the landscape has changed. “X-Play”, a TV program about video games, rated Duke 1 out of 5 for, among other things, its “creepy, hateful view of women”. One solution could be more women-friendly products. Recent releases aimed at women include *CastleVille*, *Dragon Age*, *Journey* and *School 26* – the latter developed by a Canadian company, Silicon Sisters.

As women’s gaming evolves, academic interest in gender issues surrounding women and gaming has also gained traction. In 2011, Toronto hosted the Women in Film, Games and New Media conference at the TIFF Bell Lightbox, as well as the broader Digifest Conference. Jennifer Jenson, who spoke at Digifest, is a gamer, a York professor of pedagogy & technology in the Faculty of Education, and president of the Canadian Game Studies Association. She says women are woefully underrepresented in the gaming industry as game designers and, to some extent, as consumers. “More women are playing, but we have yet to see if their playing will also push them to want to be producers of games and not just consumers. The jury is still out.”

A devoted gamer, second-year York student Caitlin Matthews-

McWhirter, who’s double majoring in psychology and law & society, never wasted much time worrying about girls’ roles in the gaming world, she says. Matthews-McWhirter is something of a whiz when it comes to playing so-called “men’s games” like *Call of Duty*. Her passion is first-person shooters (she regularly trounces male opponents). She also enjoys playing games like *Grand Theft Auto* (in which male characters can buy the services of a prostitute and then kill her), but says she has never been bothered by any game’s anti-women aspects. “Misogynistic? I see them as a product. Just something to sell,” says Matthews-McWhirter. “It doesn’t matter how women are portrayed because men are portrayed the same way. They’re exaggerations. It’s marketing. You can’t take it personally.”


Matthews-McWhirter says she understands the “pink it and shrink it” reflex – where game content is based on stereotypes of what women supposedly want (as with products that are made pink and smaller) – and that some women may not feel certain mainstream games are for them. “I get it, but I wouldn’t want to play a game like that because I would find that more sexist – like, here’s a game for you because you can’t play our game.”

Nick Taylor, a postdoctoral researcher at York who works under Jenson and is part of the Feminists in Games Research Initiative that Jenson leads, says the issues aren’t so much around the games as the gaming communities. “Even as gaming continues to expand beyond its long-standing demographic, there remains a really reactionary core to the gaming community that makes it very hard for women to equitably participate as industry workers, players and teammates,” he says. “I could list a bunch of particularly misogynistic, homophobic games, but I’d rather single out some of the misogynistic and homophobic practices of player communities.”

Competitive gaming (either online or at tournaments) continues to be a male-dominated domain that strongly discourages female players. But some women are fighting back. On the website fatuglyor Slutty.com, female gamers can post the screenshots or egregious comments made by certain male players, notes Jenson. “It’s a kind of ‘shaming the Johns’ approach that makes visible everyday forms of sexism and homophobia that persist in these spaces.”

So if the demeaning “pink it and shrink it” approach is totally misdirected in terms of game development for women, what would work best? Experts like Jenson say the only rational way to do it is to put together mixed-gender teams of designers and programmers – and put women in power. “As it stands now, basically the only women you meet in the gaming industry work in HR! It’s clear that while women are playing games, they are not making them. Cynically? I don’t think the gaming industry is going to change unless a whole lot happens within the culture.” ■

COMBAT READY: Matthews-McWhirter takes no prisoners

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark sleeveless top, dark pants, and black boots, is sitting on a silver metal case. She is holding a white video game controller with both hands. Behind her is a large green backdrop that has been set up outdoors in a wooded area. The ground is covered with dry leaves and twigs. The scene is lit with natural light, suggesting it's daytime.

In the hyper-masculine world of video games,
women are finally pushing back.
Can they zap “pink it and shrink it” stereotypes?

