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Tough Love

Zola Jeffers helps steer girls away from gangs and drugs

PLUS

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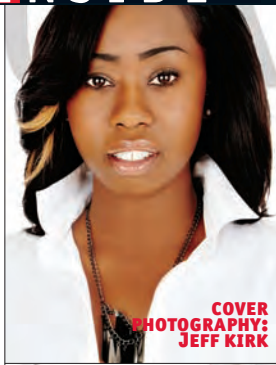
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It's all here. BY BERTON WOODWARD

Arc of life

The *News of the World*, the literally scandalous British Sunday newspaper that Rupert Murdoch shut down this summer, used to carry a slogan on its front page that I wish every media outlet could claim: “All of Human Life is Here”. Of course, it was never true for the *NOTW*, which covered only the dark and racy sides of life. But I’d like to make a case for our own *YorkU* magazine. Think about it: we publish a lot of information about research into babies, children, teens and adults, not to mention, just this past year, religion, robots, finance, perfectionism, tigers, dance, mosquitoes, medieval art, talking, grieving, copying, texting and much more. And that doesn’t count the lives of our grads, who are into everything from heavy metal music to running the police. Or being John Tory.

We have no babies in this issue, but we have a recent grad on our cover and a student with amazing card skills inside. We also have profs talking about pain and about cannibalism, a TV chef who loves Italy, an expert on formal wear, a sports star... Hey, all of human life is here.

And, in the end, we include the sad part. The In Memoriam section of Class Notes this issue records two Jacks that York has lost. The entire country mourned Jack Layton (MA ’72, PhD ’83), and we offer poignant York memories of him – and by him – on page 16. For the other Jack, it’s fitting that the opening photo spread of Universe features a student of the 1960s at the Glendon campus. That, of course, is



where York truly started and it’s where a dapper historian named Jack Saywell arrived at the invitation of York’s founding president, Murray Ross, and in 1964 became dean of Arts and Science.

It has often been said that York is “the house that Jack built”. Saywell was a critical figure in York’s history, both in his achievements as dean and as a scholar, and in his vision for the University. He was even shortlisted to become Ross’s successor in 1970. But his real accomplishments are the fabled departments he moulded in those early years – not least the Political Science Department that attracted Jack Layton.

As for *YorkU*, I can’t leave this discussion of life and accomplishment without noting that our staff won the silver award for best staff writing earlier this year from the Washington-based Council for Advancement and Support of Education (District II) and a gold award for best photograph (“Gravy Train”, showing Rocky Mountaineer CEO Randy Powell, in the Summer 2010 issue) from the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education. Remember, you can see our current and back issues at yorku.ca/yorku, including on your iPad. *YorkU*, we hope, will live forever. ■

YORKU

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York is expanding its engineering and business schools. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

A Time to Build

As we begin a new academic year, I would first like to extend a warm welcome to our students, staff and faculty. I hope that all of you enjoyed the summer, and are eager and ready for the months ahead. Having recently been renewed for a second term as York University's president, I am delighted with the support and really looking forward to continuing to serve the York community.

Since its founding, our University has built a strong reputation, both here and abroad, for our leading faculty, our ability to attract the best and the brightest students, our alumni who are making a difference, and the quality of our academic programs. Our success also comes from our capacity to evolve and grow to meet the needs of our community, which is why this past June was a fantastic month for us. Not only did the subway construction officially start, but we announced the expansion of our science and engineering program at our Keele campus, and we signed an agreement to build a Schulich campus in

A state-of-the-art facility

Hyderabad, India.

On June 20, the Ontario government announced a \$50-million capital investment for a new engineering building. This is one of the largest expansions in our University's 52-year history, and the largest single capital investment from the provincial government for a new facility at York. This investment will allow us to expand our engineering program from a high-quality suite of engineering streams in computer science, geomatics and space (our space engineering stream is the only undergraduate program of its kind in Canada, with a unique research relationship with the Canadian Space Agency and the National Aeronautics & Space Administration in the US) to a more comprehensive School of Engineering.

The engineering school is a longtime aspiration and goal for York that can be traced back to its founding, and more recently to our University Academic Plan and the White Paper. Once built, this state-of-the-art facility will cater to the science and



technology research needs of our community, and meet the demand for engineers in Ontario's growing knowledge-based economy. Building on our strengths in the humanities, social sciences, business and the arts, this initiative will allow us to train our future innovators with a broad education and an awareness of the issues of sustainability and social responsibility.

Equally exciting was the signing of an official agreement between our Schulich School of Business and India's GMR Group, one of the world's leading infrastructure developers, to build a Schulich campus in Hyderabad, India. Scheduled to open in September 2013, Schulich's GMR

campus will operate as a seamless extension of Schulich's main campus in Toronto, ensuring the same high-quality programs, faculty and students (see page 20). This will be the first full-fledged campus of a major, top-ranked international business school in India. With the opening of the GMR campus, Schulich will also become one of the world's few truly transnational business schools.

These events prove once again that York is a fantastic community – one where we take pride in what we have accomplished together. Over the years, York has continued to transform and evolve while becoming one of Canada's leading universities. I am honoured to be associated with this great institution, and am really looking forward to seeing you around our campuses. ■

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

UNIVERSE



Head Trip

Inside the minds of Glendon's class of '67

For York sociology Professor Paul Grayson, it was like discovering a gold mine – not of precious metal, but of information. Grayson was the beneficiary of a large donation of questionnaires, tests and psychological surveys completed by students from Glendon's first graduating class as a college in 1967. Grayson says the documents are the only source of such information on Canadian students from this time, offering a unique glimpse into attitudes of the mid-1960s.

Much of the material shows the need to qualify some commonly accepted assumptions. In his paper, "The Experiences and Expectations of Canadian Female Students in the Dawn of the Age of Aquarius", Grayson says while no systematic record is available of female Canadian university students' experiences of that era, some Canadian feminist scholars contend that women faced a less-than-friendly academic environment.

"The complaints were that the curriculum was androcentric, same-sex role models were largely unavailable and female students did not receive encouragement to go to graduate school. This was not completely true for female students attending Glendon," says Grayson. "It wasn't a completely chilly climate."

Curriculum was largely androcentric and male faculty did outnumber female, but female students reported they received more support academically than their male peers. Females also said they enjoyed the respect of their male peers. Interestingly, a majority of Glendon females reported they expected to attend graduate school (this was not the norm at the time), and that they intended to have careers even if they had to take time out for children.

It was also clear to Glendon's female students that they were at a disadvantage entering the labour force. "Even just after graduation, their earnings were lower than the male cohort," says Grayson. "They expected this wage differential to extend well into the future before it was rectified. History proved them correct." ■

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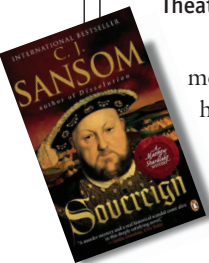
BOOKS

What They're Reading

York people reveal what's on the bedside table

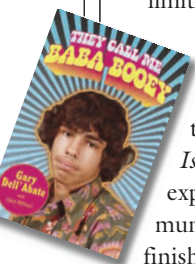
Elizabeth Asselstine
Theatre professor

"I like my history light. Give me a novel where someone else has slogged through the ancient tomes and primary references and painted with words the society, the mannerisms, the art, architecture and concerns of the time. I am just finishing a trilogy by C.J. Sansom, whose main character is the hunch-backed lawyer Matthew Shardlake. To me, the environment is the important part of these mysteries. They take place during the dissolution of the monasteries, giving you a vivid picture of the destruction of human lives, the demolition of a social support system supported by the church and the real autocratic tyrant who was Henry the Eighth. And, of course, there is a great story to wrap it up in."



Jennifer Taylor
PhD candidate, ethnomusicology

"Because I tend to have a hard time limiting myself to just 30 minutes or a chapter, I have done most of my fiction reading over the past few years while on vacation. Most recently I read *Small Island* by Andrea Levy, which explores England's Jamaican community during the 1940s. I also just finished reading *They Call Me Baba Booy*, an autobiography of Gary Dell'Abate, executive producer for satellite radio's "The Howard Stern Show". The book had actually been sitting on my husband's bedside table, as he is an avid Stern listener. I'm not a fan myself, but it was an interesting read and shed new light on the show."



PSYCHOLOGY

Trauma Centre

A new blog gives reliable information about a difficult topic

Yale law Professor Amy Chua, controversial author of the recent book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, celebrating extreme parenting (e.g., call your kids "garbage" as a way of motivating them), might benefit from reading York University's new "trauma blog", a.k.a. The Trauma and Attachment Report.

Chua's opinions on child rearing, although partly satirical, are a good example of the kind of writing that flies in the face of clinically proven child intervention techniques, says Robert Muller, a psychology professor in York's Faculty of Health. Following Chua's advice in raising children, Muller says, would likely lead to serious trauma and attachment issues down the line. But her book, he notes, is only one of many examples of bombastic and often ill-informed opinion masquerading as expertise in the media and on the web. Muller offers his blog as a thoughtful antidote.

"I'm hoping our weekly trauma blog – written entirely by students doing research in York's Trauma and Attachment Lab – will become the go-to source for legitimate information on how people can cope with traumatic events," says Muller, the blog's creator. "Our metrics already point that way."

Muller's trauma blog deals with topics around trauma and attachment issues, including their causes and consequences, as well as prevention and treatment. Posts in recent months have dealt with such subjects as elder abuse, hoarding, brain injury and crisis lines, often in Q&A format. In one such interview, a young woman talked about using painting to deal with the trauma caused by unrealistic and demanding parents.

The Trauma and Attachment Report also features subject tabs for book reviews, events, research and therapy. Readers can follow the blog at trauma.blog.yorku.ca or via Twitter and Facebook. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY KATY HA



Thrill Bill

A grad's virtual lab revitalizes Shakespeare

Aside from taking your class to Stratford on an expensive field trip, what do you do if you're a teacher trying to inculcate a love of the Bard? Take 'em to York grad Michael Kelly's website – the Shakespeare in Action Virtual Lab – that's what.

Kelly is a Toronto-based thespian, York theatre faculty member and York grad (MFA '95). He has taught master classes at Stratford (Ont.) and founded the non-profit organization Shakespeare in Action (SIA) in order to expose young actors to the plays. He says many teachers he talks to feel out of their league when teaching the Bard.

The website (lab.shakespeareinaction.org), which was launched in November 2010, offers new ways for teachers and students to get down and interactive with Will himself. Students can try the Shakespeare interactive video-karaoke scenes to see how they fare playing roles from *Othello* or *Romeo and Juliet*, play "mad lib"-style word games by inserting new verbs and nouns into classical dialogue, and even practise Shakespearean insults.

"SIA is dedicated to engaging kids and teens, their parents, and teachers with a myriad program including performances, festivals, summer camps and even a Shakespeare Fight Club," says Kelly. "Our mission is to make Shakespeare more accessible to young audiences and to remove the biggest barrier of all – cost." Best part? Students and teachers can register free for the site. ■

DANCE

Vertically Challenged

A York researcher raises the bar on pole dancing

Dance major and graduate student Claudia Aguirre is tackling a subject for her thesis few people would likely wrestle with in these politically correct times. She's hoping to prove that pole dancing can be more than a strip club sideshow or workout routine, and instead merit inclusion in the dance canon as a legitimate art form.

Aguirre comes to the art of pole dancing from her formal training in flamenco. The Spanish art form – especially the vocals – made her attuned to the qualities of tragedy and catharsis, which, she says, are also qualities of pole dancing. "People are skeptical about pole dancing as 'legitimate' art, but I'm interested in exploring the role and impact pole dancing can have in non-conventional performance spaces and contexts," she says.

Competition from the Internet has significantly reduced the audience for erotic dancing, says Aguirre. But it's in no danger of becoming a lost art, because "poling" has moved beyond the strip club mainstay to become a way of staying fit. It's even a part of more mainstream entertainment, such as Cirque de Soleil's show *Zumanity*.

Aguirre is talking to "polers" and their audiences both in erotic clubs and at competitions where world-class artistes show off their routines. As well, she's working on her own style of pole-dance choreography and technique (she bought a pole last year). Being a pole dancer herself also helps her in creating an index of pole dance vocabulary, much like the Laban movement system, she says. "My real goal is to make the stories of pole-dancing practitioners – instructors, entrepreneurs, pole dance champions and sex-trade workers – heard in academia. At the moment it's a marginalized dance form, but that doesn't mean it's not art." ■



As long ago as the late 19th century, psychologists like Hermann Ebbinghaus had discovered that trying to learn a large quantity of factual material – in his case, lists of nonsense syllables – was made easier by spacing out study sessions rather than trying to cram everything into one session. Yet, despite our knowledge of the “spacing effect” on memory retention, little is understood about how it might apply in educational settings, says Nicholas Cepeda, psychology professor in York’s Faculty of Health.

Cepeda was recently awarded a \$100,777 grant from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation to buy equipment that will allow him to measure electrical activity in the brains of children when they learn something for the first time and compare it to when they study it again several months later. Cepeda says the brain’s electrical response is a clue to whether items are well, or faintly, remembered. Using this brain response, the process of learning and remembering can be better understood.

“We simply don’t know how the spacing effect unfolds over significant periods of time, like days, weeks or months, rather than just a few minutes,” he says. To provide guidance to teachers, he has run classroom studies that require people to remember material over long periods, such as a school break. These studies show that core material and skills should be re-taught or re-tested after several weeks of working on other material. Says Cepeda, “The goal of my research is to give teachers some simple recommendations that can help students learn more efficiently and retain facts and problem-solving skills longer.” ■



Total Recall

Remembering made easy



The commonly accepted belief that Thomas Crapper invented the first flush toilet is, well, a load of crap. “Crapper refined the design. But the first flush toilet was invented for Queen Elizabeth I by her godson, Sir John Harington,” says Sheila Cavanagh, a sociology professor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies and York’s Sexuality Studies Program coordinator. She is also an expert on the history and lore of the public washroom.

Cavanagh’s new book, *Queering Bathrooms: Gender, Sexuality and the Hygienic Imagination*, explores the gendered nature of public washrooms, which has become a source of anxiety and political controversy in recent years. “The first gender-segregated bathroom appeared in 1739 in Paris for a ball. Historically it was more likely that excretion was a communal event,” notes Cavanagh, who mixes theories from queer and trans studies, psychoanalysis and philosopher Michel Foucault to argue that the cultural politics of excretion are intimately related to the regulation of gender and sexuality.

Her new volume is based on 100 interviews with LGBTQ folks in major North American cities. Cavanagh delves into the ways that queer and trans communities challenge the rigid gendering and “heteronormative composition of public washrooms”.

“It’s true that the subject of toilets isn’t your typical scholarly subject,” says Cavanagh, who offers suggestions for trans-positive public bathroom designs, and who has written a play based on the gender and sexual politics revealed in the book – called *The Queer Bathroom Monologues* – staged at the Toronto Fringe Festival this summer. “But it forms a crucial part of our modern understanding of sex and gender.” ■

ILLUSTRATION BY KATY HA



ENVIRONMENT

Green by Nature

York is taking great strides with a smaller footprint

From an inter-residence competition among students to reduce their energy footprint to promoting cage-free eggs in cafeterias, York is making great strides in creating a campus that's as friendly as it is eco-conscious.

This spring York students completed their third annual "Res Race to Zero", which challenged those living in residence to cut their energy consumption from March 1 to 28. Glendon College's Wood Residence students were champions and reduced their energy consumption by 13.4 per cent over last year. Meanwhile Calumet Residence reduced its energy consumption by 17 per cent during Earth Hour this year (compare to the City of Toronto, which only reduced its energy use by five per cent).

In the first seven months of the University's new "ZeroWaste" program (June to December 2010), York reduced the amount of garbage it sent to landfills by 16 per cent against the same period in 2009. Mixed paper products sent for recycling declined by 33 per cent – meaning less paper used – while York increased its bins for recycling batteries and ink cartridges to 23 from nine. York also recycles electronic waste (from computers to blenders) through York's e-waste program. None of York's e-waste is exported outside the province and the companies York uses guarantee that a minimum of 85 per cent of the components are recycled.