BY MICHAEL TODD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG

GAME ON



Love and Latte

Hard-driving CEO Stacey Mowbray is perking up Second Cup.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

LAST FALL, STACEY MOWBRAY WENT INCOGNITO. Cast as a woman re-entering the work force, the 50-year-old president and CEO of Second Cup Ltd. dyed her hair, added extensions and tied on a black apron to serve steaming cups of Paradiso Dark from behind the counter at four of her company's 360 cafes. Then she put on a hairnet, packed boxes and emptied 100-pound sacks of beans into roasting pans during a shift in the processing plant. Why was that camera crew following her around? Her unsuspecting co-workers soon learned they'd been training their president and shooting an episode of "Undercover Boss Canada".

At the end of the day, the York grad's feet ached and her back was sore, but it was worth every minute, she says. "It was a fabulous opportunity to really showcase the company and understand the frontline experience." No stranger to hard work herself, she came away inspired and with a new appreciation of her employees – they donate leftover food to homeless shelters, return after work to play guitar for clientele, draw hearts in the foam of lattes. That last one really impressed her and now servers in the chain's cafes are putting "a little love in every latte."

Latte art is part of her effort to strengthen Second Cup's brand as "the coffee company that cares" and give Starbucks a run for its money. Mowbray (MBA '88) started four years ago and brings to the task more than two decades in senior marketing positions at Pepsi, Cara Operations and Molson Canada. Business is picking up.

Some women say they must work twice as hard to get half as far as men. Not her. "I don't believe I worked harder than men to be recognized. I had equal opportunity." Sure, there were sexist comments, but Mowbray says she was promoted because she did a great job and was a good team leader. "I focused on the work. I never made a big deal about not being invited to a golf tournament."

She has always focused on the work – and excelled. Mowbray grew up in Kitchener-Waterloo, the second of three children of an insurance salesman and stay-at-home mom. Her father came from a farm, her mother from a blue-collar family; neither went beyond Grade 9, "though not for lack of smarts." In Grade 13, Mowbray had the highest average and scooped up the Principal's Prize and most of the subject prizes – while juggling three jobs. "I was the kid who did it all," says Mowbray.

When she won a scholarship to Wilfrid Laurier University, "me going off to university was important and unique."

Unsure of what to study, she heeded her father's advice to take business and soon made up her mind to become president of a company some day. "It was a far-off aspiration. I had never met a president of a company. My family didn't know any presidents."

If Mowbray had a role model, it was her hard-working father. He earned his high school diploma at night school and took professional accreditation courses. "I admired the fact that he was always taking courses and improving himself. He had a style and approach that, to this day, I admire. He cared for people. He had respect for people. He listened."

After graduating in 1984, Mowbray started in sales and marketing at Weston Bakery and promptly enrolled in night classes in York's MBA program, taking two courses per term for three years. If she wanted to be a president, she figured she needed finance credentials. Twenty-four years later, she got the job.

When Mowbray finally cracked the proverbial "glass ceiling" four years ago, she joined that rare breed – women who hold six per cent of top jobs in corporate Canada. Within a year, she made the Top 20 Women in Canada list, and last year, the Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada. The recognition came not just for her corporate status, but for her charity work raising funds for girls' schools in Africa for Plan Canada's Because I am a Girl campaign, and her mentoring of women in marketing.

Her rise to the top hasn't been all smooth sailing. When her two daughters were small, Mowbray hired a life coach. "I was leading two separate lives. At work, I never talked about my kids. At home, I was mom. I thought that's what I had to do to fit into a male world." She thought she needed balance. "But it wasn't about balance, it was about common values. I quickly found out that you have to be the same person at work and at home. You can't pretend to be a worker bee who doesn't have a personal life." Find a corporation whose values and culture suit yours, the life coach advised. "It was an incredible turning point."

In Second Cup, she has found the ideal match. "I love the café experience. I can walk into a Second Cup and see a teenager on the Internet, a real estate agent closing a deal, an older woman reading a book. I can be a genuine leader here. I care about the experience people are getting. The values here absolutely jive with my value system." Latte, anyone? ■



York atmospheric scientist Tom McElroy might have his head in the clouds, but his research is rooted firmly on the ground.