When it comes to animal welfare, York is no chicken either. The University's cafeterias now serve cage-free eggs in an attempt to make these food outlets a little more animal friendly. An estimated 150,000 to 200,000 eggs at York and program companion Humber College will now come from hens that have freedom to move, nest and stretch their wings.

Finally, York came in third worldwide in a global ranking of campus sustainability by the University of Indonesia this year, and it received a B+ on the College Sustainability Report Card in 2010 – earning York a rank of second place among Canadian universities out of 322 Canadian and US universities surveyed. ■

Tough Love

Zola Jeffers helps steer young women away from gangs, drugs and crime.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

JUST BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY, social worker Zola Jeffers had this text message exchange with one of her young female clients:

Client: "Zola tell your mom I said happy mother's day and I appreciate her giving us a talented daughter like you to help us out with our problems and be there for us."

Zola: "Omg u made me cry."

Client: "Looool don't cry like a bitch and happy mother's day to you to even though your not a mother your mine to"

Zola: "And don't use that nasty language I will slap u"

Client: "Lol"

Zola: "I love u and I am always here...Now and always"

Client: "Looool ok I won't and I love you tooo"

I am always here.

That is the truth. Day and night, seven days a week, sometimes long after a program ends or a case file is closed, this York grad promises to answer her phone. A caseworker for at-risk youth in Toronto's Jane-Finch neighbourhood, she's jumped out of bed at 2am to rescue clients in trouble. "Someone dropped the ball somewhere in their lives." And she's going to pick it up. She's attended their baby showers, their grandparents' birthday parties. "I'm like an on-call doctor. It's crazy, crazy. But that's where their successes come from."

Jeffers (BA '07) will do anything to make sure her clients – mainly teenage girls – break out of the vortex that sucks them into anti-social, self-destructive behaviour. "In the real world, there is no hand holding. But I do coddle them. I don't apologize for that because a lot of them haven't been coddled. I tell them, 'I love you. You're beautiful.' I hand hold, but I also push."



Though raised in the same neighbourhood, the daughter of hard-working Trinidadian immigrants never mixed with gangs. “I grew up in a normal, middle-class family without drama, with stability. That doesn’t mean I can’t help. If a client says to me, ‘You don’t know what it’s like, miss,’ I say, ‘You’re right, I don’t know. But where is it you want to be? I am the expert on where you want to be.’”

Jeffers is team lead of a new gang-prevention program called Prevention Intervention Toronto (P.I.T.). Funded by the City of Toronto and administered by Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), this trailblazing \$5-million, three-year program was launched last fall in three of Toronto’s “priority” neighbourhoods. Delivered in nine-month intervals, it aims to steer young people aged 13 to 24 away from the anti-social behaviour that can lead to gangs, drugs and crime. And it’s not just for boys. “I made an effort to get females into the program as well,” says Jeffers, who helped develop the curriculum. Girls, she says, tend to be “vicariously involved” with gangs as sisters and girlfriends. They are less into serious criminal activity like robberies, but they may hide weapons, get into fights or use drugs.

Participants – often in trouble at home, at school or with the law – meet for three hours a day, three days a week, for 20 behaviour-modifying weeks. They practise ways to manage anger and emotions, listen and communicate, set goals and solve problems, prevent violence and make peace. They explore issues of race, class and gender, and learn how to build a support network, avoid risky behaviour, make healthy choices and manage their finances. Then they get a helping hand to go back to school, get skills training, plan careers and find jobs.

“We’re not a gang-exit program. We’re about harm reduction,” says Jeffers. “It’s never saying: ‘you need to get rid of your friends.’ Cold turkey doesn’t work. We always start from where they are. We contextualize.”

Jeffers not only oversees the project, she teaches and mentors participants. Two of her three weekly classes are female-only, while the third is a mix “to teach them to deal with the opposite sex.” Classes can get pretty intense. From the start, Jeffers insists on respect and civility, even old-fashioned chivalry from her “ladies and gentlemen”. She chides them for cursing and makes them greet everybody upon entering the room. “As I encourage my young men to treat you all like queens,” the avowed third-wave feminist will tell young women, “I encourage my young women to treat the young men as kings also.”

“We teach them how to be cordial and not get angry in a space where everyone is violent,” says Jeffers. “We tell them: ‘this is how you’re going to make it so that that [gang life] doesn’t become your story.’” Even “hard core” girls whose attendance is spotty always seem to find their way back and

even refer friends – highly unusual and a measure of the trust they feel for Jeffers and her colleagues.

At 28, Jeffers could pass as one of her own clients. Stylish, gregarious, she’s like a big sister – bossy but caring. As a social worker, she exudes an aura of safety and calm, and her biggest thrill comes when they confide in her. “I’m so humbled that they come to me in their neediest time.” She tells them, “I will always be there to help. But I let them know I never work harder than them because that’s not the formula. They need to understand that their success lies in their hands.”

Her ease with young people comes, in part, from growing up with four brothers. She easily held her own in a testosterone-filled house – and reaped the rewards of being the only sister. “They treated me like a princess.” But she’s also been working with youth for 13 years. She started at 15, as a counsellor at a summer day camp in Regent Park, where her mother – Jeffers’ greatest inspiration – was a devoted social worker. At 16, she was volunteering at a women’s shelter; at 17, she was coordinating an HIV-prevention program for girls – and juggling jobs at Ikea and McDonald’s. She couldn’t have done it all without a mother who drove her everywhere. “I had a huge, crazy, beautiful support system. My parents’ work ethic is my template.”

Along the way, she had great mentors – a camp director who saw her leadership potential, a high school teacher who turned her on to African-American novelist Bebe Campbell. The first in her immediate family to attend university, Jeffers enrolled in sociology at York, keen to explore “why we do what we do.” She took law & society courses, imagining a future defending the downtrodden and wrongly accused. When she graduated in 2007, she also held an advanced certificate in women’s studies.

Within months, the United Way offered her social work training at its Creative Institute for Toronto’s Young Leaders (CITY Leaders). She worked on a safe-schools project, then landed a job with JVS’s YouthReach program as an employment counsellor working with youth in conflict with the law. The glacial pace of the legal system lost all appeal for this young crusader, impatient for a better world. Social work offered more immediate, gratifying rewards. When JVS won the city contract to pilot the P.I.T. gang-prevention program, Jeffers leapt at the chance to coordinate it.

Suddenly, she’s in demand to speak about best practices at conferences on crime prevention in Mexico and Canada. “This year has been crazy,” says Jeffers, who also volunteers on countless committees at schools and youth agencies.

Next year, she plans to go back to school to do a master’s degree in social work, criminology or social policy. She’s worked in the trenches, seen the issues on the ground and wants to move into management and drafting policy. “It’s time to start making changes at the top.” ■

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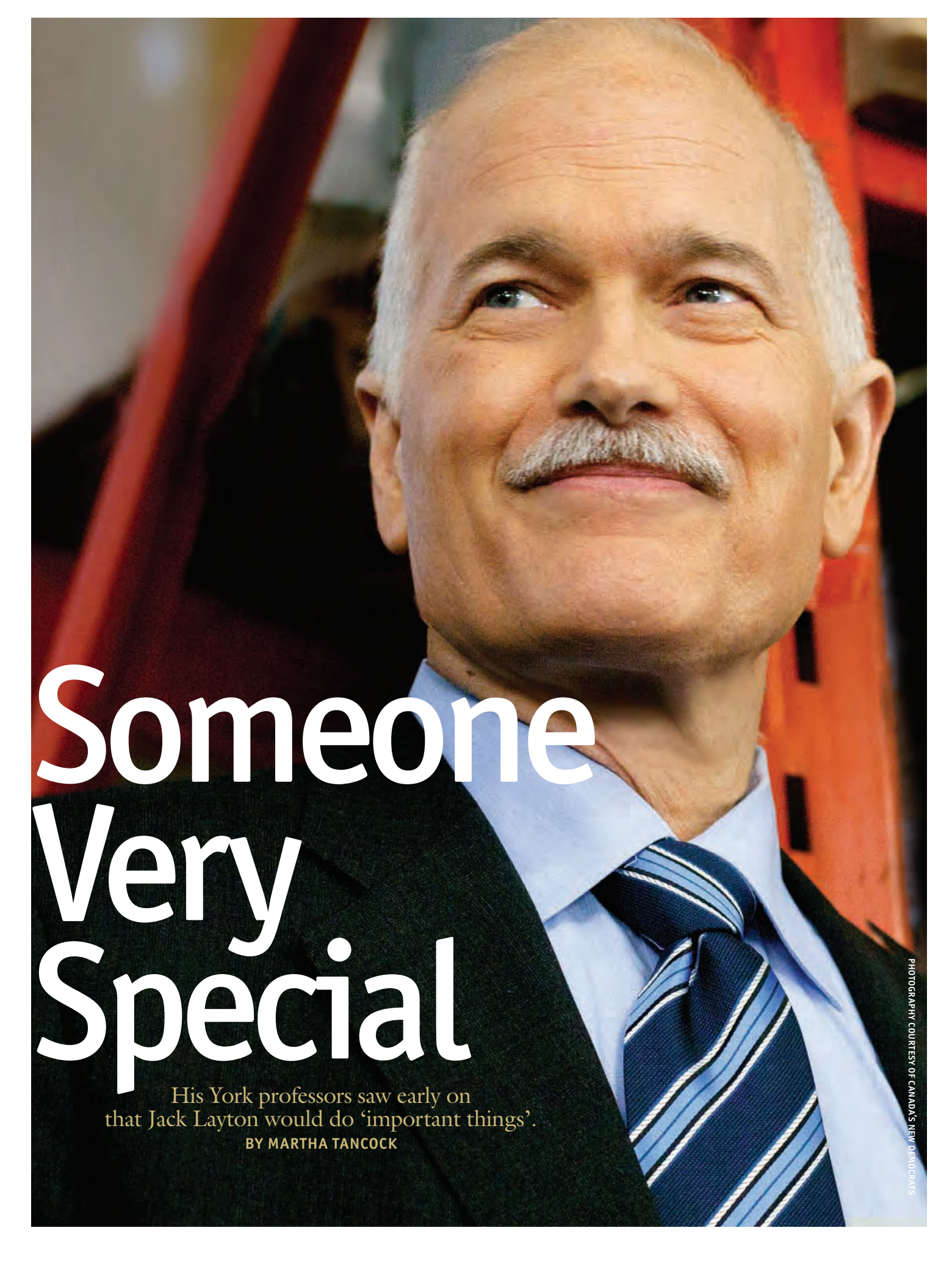
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Someone Very Special

His York professors saw early on that Jack Layton would do 'important things'.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

ON MAY 2, JACK LAYTON and Canada's New Democrats won most of the seats in Quebec, decimated the Bloc Québécois and edged out the Liberals to become the nation's official opposition. It was a stunning, historic shift in Canadian politics. On Aug. 22, only three-and-a-half months later, Canadians were mourning the untimely death, at 61, of an inspirational politician and one of York's most distinguished graduates.

That Layton (MA '72, PhD '83) took the leftist, perennially also-ran New Democratic Party to unprecedented heights came as no surprise to three of his York professors. Jim Laxer, Daniel Drache and David Bell, who taught and mentored Layton 40 years ago, sensed the fire in his belly and his potential. Bright, curious and unfashionably optimistic, the graduate student in political science exhibited an early knack for consensus-building and a passion for social justice. "When he walked into a room you immediately saw the tremendous intelligence of this person," says Laxer. "He was also a guy who loved to meet people and respected other people. I knew as soon as I met him that he was someone very special and that he would do important things."

Layton grew up privileged in tony Hudson, Que., the son of a Conservative MP who served in Brian Mulroney's cabinet. How did he end up on the political left? "I've always been on the left," he told York's *Universe* magazine, a monthly published at the time, in a 2003 interview following his election as leader of the federal NDP. Growing up in a small town, "I could see French kids treated in discriminatory ways. And I got involved through church and youth parliament in issues like apartheid, social justice, Medicare, the war in Vietnam." His awareness of social inequities intensified at McGill University: "There was a gross distortion of wealth that struck me as so wrong."

At McGill, an intellectually thirsty Layton took every course offered by renowned political philosopher Charles Taylor until his mentor finally pointed him towards York, and some cracker-jack political theorists – Bell (his dissertation adviser and mentor), Drache, Laxer, Fred Fletcher (his dissertation chair) and David Shugarman. Layton seemed destined for academia – until he helped his urban politics prof run for a seat on Toronto city council. "Mike Goldrick shaped my whole life," remembered Layton. "He introduced me to the municipal world. York became my entrée into what became my career."

A decade later, Layton leapt into municipal politics himself. The father of two young children had been lecturing in urban studies at Ryerson Polytechnic while completing his PhD at

York. In 1982, a year before he defended his dissertation, the 32-year-old won Ward 6 on the hot-button issue of rent control. For the next 20 years, Layton earned a reputation as a leftist firebrand, advocating for the homeless, the poor, new immigrants, abused women, gays and lesbians – and bicyclists. He pushed for affordable housing, started the White Ribbon Campaign to end violence against women and was an early champion of environmental sustainability. As president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in 2000, he brokered the deal allotting communities across the country a share of the federal gas tax to support public transit.

"Jack was a fighter for a whole lot of causes," remembers Laxer. "He was the kind of guy who had huge optimism and didn't have any use for fashionable pessimism. He had conviction that one could make a difference and change things. And he had huge energy and huge intelligence. You saw it in his fights at city hall, in his bids for federal office and in his run for mayor." He never gave up.

"What's most important is to get out and work on issues affecting people and to become totally engaged in your community," Layton told *Universe* in 2003. "That's the best route and the most legitimate route to becoming involved in politics. Some people go the other route and get law degrees, make connections with the rich and powerful. I prefer the [first] route."

"Jack came across as a principled leader, a rarity in today's rough and tumble world of parliamentary politics," says Drache. "People esteemed Jack in a way they esteemed Ed Broadbent, Pierre Trudeau and Tommy Douglas. His ability to speak in plain language about big and small ideas made him a formidable campaigner. And his sense of social justice became the beacon that guided all he did. He won the hearts and minds of Canadians and could have been Canada's prime minister."

Bell and Laxer think so, too. "This was a guy who took things that looked impossible and accomplished them," says Bell, retired dean of York's Faculty of Environmental Studies and a lifelong friend. "I'm convinced that his next step would have been moving into 24 Sussex." There he would surely have crafted a national sustainability agenda, Bell says. "That's the kind of political leadership we need for this century if we're going to even get into the next century. That's the real loss. People are just starting to get that."

"Jack should have been opening the chapter that was the pinnacle of his career," says Laxer. "His breakthrough in Quebec was historic and has changed the country. What we have to do now is take his qualities of optimism and courage to heart." ■

Allan Hutchinson talks about his love of the law, Plato as footballer and the academic title of the year: *Is Eating People Wrong?*

BY MICHAEL TODD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

ON PAPER, he's Allan C. Hutchinson, Fellow of the Royal Society, Distinguished Research Professor at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, author of 60-plus articles and papers, and interim dean of York's Faculty of Graduate Studies. But he likes to sign his e-mails, simply, "Hutch". A small point, but not insignificant for a man who, despite many honours as both a practitioner of and thinker about the law, prefers a more basic approach grounded in his northern English roots.

"You've seen 'Coronation Street'? Well, that's me. I'm from there, just a couple streets over," he says in his Manchester accent. "My father was a bus mechanic and my mum was a clerical worker," adds Hutchinson, who has been getting some upscale attention lately for his book, *Is Eating People Wrong? Great Legal Cases and How They Shaped the World*, an entertaining examination of decisions that advanced English common law.

"My roots were definitely working class. 'Coronation Street', like Manchester itself, has changed since those days in the Seventies, but then it definitely had a kind of drab, gritty realism. It was a pretty accurate reflection of life. I'm sure that informed how I looked at the world. John Lennon showed you could become a world class hero, but still talk like the place you came from and not forget who you were. That was a big thing."