BY DAVID FULLER ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

MR. OZONE

METEOROLOGY

THE REPUTATION OF YORK'S Faculty of Science & Engineering is shining even brighter these days, thanks to the arrival of experimentalist Tom McElroy – the University's oldest "rookie" professor. It's a title he wears proudly, along with his grey ponytail and Australian bush hat. After a 36-year career as a research scientist at Environment Canada, McElroy moved into his new lab in the Gordon G. Shepherd Atmospheric Research Facility last fall to continue his work monitoring the health of the Earth's ozone layer and designing the gadgets to do it.

As Industrial Research Chair in Atmospheric Remote Sounding in York's Department of Earth & Space Science & Engineering, McElroy (PhD '85) will be returning to the scene of his doctoral studies with Shepherd, York's distinguished pioneer in atmospheric research. McElroy's career almost took a completely different path. While an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, he had set his sights on becoming a nuclear physicist when he met the late Professor Alan Brewer. "I had absolutely no interest in going into meteorology or atmospheric science because 'real' physicists look down their nose at people who do that," McElroy says, smiling at the memory of such youthful hubris. Brewer, whose research helped change our knowledge of the stratosphere, convinced him there was, indeed, enough science in meteorology to challenge him. "Once you get into it, you find out: I'm doing quantum physics, I'm doing spectroscopy, I'm doing atmospheric science, thermo-dynamics – just about every area of physics is involved somewhere."

McElroy came to York in 1976. He joined the wave of scientists then testing the health of the ozone layer using giant weather balloons. In the 1980s, McElroy and his Environment Canada colleagues, James Kerr and David Wardle, developed a device known as the Automated Brewer Ozone Spectrophotometer, which measures ozone and nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere. That instrument and another innovative idea – the UV Index – earned the trio an award in 2007 from the United Nations Environment Programme; it is now the backbone of The Canadian Ozone and Ultraviolet Measurement Program. Today, the spectrophotometer (collectively referred to as the "Brewer") is used in more than 40 countries through a network of ground-based monitoring stations (including one at the South Pole, which McElroy installed in 2008 and jointly runs

with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). The UV Index has been a staple of Canadian daily weather reports since McElroy and colleagues launched it in 1992. The Index was the first of its kind, and has been the worldwide standard measurement system since its institution by the World Health Organization.

After a career spent monitoring the ozone layer and related threats to the environment, McElroy has developed a particular dislike for climate change deniers – whom he blames for a change in the public perception of all scientists. "When you say 'theory' to a scientist, it means one thing; when you say 'theory' to a non-scientist, well, the expression is, 'oh, that's just a theory.' The deniers have been casting doubt on established science." What was once a respected term for the plausible has become tainted with connotations of politics. "We are losing the contribution of expert knowledge to evidence-based decision making," he says. "This is the ultimate challenge for science right now. The way I like to put it is: if you're sick, you go to a doctor; you don't go to your neighbours and get them to vote on whether to take out your liver or your spleen."

While much of McElroy's work is focused on the Earth, his energies are also directed towards space. He trained York grad and former astronaut Steve MacLean, now president of the Canadian Space Agency, to operate one of his instruments on MacLean's first flight aboard the space shuttle in 1992, and has proposed instrument packages for various satellite missions since. The Canadian Space Agency funds his research, along with the National Sciences & Engineering Research Council of Canada and ABB Bomen, and he is developing proposals for new projects to study the ozone layer over the poles, monitor pollution and quantify the effects of global warming on the Arctic.

"This is, for me, the Holy Grail at the moment," he says, outlining plans to make an image from data collected by satellite over the Arctic that will show methane coming out of the permafrost. "I think if we have those pictures in five years – if climate change hasn't already been solved – I think the reality of climate change will be impossible to ignore." In the meantime, he continues developing new ways to observe what's happening to the planet so science can refine its global warming theories. "Science is supposed to speak truth to power," McElroy says. "Facts are supposed to carry the day; that's what we're trying to do." ■



PURSUING

In a new biography, dance historian
Carol Bishop-Gwyn
chronicles how Celia Franca
changed the landscape of Canadian ballet.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PERFECTION

IN 1950, CELIA FRANCA RECEIVED a letter that would change her life – and change the cultural landscape of Canada. The talented young dancer had been performing with London’s world-renowned Sadler’s Wells Ballet, and was making her mark as a choreographer for stage and television in post-war Britain. At 29, she cast a promising career aside when Toronto arts patrons with deep pockets invited her to start a national ballet school in Canada – an ocean away, in a city she had never heard of.

Twenty-five years later, Franca had created a world-class ballet company. In a new biography, *The Pursuit of Perfection: A Life of Celia Franca* (Cormorant Books, 2011), York alumna Carol Bishop-Gwyn (MFA ’90) documents how she accomplished such a remarkable feat in what many perceived as a colonial backwater. Published to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the National Ballet of Canada, it is a story Franca wanted to share, though not necessarily the way Bishop-Gwyn tells it.

Bishop-Gwyn traces Franca’s life story in three parts – her formative years growing up as the daughter of working-class Polish immigrants in London’s East End; the intensely productive middle years building the ballet company and its feeder school; and her last, lonely decades in Ottawa before she died in 2007, at age 86.

Franca arrived in Toronto in the winter of 1951, and soon embarked on a cross-Canada trip to audition young Canadians for her fledgling company. By fall she was rehearsing her recruits, and on Nov. 12, 1951, she trotted them out for an inaugural performance at Eaton’s College auditorium in Toronto.

Her dancers faced stiff competition for an audience that night. Toronto, generally considered a cultural desert, was host to touring opera and theatre productions from New York and the *Ice Capades*. “The fact that people queued at the Eaton auditorium box office for ballet tickets, despite these rival events, attests to the hunger that existed for Canada to have its own national ballet company,” writes Bishop-Gwyn.

For the next 24 years, a visionary and driven Franca continued to deliver. “Although she was not always likeable, she was such an amazing force, ferociously determined to create a ballet company of international stature,” says Bishop-Gwyn.

But her success came at a cost, both personal and professional, and with lots of drama. Franca’s life was a tempest of triumphs and tribulations, petty and epic feuds, private agonies and public insults, jealousies and betrayals. She chronically overspent her budget and fought with her board. Her bitter rift with National Ballet School co-founder Betty Oliphant was

legendary. She could barely tolerate a belligerent Rudolph Nureyev, but had to appease the starring guest artist so the company could replenish its coffers. As artistic director, she devoted her life to developing stars of international calibre – Veronica Tennant, Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn, among others – and seized every chance to sing their praises and seek public support for her company of dancers. Behind the scenes, the chain-smoking, Scotch-loving Franca dropped husbands, lost friends and neglected family.

One of her original recruits was Grant Strate, an Edmonton law student with no ballet training. Strate dropped law, learned ballet and ended up as the company’s resident choreographer for nine years before departing in 1970 to launch Canada’s first bachelor’s degree program in dance at York.

Chafing at Franca’s preference for the “saccharine romance and pretty dancing” of British classical ballet, Strate designed a program favouring modern dance at York. He was “rebelling against all the works Celia valued,” writes Bishop-Gwyn. Nevertheless, “without the National Ballet Company, Grant Strate would not have developed into the choreographer and champion of Canadian dance that he became,” says Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt (BA Spec. Hons. ’78, MFA ’86), director of York’s MA and PhD dance programs. (York’s Faculty of Fine Arts is one of North America’s premier professional training and research institutions for the visual, performing and digital arts; it is the first program of its kind in Canada and the only Fine Arts Faculty in Ontario.)

“Celia’s influence was more indirect than direct on York’s program,” suggests Fisher-Stitt. She herself studied under Franca and danced for four years with the company before enrolling at York. And, like Bishop-Gwyn, she recently produced a major history celebrating Franca and Oliphant’s legacy – *The Ballet Class: A History of Canada’s National Ballet School, 1959-2009* – in time to celebrate the school’s 50th anniversary. Many York instructors have come from the ballet company and school – dancers Yves Cousineau and Angela Leigh among them in the early days. And the symbiotic relationship continues to this day, as York and the National Ballet School offer young dancers a joint teacher training/BFA program.