Although Hutchinson, an Osgoode professor since 1982, did well in school, he didn't have any particular commitment to law as such. In fact, he was something of a star footballer. "I actually had the chance to go professional, but I made the decision at 18 to go to university," he says. "But I still love the game. I even wrote a book called *If Plato Had Played Football* about how it might have affected his ideas." Hutchinson says football is as good a place as any (and probably better than most) to look to address the questions that first got Plato and Aristotle going – i.e., "What is the right way to conduct our lives?"

Though he realized early on he was ambitious, he decided he wanted to channel his drive and quest for recognition toward the realm of ideas and writing rather than, perhaps, a highly remunerative career practising law on Bay Street (he does help firms with such things as class-action suits). "I don't want this to sound holier than thou, it's just that I realized it

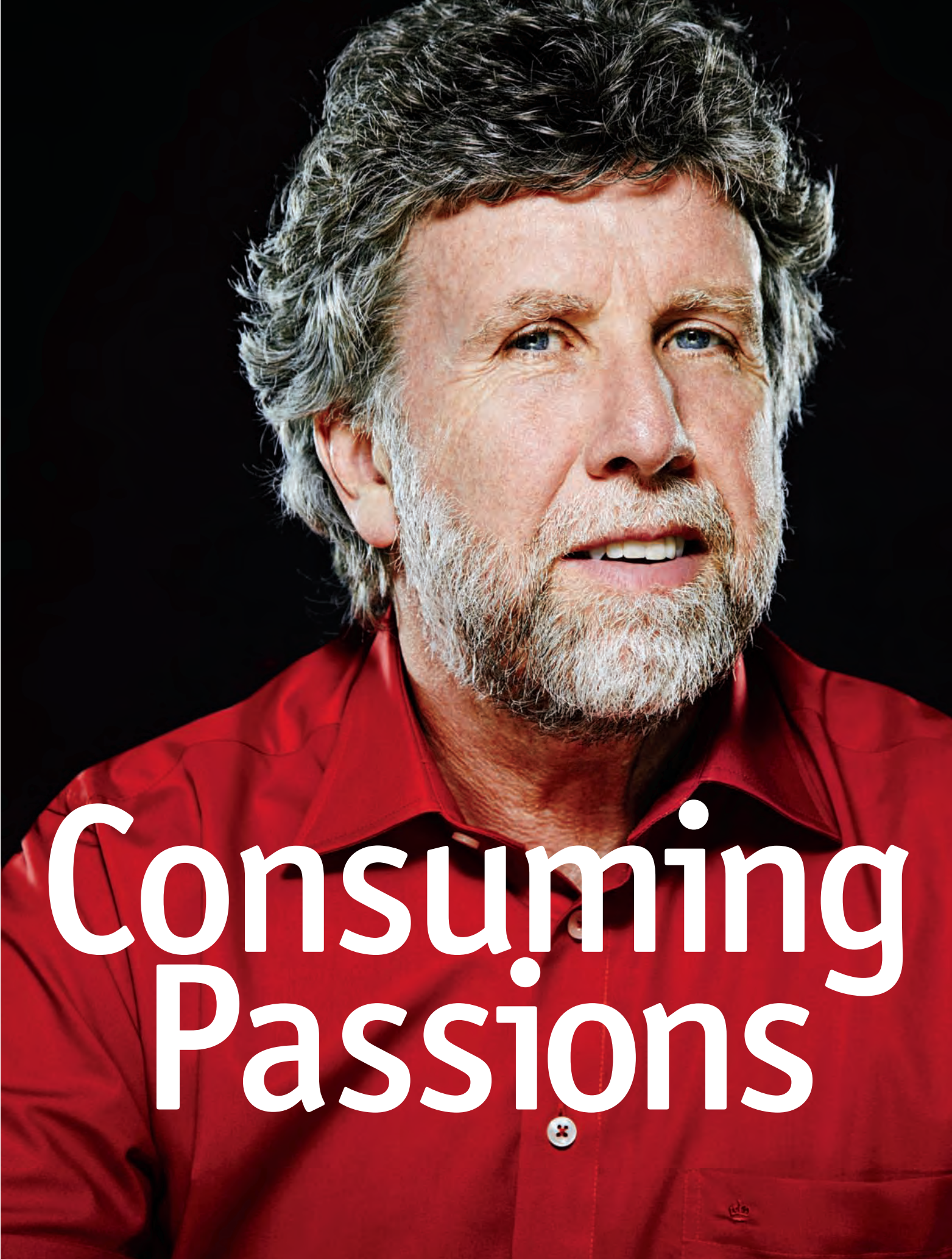
would be easy to end up justifying yourself to yourself and becoming a person I didn't want to become. The bottom line is, there are lots of ways you can do law. I consciously chose one where I could get paid to teach and think, still be involved in law in a way I wanted to be, and still write books."

Books that display a knack for titles. His latest, *Is Eating People Wrong?*, deals with the great cases – and judicial decisions – around which common law has developed during the last 150 years. The title refers to the infamous case of Victorian shipwrecked sailors who killed and consumed a comatose fellow strandeer in a situation they subsequently claimed was kill or starve. But in their trial, the judges ruled there could be no "necessity" defence for murder. Interestingly, the necessity defence has surfaced today in abortion issues and in questions about whether doctors could be charged with killing one conjoined twin to save the life of another.

Then there was the 1920s Scottish woman who found a snail in the bottom of her bottle of ginger beer and fell ill, thereby losing her health and months of wages. Her case was taken up by a local lawyer and proceeded to the highest levels of the English courts. Their eventual decision set long-lasting precedents around the law associated with product liability. Other cases in the book deal with the rule of law, school desegregation, suspects' rights, property rights, Aboriginal title and contract damages – all in a highly engaging, storytelling mode.

Hutchinson, whose interests include public law, legal theory and the legal profession in general, will tell you that law is all about stories, and not the dry as dust details people often associate with jurisprudence. His book is about ordinary folk whose stories influenced and shaped the law, he says. "Common law is really at heart messy, experimental, productive and tantalizing, like people themselves. Society's demands and conditions are always changing and the law must change with that. Great cases are a way to get a glimpse inside the often untidy workings of common law and debunk some myths along the way."

He has now written or edited 16 books on law and related matters, and recently completed another one dealing with great judges. "My purpose in all this is to show that while the law is all about power, it's also about people – and people are fallible. The law isn't, as Oliver Wendell Holmes once sarcastically said, 'a brooding omnipresence in the sky' – it's made by people and it can be no better or worse than the people behind it." ■



Consuming Passions

York goes even more global with the pioneering Schulich MBA in India.

BY DAVID FULLER ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD

THE FIRST THING that struck Nishith Parikh when he came to York University from Mumbai – India’s largest metropolis, with a population of more than 20 million – was how quiet it was at his new apartment in Assiniboine graduate residence. “For 10 minutes I didn’t see a person. I didn’t see anyone,” says the 27-year-old member of the first Schulich MBA in India class to arrive in Canada. “I am used to crowds.” The second thing Parikh marvelled at was being able to walk into York’s five-storey Scott Library, pick up a copy of *The Wall Street Journal* and log on to the Internet. The contrast with home, where many undergraduate students still go without such amenities, confirmed that his decision to do part of his graduate business degree in Canada made a lot of sense. It also makes plenty of sense for York as it spreads its reach across the globe.

News stories about India’s high economic growth rate and its market of 1.2 billion people are standard fare these days. For Dezső Horváth, dean of York’s Schulich School of Business, the numbers started adding up nearly a decade ago, as he looked for new international opportunities for a school that was already active in Eastern Europe, Russia, Asia and Latin America. After many visits and meetings with Indian business, education and government leaders, his efforts led to the creation of the Schulich MBA in India program, the first by a top-ranked school based outside India, which welcomed its first class in January 2010. Students spend their first year studying in Schulich-run courses in India, and their second, as Parikh has, at York’s Keele campus. The next step, for which ground broke in July, is to open a new, full-featured Schulich campus in India in 2013 – another first for a university outside of India.

Ashwin Joshi, executive director of the program, calculates that India’s blossoming economy needs 50,000 high-quality managers. The top 10 business schools in the country produce only 3,000 a year, creating a major opening for the world’s best to help fill the demand. Schulich decided that setting up shop in India, currently at the S.P. Jain Institute of Management & Research in Mumbai, was a good way to introduce candidates to the benefits of studying for a truly global MBA. Schulich faculty members take turns teaching courses in India each semester, and every week the school invites one CEO from a top international firm to speak to students. As Indian businesses become more globally engaged, argues Horvath, they will increasingly look for MBA graduates with internationally focused training. “Schulich has a global student body, global faculty and a global curriculum, and hence is ideally suited to meet India’s needs.”

Indeed, Parikh felt that his career in banking, first with JPMorgan Chase Bank and then with Citibank, needed the boost only an MBA can give, and he also wanted the international experience companies look for. He was attracted to the Schulich program because he could do his first year in India. “That was extremely important, because I left my job in December and started my MBA soon after in January, so I didn’t waste any time in between moving,” he says.

His fellow grad Kairvee Malik, a 27-year-old software engineer from Kharagpur, West Bengal, worked at WiPro, one of the world’s leading IT companies and one of India’s most successful multinationals. After leaving the IT world to work at a school for children with disabilities, she was inspired to pursue an MBA to further a new career in India’s non-profit sector, where competition for resources is fierce and still bedevilled by corrupt traditional practices. She wanted a school with courses in corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices – both key components of Schulich’s offerings.

Both students rave about the difference in learning styles between Schulich, where students work on field case studies and interact with professors freely, and India, where the traditional lecture format is the norm. “In India, you don’t get any opportunities like the one Schulich is providing,” says Malik. “So from day one, it has been pretty exciting.”

With their courses now completed, both intend to work in Canada for a few years before returning home, although many of their colleagues will find spots in companies around the globe. Parikh has already been offered a position with a major Canadian bank; Malik, who is married, plans to work in Canada while her husband pursues his MBA studies in Chicago. Eventually, they intend to return home to a country that is becoming a destination for career seekers from around the world.

“The balance of economic power is going east,” says Joshi, who lives in Mumbai and returns to Schulich for a week in each quarter. “The earlier we recognize this reality and learn to cope and thrive with it, the better off we will be.” Schulich underlined its commitment to that reality in June by signing an agreement to build its new campus in the south-central city of Hyderabad. Schulich’s partner is the global infrastructure company GMR Group, based in Bangalore and headed by G.M. Rao, who received a York honorary degree at Spring Convocation this year as the first Schulich MBA in India grads crossed the stage. The 15-acre campus will offer the two-year MBA program to 120 students, with more expansion planned. “It will make Schulich part of a truly transnational school that operates as a seamless extension and mirror image of Schulich’s main campus in Toronto,” says Horváth. A little bit of York on the other side of the world. ■

‘Exciting from Day One’

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE: Malik (left) and Parikh



A champion card manipulator makes all the right moves.

BY DAVID FULLER ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD

Extreme to th

AT 19, MAX VLASSENKO HAS achieved the new nirvana of notoriety: one of his videos has received more than a million hits on YouTube. The second-year York film production student didn't create the 30-second spot for cellphone maker Nokia, but you could say he had a hand in it. Vlassenko is an extreme card manipulator, whose dexterity and skill with a deck of playing cards made him a world champion at 16. When Nokia's agency saw his demonstration videos, they flew him to England to juggle their client's product on camera. Vlassenko flips, flops and twirls the phone through the air as upbeat music punctuates the highlight of each manoeuvre. The video – search “Nokia N8 Sneak Peek” – is definitely cool.

So how did a tall, athletic teenager from Thornhill, Ont., who plays basketball and does weightlifting, become so flash with a deck of cards? He saw a magic act on TV when he was 14 and briefly took up card tricks. He enjoyed the dexterity and practice it required, but was less impressed with the “trickery, gimmicks and fake decks.” Surfing the Internet, he discovered the world of “XCM” – extreme card manipulation. In no time he felt he was ready to enter the online world championship competition, which in 2007 he won, the youngest ever to do so. Since then he has made television guest appearances, done more commercials – for Cadbury, MTV and others – and produced instructional DVDs as one of the stable of artists at Handlordz.com, an XCM website run by the sport's founders. When he isn't walking around with a deck of cards in his hands – which is seldom – Vlassenko studies film location sound recording. ■

A young man with short brown hair, wearing a blue and white plaid button-down shirt and blue jeans, stands with his hands in his pockets against a dark brick wall. The ground in front of him is covered with scattered playing cards. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

e Max

Pain Killer

Leading researcher Joel Katz works on getting the ouch out.

BY MICHAEL TODD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK



NORTH AMERICANS DON'T DO PAIN WELL. When we're not talking about those flickering, pulsing, throbbing, torturing, miserable, intense, unbearable, wretched, tender, hot, sharp, numb, crushing, nagging and sometimes nauseating pains that afflict us, we're trying to find ways to assuage them. (The descriptive words here are taken from the McGill Pain Questionnaire, a scale known and used worldwide to rate pain.)

But pain has its positive side. It's there as a warning signal, and it helps us avoid potentially damaging situations. For instance, it can tell us to take things easy if we've got a sprained ankle, thereby avoiding further damage. Having no sense of pain is more dangerous than suffering from it.

Scientifically, pain is partly defined by the International Association for the Study of Pain as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage." Most times, small hurts resolve by themselves quickly as the body heals. But sometimes pain will persist even if the stimulus is removed or the injury has healed – for example, the brain will still perceive pain in a limb even when the limb is no longer there, a phenomenon known as post-amputation phantom limb pain. That is one of the continuing mysteries that interest leading pain researcher Joel Katz, York's Canada Research Chair in Health Psychology and a psychology professor in the Faculty of Health.

Katz's major accomplishments include using a preventive approach to advance the treatment of acute post-operative pain, and increasing our understanding of how to manage pain in newborn babies. Katz also discovered previously unrecognized gender differences in how males and females experience pain. He is currently coordinator of York's Health Psychology Graduate Diploma Program – the only program in Canada offering specialized training in health psychology leading to a diploma. He is also director of the Acute Pain Research Unit in the Department of Anesthesia and Pain Management at the Toronto General Hospital.

Interestingly, for a guy from Montreal who's devoted his academic life to relieving pain, Katz never received any anesthetic when he went to the dentist as a child. He just toughed it out. "It didn't seem like a big deal at the time. I didn't know any better," he says. "I just thought the care I was receiving was normal." (He now receives local anesthetic.)

Chronic pain is especially mysterious. Unless there is obvious tissue damage, doctors often can't use traditional diagnostic tools and have to rely on patient narrative, a state of affairs that in the past often led to the diagnosis, "It's all in your head." Even as little as 20 years ago, some chronic pains

were dismissed as purely psychological, notes Katz. Now the majority of physicians know better.

"Take the case of phantom limb pain, that almost every amputee experiences. Phantom limb pain shows how pain is a psychological experience rooted in brain mechanisms," he says. "A person who feels intense pain in her hand after an amputation clearly does not have pain in her hand; she has what we call referred pain."

Katz says the signals giving rise to pain are transmitted to central neural structures and up to the brain in such a way that the pain is experienced as if it were coming from the hand. In some instances, the pain may even represent the re-activation of a sensory memory-like mechanism in which the pain has become "imprinted" in the central nervous system. The problem that some patients face is their doctors do not believe that their pain is "real". "If you've ruled out every known medical cause for a person's pain," says Katz, "it is best to say 'we do not know enough about pain to identify the cause' rather than to say 'there is nothing wrong with you.' We simply do not know enough about the mechanisms that underlie chronic pain."

Katz, a prolific writer, has already published 135 papers in peer-reviewed journals, written one book and contributed 42 chapters to other books, as well as given 108 invited addresses at pain-related conferences. He says it took him time to find his passion, but in 1989 he completed his doctorate in clinical psychology at McGill, after taking some time off to work at the Montreal General Hospital Pain Centre. At McGill, he says, "I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to do my doctoral work with Dr. Ronald Melzack, a pioneer in the field of pain."

In 2002, he was invited to York to take up the newly created post of Canada Research Chair in Health Psychology. He has loved his time at York, he says, in terms of the research environment, his academic colleagues and, most of all, mentoring grad students in psychology and in kinesiology & health science.