“During her long life, Celia Franca was loved and loathed, a loyal friend and a dangerous enemy, arrogant and insecure, self-centred and yet thoughtfully generous,” writes Bishop-Gwyn in her introduction. “This is the story of a woman who rarely stepped out of her role.”

When Franca retired – or, more precisely, was pressed to retire – Canadians showered her with accolades, anniversary tributes, honorary degrees – including one from York in 1976.

AIR BORN: Celia Franca in ‘Giselle’

PHOTO BY KEN BELL, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA ARCHIVES

FINE ARTS

She was named Companion of the Order of Canada in 1985.

But retirement was unwelcome and lonely for Franca. She moved to Ottawa to take care of a diabetic and alcoholic husband, accepted teaching offers in China and elsewhere, served on boards, such as York's Board of Governors. Within three years, she penned a short memoir.

Later, she sat down for a series of interviews with arts writer Frank Rasky for a fuller biography. He died in 1994, but had he lived, his book would be very different from the one Bishop-Gwyn has produced.

After Rasky's death, his publisher asked Bishop-Gwyn to complete his manuscript. As a CBC reporter in Ottawa 20 years before, she had interviewed Franca "as she lost her grip as the National Ballet of Canada's founding artistic director." But because Franca insisted on complete editorial control, the biography was shelved – until she died in 2007.

Then Bishop-Gwyn went back to work. Rasky had left a gold mine of tapes and notes from interviews with Franca and major players in her life. "During those long hours listening to Celia Franca, I realized my great luck," writes the author. "Using some discretion, I could give readers her own words without the censorship she would have imposed on Rasky. Particularly when she lost her temper at his repetitive questions, the real Franca came through loud and clear."

Bishop-Gwyn also spent two years doing her own digging. In England, she delved into the Royal Opera Archives and



"Celia Franca was loved and loathed, a loyal friend and a dangerous enemy..."

CELIA FRANCA: circa 1953 in 'Lilac Garden'

PHOTO BY KEN BELL, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA ARCHIVES

interviewed friends and lovers of the young Franca, who gave access to their correspondence with her. In Canada, she watched hours of archival film footage, chuckling at priceless moments, such as one in which Franca, at the end of a class, turns to Russian superstar Mikhail Baryshnikov, who has just defected to Canada, and says, "That was much better today, Misha."

In her version of Franca's life, Bishop-Gwyn captured the true voice – imperious, impatient, proud – of the woman who left home forever to start a national ballet company from scratch in the colonies. The woman who, the *Ottawa Citizen* declared on the day she died, "taught Canada to dance." ■

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A L U M N I

Convocation's Hidden Traditions

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Class Notable

1977: Barbara Killinger

BARBARA KILLINGER (MA '74, PHD) WAS RECENTLY invited to write a monthly blog for *Psychology Today* on the topic of workaholism, which is also the subject of her forthcoming book, *Workaholism: The Character Changing Addiction*. She has authored a number of books related to workaholism, the loss of integrity and how to achieve inner balance. ■

Alumni News



Crowning Achievements

Flowers, caps, gowns (and yes) – sometimes tears. Convocation is a ceremony that celebrates a tremendous life event that’s all yours **BY JAMES ALLAN**

There’s nothing quite like the feeling of walking across the stage at Convocation. It’s an opportunity to reflect on a major accomplishment, to celebrate with family and friends, and to acknowledge all the hard work – and support – that led up to that moment.

Every year, in June and October, York hosts a series of Convocation ceremonies to honour the graduating class – and these days, York’s Convocation is a BIG celebration. At York’s first Convocation back in 1963, 43 students received their degrees. Now, more than 11,000 students earn their degrees each year and some 7,500 of them walk across that Convocation stage to shake hands with the Chancellor and President as friends and family cheer from the audience.

But Convocation is more than just a party, it’s a ceremony with a long and rich history. Many elements of York’s Convocation stretch back to the 12th and 13th century

Europe, when some of the world’s first universities began forming their traditions.

The academic regalia (the special robes that faculty and graduating students wear at the ceremony) are modelled on the clothing worn by scholars in the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages were also a dangerous time, which is why the head of medieval convocations had a personal bodyguard who carried a large club to ward off attackers. Luckily, the life of a student at York in 2012 isn’t so fraught with danger. But York maintains the tradition, and so the Chancellor – the honorary or titular head of the University – has a Beadle (a bodyguard) to watch over him with a ceremonial mace. (You will see a similar procession at the opening of the federal or provincial parliaments, where the Speaker of the House is accompanied by the Sergeant-at-Arms.)

Of course, not all Convocation traditions go back to the Middle Ages – some are a little more modern. Most con-

temporary convocation ceremonies include the awarding of an honorary doctorate to a person who has made remarkable contributions to the local, national or global community. Past recipients of York U honorary degrees, such as author Hannah Arendt, politician Isabel Bassett, global AIDS activist Stephen Lewis and businessman Isadore Sharp, were chosen so that they could inspire graduating students to make their own contributions.

Recently, York has created some new Convocation traditions. These days, our ceremonies are webcast so that family and friends around the world can watch. Last year, people logged on to watch the York U Spring Convocation ceremonies from more than 45 countries, including Hong Kong, Slovakia and Ghana. York University is also one of the first Canadian institutions to make Convocation webcasts accessible via mobile devices; now families and friends can watch on the go!

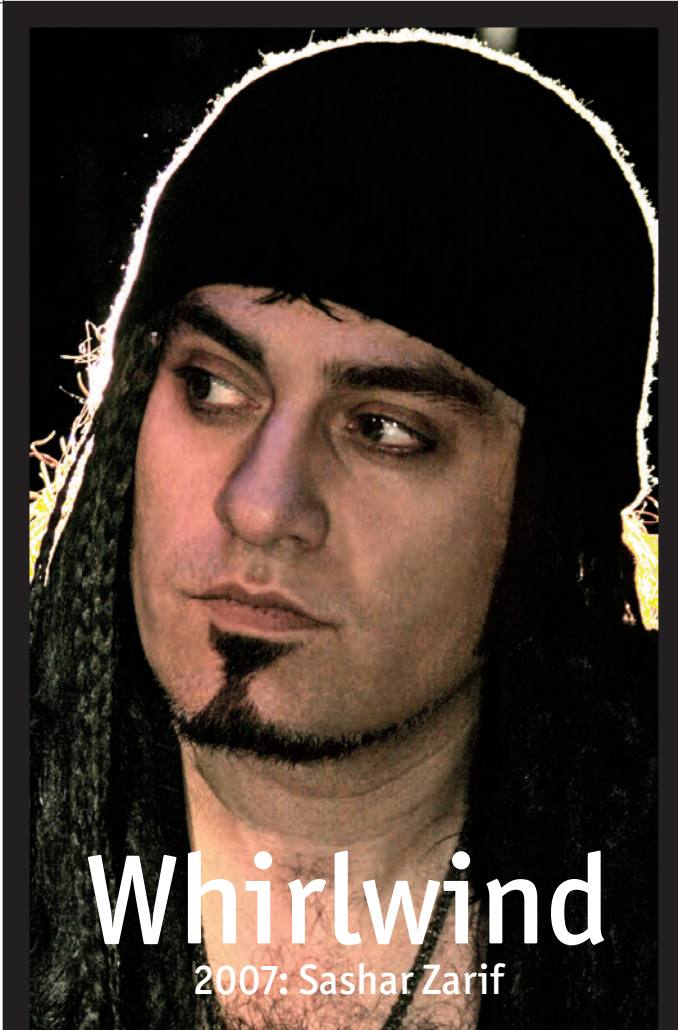
Our newest tradition is a per-

manent home for Convocation. After years of holding ceremonies in a variety of venues as the graduating class got bigger and bigger – on the rooftop podium of the Ross Building, in the amphitheatre next to the Centre for Film and Theatre and under the biggest tent in North America – York’s Convocation has landed at a new venue: the Rexall Centre, just at the western edge of campus. It’s a huge building that can accommodate the throngs of graduating students, family members and well-wishers – and provide them all with air-conditioned comfort. All in all, the new facility is a perfect site for a grand old ceremony that gets renewed with each graduating class.