There are many more intriguing questions to be investigated in the field of pain, says Katz. One of those is, "How can we prevent acute pain from becoming chronic pain? And, more specifically, how can we prevent it after surgery?" Another hot topic revolves around genetics and the challenging task of finding human pain genes for such a complex phenotype as chronic pain. There is also the unresolved question of the mechanisms responsible for gender differences in the experience of pain.

Katz says it's clear some people have a predisposition to suffer more from pain than others, but no one knows why. "The more we can understand how to manage pain both before and after surgical procedures, the better for patients, their families and for health-care costs. If we can improve the quality of people's lives just a little, it will all have been worthwhile." ■

From Italy to Brazil, David Rocco has become TV's entrepreneur of travel food shows.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD

FOOD NETWORK FANS KNOW HIM as the casual host of “David Rocco’s *Dolce Vita*”, sharing his passion for Italy’s *cucina povera*, or peasant cuisine, hospitable people and unhurried way of life. For four seasons, the York grad led viewers to market stalls to taste ripe cheese and cured salami, into Tuscan hills to pick grapes, harvest olives and hunt for mushrooms and wild boar, out to sea to catch calamari, then to his kitchen to whip up a simple dish of “fresh and humble ingredients” to serve friends and family. Untrained and proud of it, this popular TV cook learned to make a tomato sauce in mama’s kitchen. “I’m not a chef. I’m Italian!” he likes to say. His real talent, though, is as an entrepreneur.

“Cooking is in my DNA,” he explains. So are business smarts. Rocco, 41, is the youngest son of hairdressers from Italy who settled first in Scarborough, then in Woodbridge, north of Toronto. His parents expected their three children to go to university, but pay for it themselves. In high school, Rocco made big bucks as a model. In the 1980s, Toronto was a mecca for advertising and the 16-year-old could bring home \$1,200 a day for hand demos and catalogue shoots. Ditto for working as an extra on film shoots. At first, he didn’t care about the size of the part, the money was the thing. “It was incredibly lucrative.” Then he started to dream of starring in movies.

Not before you get a university education, insisted his mother. So, at age 19, he and high-school sweetheart Nina Cipriano followed his brother Sal (BBA Spec. Hons. ’88, LLB ’91) and sister Maria (BA Hons. ’91, BEd ’91) to York, conveniently close to home, to study economics. In between lessons on the gross domestic product, he flew to Milan on modelling assignments and made extra cash selling his unofficial York sweatshirts – until ordered to desist. “I was very entrepreneurial. It was fun.”

In 1992, fresh out of York, Rocco (BA ’92) and Cipriano (BA ’92) took over a pizzeria in one of her father’s buildings. While they flipped dough and waited on customers, they still dreamed of films and took acting lessons. When talent scouts didn’t come knocking, they toyed with the idea of making their own films. “You could probably handle a frying pan in front of a camera,” joked Cipriano.

After two years of slicing salami, the couple, now Mr. and Mrs. Rocco, sold the restaurant and flew to Italy for a holiday. On a whim, they roped friends into shooting Rocco strolling

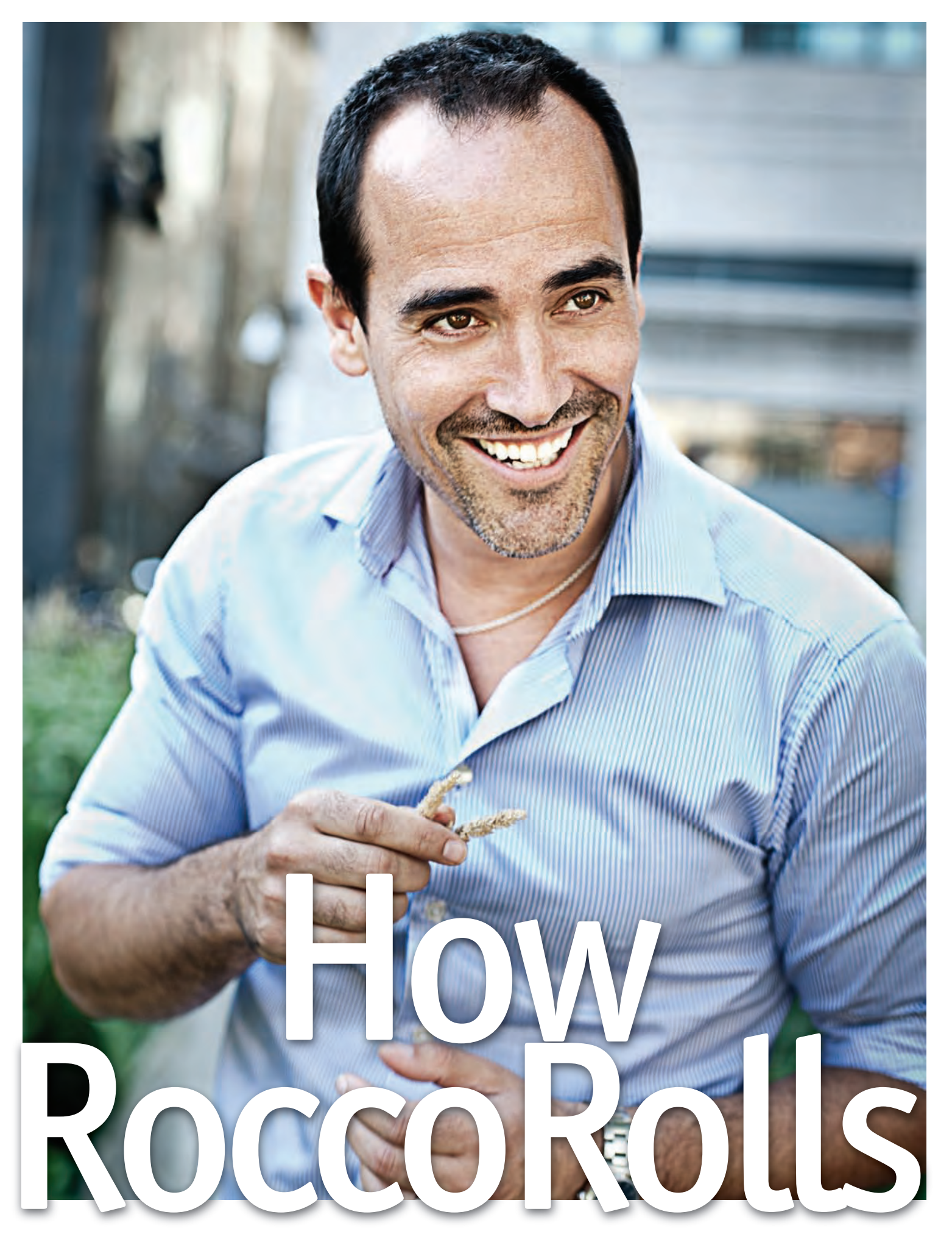
through Florence on the day before they flew home. Back in Canada, their wedding videographer helped them edit the footage and they showed it to a Toronto production company. That five-minute demo spawned the 26-episode series “Avventura: Journeys in Italian Cuisine”. The show aired on PBS, TV Ontario and around the world.

Buoyed by *Avventura*’s success, David and Nina moved to Rome and cooked up their second act. They were charmed by a culture centred on sharing simple food with friends and family. “In Italy, you can be walking home and bump into somebody and suddenly be invited to dinner at their home,” says Rocco. “These are real moments.” They pitched a show that celebrated this casual hospitality, this good life, this *dolce vita*, in episodes where Rocco might feed teammates before a soccer match or pack a picnic for a day at the beach. “We wanted to do more than a cooking show. We wanted to bring to TV the smells, the sights, the sounds, the people, the culture and the lifestyle of Italy.”

Canada’s Food Network loved the idea, but balked at letting the Roccas produce the series. Six months later, after blowing their savings to create a 30-minute pilot, the couple had a deal. “David Rocco’s *Dolce Vita*” has run for four seasons in Canada, aired in 150 countries and was picked up last year by The Cooking Channel in the US. It has spawned CDs and two lifestyle cookbooks – the second, *Made in Italy*, comes out in October – and defined the David Rocco brand. “The show,” he says, “is a reflection of our values, of living a life where you connect with each other and food is the bridge that connects you.”