Convocation is a time for alumni everywhere to welcome the latest group of graduates to the community. So congratulations to the Class of 2012 – and welcome to the club! ■

Do you have pictures from your Convocation? Post them on the York Alumni Facebook timeline at www.facebook.com/yorkualumni

Class Notes



Whirlwind

2007: Sashar Zarif

IF YOU ATTENDED YORK'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY gala night in 2009, chances are you were wowed by Sashar Zarif, York grad (MA '07) and contract faculty member in York's Dance Department, doing a traditional "whirling dervish" dance. "I came to York because York accepted me for who I am and made me feel proud of my cultural elements that I have carried with me and were so much a part of my being," Zarif says.

That past is still reflected in the work Zarif has been doing in the field, studying traditional Sufi-Shamanic dance forms from Mongolia through central Asia to the Middle East. Last fall, he was busy researching local dance traditions in Uzbekistan. "My aim is not to live in the past, but it isn't to disconnect from it either," he says. "That is why my work is contemporary but based on traditional practices." ■

1970

Cole, Donald (BA McLaughlin) retired from a successful career in real estate to open a private practice as a counsellor/life coach in Riverdale neighbourhood, Toronto. A publications manager at York from 1970 to 1986, Donald recently married Jon, his life partner of 40 years.

1971

Grimaud, Gerald (LLB Osgoode) is completing service on the Pennsyl-

vania Bar Association's Constitutional Review Commission. He also served as a Pennsylvania Assistant Attorney General for Environmental Protection. His legal career has involved environmental law, constitutional law, criminal law, energy law and contract law. He practises in the New York and Pennsylvania state courts, and in the Federal Courts. He's been a local bar leader (president and vice-president) in his two county judicial districts for more than 20 years. He is married with

2000: Vikas Kohli





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Class Notes

two daughters and now lives in Pennsylvania.

Miller, Mark (BFA Stong) recently published *Way Down That Lonesome Road: Lonnie Johnson in Toronto, 1965-1970*, his tenth book since 1982 in the field of jazz history and biography. He was the jazz critic for *The Globe and Mail* from 1978 to 2005 and has written for several other popular and scholarly publications.

Thornton, Nancy (BA Glendon) has retired from her career in the financial industry, which included 31 years with TD Bank. She looks forward to spending her time travelling, catching up with friends and pursuing new hobbies.

1974

Clements, Warren (BA Hons. Winters) writes the weekly "Word Play"

column for *The Globe and Mail* and is editor of *Portfolio 25*, a collection of Canada's best editorial cartoons published in 2011. He and wife Sandra are collaborating on a book of bird verse.

1979

Randall, Martha (BFA Spec. Hons. Calumet) is one of two teachers in Canada providing training in the Nia Technique, a movement and fitness program that introduces elements of martial arts, dance arts and healing arts. Martha's dance career has spanned 15 years, several continents and numerous productions including performances with the Judy Jarvis Dance & Theatre Company and Claudia Moore's Moon-Horse Dance Theatre. She now teaches in Toronto.

Watts, Chris (BSc Vanier) is an ESL

teacher. He married his wife Kathy in July 2011.

1993

Lee, Irene (BEd) started a free education website featured by the Wall Street Executive Library. She also volunteers as a webmaster in the Mississauga area, supporting Seniors Activities at a Glance and Dr. Peter W. Kujtan's Medical Matters.

1995

Lucier, Marianne (BA Spec. Hons. Glendon) earned her TESL Canada certification and went on to teach undergraduate English to speakers of other languages.

1998

Chan, Bonnie (BA Calumet) works with the Co-operators insurance company, and recently became an

agent serving clients in the Kennedy and Huntingwood area with offices located in Scarborough.

2000

Kohli, Vikas (MBA Schulich) has pursued a career in music and become an award-winning composer and music producer. Recently, he scored the music to director Samuel Kiehoon Lee's film *Wild Goose Daddy*, which was performed by 28 classically trained musicians and recorded live in CBC's Glenn Gould Studio. He is the first composer to receive the Reel-World Film Festival's Trailblazer Award and the first composer to receive a Voice Achievers Award. He has also received a MARTY award from the Mississauga Arts Council. He now lives in Mississauga, Canada.

Ng, Stanley (BBA Schulich) earned his Certified Management Accountant



WHY I GIVE TO YORK

Heather Marr (BA '08) was an active member of York's student community, winning sports medals and leading initiatives that enhanced student life. She was able to get involved at York thanks to generous funding from the Virginia Rock Award, established in honour of York's first Master of Stong College.

Marr's inspiring leadership roles at York and now, as an educator, demonstrate the impact donors can have when they support education at York.

Heather Marr now teaches Physical Education, Health and Careers at Fort Nelson Secondary School in B.C.



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Class Notes

(CMA) designation after graduation and returned to Hong Kong to work in his family's business. In 2011, he was elected national president of Junior Chamber International Hong Kong, an NGO that is focused on empowering young people to create positive change through community development, international exchange, leadership development and networking.

2001

Kowalski, Mitchell (LLM Osgoode) recently wrote *Avoiding Extinction: Reimagining Legal Services for the 21st Century*, published by the American Bar Association.

2002

Kung, Grace (BFA Spec. Hons. McLaughlin) was nominated in the Best Actress category for her role as

JoJo Kwan on the television show "InSecurity" at the 2011 Gemini Awards. She has appeared as a guest on "George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight", and is also known for her work on "Slings and Arrows" and in Sarah Polley's movie *Away from Her*. She is currently pursuing her studies in natural medicine in London, England.

2005

Dougan, Kwame (BA Hons. Founders) founded Urban Legal Planners and joined the litigation department at international law firm Shearman & Sterling LLP.

2008

Farooqi, Naeem (BBA Spec. Hons. Schulich) won the 2012 President's Award presented by the Supply Chain & Logistics Association of Canada.



1970: Don Cole

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GIVING

Will Power

When it comes to giving back, Terrie-Lynne Devonish takes the fast-track

At 36, the Glendon and Osgoode Hall alumna was named chief counsel at Aon Canada Inc., one of the largest firms in the world providing risk management services, insurance brokerage and management consulting. In 2005, she was elected to York's Board of Governors, and in 2007 was recognized as one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40.

When it comes to philanthropy, Terrie-Lynne Devonish favours a similar fast-track approach. "It's never too late or too early to think about how you can help," she says. "Even if you're just starting out and have little to give, it's important to keep a philanthropic mindset."

For her part, Devonish was motivated to give back to the institution that played an important role in her success – York University. In 2008, she generously made a planned gift to York in the form of a bequest, in addition to her other contributions.

"People talk about giving near the end of their lives, but I believe generosity is a starting point, not an ending."

For those who have the desire but not the means to make a large gift to a charity they care about, a planned gift such as a bequest is an effective way to ensure a meaningful contribution that will have an impact in the future. Donors can also benefit from a greater range of choice and flexibility in the management of gifts, along with significant tax advantages for their estate.

Other types of planned gifts include



WILL TO GIVE:

Terrie-Lynne Devonish (BA '92, LLB '95) on the philanthropic mindset

life insurance policies, retirement plan accumulations, stocks and securities, and gifts-in-kind. Each of these plays an important role in ensuring the long-term growth of the University and our ability to meet the needs of our students and community. During the highly successful York to the Power of 50 fundraising campaign, for instance, an estimated \$10 million was raised through planned gifts.

In recognition of the many generous

donors like Devonish, who have committed to support York through a planned gift, the University is launching the White Rose Legacy Circle. Named for the White Rose of York, symbolically planted on Keele campus in 1961, the Circle is a recognition society exclusive to alumni, faculty, staff and friends who have made a planned gift to York.

Stay tuned for details on an inaugural event planned for 2012. ■



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