Now, David is taking his travel-food show into new territory. While Nina stays home in Rosedale with their three-year-old twins, Emma and Giorgia, he and his creative team at Rockhead Entertainment are preparing to release “David Rocco’s *Almalfi Getaway*” later this year. Soon, they begin shooting two more series, one on American home cooks and the other, even bigger, on Brazil’s food and culture, anticipating the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

“I find the harder I work, the luckier I get,” says David, still the creative entrepreneur. “I don’t see this as work. It’s my lifestyle.” He jogs and works out at the gym to keep those boyish good looks, but when he really needs to relax, he ties on an apron and cooks risotto with his daughters, “my greatest project.” Then all the Roccas sit around the table together and eat. “Food makes me feel better. Life is good.” ■



How RoccoRolls

Julie Kirkpatrick

Writer, lawyer

Finding the Way

THREE YEARS AGO, JULIE KIRKPATRICK (LLB '99) let her staff go and started saying "no" to potential clients. Diagnosed with uveitis, she feared for her sight and her health, and wanted time out. The hard-driving barrister-solicitor had built a thriving general practice in Millbrook, Ont. representing, most famously, Peterborough's Brenda Waudby, wrongfully accused of killing her daughter. While Kirkpatrick's book-designer husband manned the home front, the I-can-do-anything mother of four was putting in 60-hour work weeks.

Kirkpatrick promised herself a month off, to garden. Instead, she went hiking in Spain with daughter Malakai for 26 days along the Camino de Santiago, an ancient pilgrims' trail. Before she left, she asked friends to set her daily tasks. Her end-of-day reports, now published in the well-reviewed *The Camino Letters: 26 Tasks on the Way to Finisterre*, document her efforts to, among other things, listen to the wind, be an animal, look up. Walking for hours on end, day after day, over mountains, through fields, under a blazing sun, often abandoned by an impatient first-born, the usually dry-eyed advocate finds herself ambushed by grief, warmed by memories, humbled by strangers. "I have missed myself," she writes to one friend. By the end of the 800-kilometre path, less burdened and bursting with joy, she vows ever to walk lightly, at her own pace. She's scaled back her practice and begun spending summers in Cape Breton. Watch for her next book. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK





Jay Pottinger

Argonaut, MBA student

Tackling Business

MOST PLAYERS IN THE CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE keep one eye on the ball and another on what they plan to do when their playing days are over. Toronto Argonaut Jay Pottinger has set his sights higher than most: he is pursuing an MBA at York's Schulich School of Business, specializing in international business. "It should lead to good things," says Pottinger, 27, who already has undergraduate degrees in economics and geography from McMaster, where he played for the Marauders. "I like the idea of working for myself and I've always considered myself an entrepreneur." The Whitby native had his own business repairing laptop computers in high school and currently operates a student housing business in Hamilton.

After being drafted by the BC Lions second overall in 2006 – their Grey Cup-winning year – Pottinger played three seasons before being traded to the Argos in 2009. He now serves as starting linebacker on a defence that includes former York Lions star Ricky Foley, a teammate from his BC days. Balancing football with the demands of an MBA program may not be easy, but Pottinger says Schulich's program allows him the flexibility to study part-time during the playing season and hit the books full-time in the winter term. Ultimately, he says, he hopes to land an exchange placement in China. "It's where business is going." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD



FIVE YEARS, 85 pages, 90,000-plus words and 42,000 unique visits-per-month later, Peter Marshall has finally completed his magnum opus: *The Black Tie Guide* – a website devoted to the finer sartorial points, history and lore of the classic tuxedo.

Marshall (BFA '88) says the site (blacktieguide.com) is a labour of love and has nothing at all to do with the subject he studied at York – film. Since its creation in 2006, Marshall says, *The Black Tie Guide* has become the de facto resource and go-to guide for the world of men's formal wear.

"There's no doubt the site has got me a lot of attention," he says. "I've been interviewed by people doing documentaries on the subject, and the *Financial Times* recently interviewed me." For Marshall, the motivation to do the site in the first place was mostly because he found a "black hole" of information on the subject. "It was a great opportunity to fill that hole and, quite frankly, I've always had this desire to be acknowledged as an authority on something." One day he hopes to turn his work into a coffee table book.

"If my site accomplishes one thing, it shows that it doesn't require a lot of money to look good, even when it comes to formal wear. A well-educated rental can always beat a poorly informed purchase." ■

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MIKE FORD AT THE CARLU

Peter Marshall
Formal wear expert

Tuxedo Junction

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University professor Robert Drummond (BA '67), former dean, Faculty of Arts; and Vicky Drummond (MA '76), coordinator, Nellie Langford Rowell Library, explain their reasons for leaving a bequest to York University.

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GIVING

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York works hard to boost university access
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AN 'AMAZING TRANSFORMATION': O'Reilly with MacDonald

FOR VANESSA MacDONALD, the idea of attending university was little more than a dream until she came across an ad in a Barrie, Ont. newspaper six years ago. It advertised courses through York University to help “bridge” people into post-secondary education.

“What grabbed me was its potential,” recalls MacDonald, who was then 38. “This ad, in suggesting I could be prepared for university, implied a better life. It sang the song of second chance.”

Soon, MacDonald and her fellow students were meeting once a week with a York instructor to upgrade their academic skills. “I loved how this magic happened in a mall in Barrie. Surrounded by Dairy Queen and dollar stores, we were achieving things of greatness,” she says.

Run by the School of Women’s Studies at York, the Bridging Program for Women is just one of the many ways York promotes access to postsecondary education for women and men of all ages and ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds – a core principle of the University’s White Paper released in 2010. “Most universities have traditionally struggled to reach out to their communities, but York is not a traditional university,” says President & Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri. “Community engagement is woven into the fabric of our University – it is part of our DNA.”

Other programs include the Advance

Credit Experience, which allows senior secondary students to enrol in a first-year credit course in philosophy while completing their high school diploma. The Transition-Year Program at York, meanwhile, supports youth and adults who have faced barriers and not been able to finish high school, but who are now driven to attend postsecondary education.

Yet another example is the Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Professionals. It helps professionals educated outside of the country to leverage their experience and credentials to access the Ontario labour market – an oft-cited challenge for many new Canadians.

These sorts of programs have a great track record. For instance, in the women’s bridging program, an estimated 80 per cent of participants complete the program and well over half go on to attend York, says Andrea O’Reilly, program coordinator and a professor in the

School of Women’s Studies. “There are students who’ve achieved their PhD in social work, or graduated from law school or teacher’s college. Some women go on to community college,” says O’Reilly. “These are women who were terrified at the beginning of the bridging program – who didn’t think they should be here. It’s an amazing transformation.”

MacDonald is a prime example. After graduating from the bridging program, she went on to major in women’s studies at York. She graduated in June 2010 and has recently applied to law school. “Thank you is an understatement,” she says. “Thanks to York, its supporters and the bridging program, I am growing comfortable with the image I see reflected back to myself.”

If you would like to donate to a bridging program or another access program through York University, contact the Division of Advancement at 416-650-8210. ■

ALUMNI

News:

From Finance to Dating

And lots more. In York's Real Life Series, recent grads get briefed by the experts.

WHAT BEER goes best with which food? What are the three essential tips to networking and working a room? How about five things to remember to give your dating life and relationships a boost?

These are the kinds of topics covered during York's Real Life Series. Now entering its third year, the series brings alumni who are renowned experts in their fields back to speak to recent fellow grads. The content is geared to those navigating the early stages of post-university life, but many of the topics are useful to people of any age.

"It's a great way to build a community among alumni, by being treated to an interesting speaker and a night of good fun, social interaction and conversation – with a Saturday night 'lounge' feel," says

Frank Belluardo (BA '02, MPPAL '10), a senior policy adviser with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, who attended last year's dating and relationships session led by relationships expert Susan Blackburn (BA '03).

"There really is something for everybody. For instance, last year we had a great session on how to inspire and motivate as a leader," says James Allan, senior director of Alumni Relations. "In addition to what you can learn, the Real Life Series is a great opportunity to mingle with new and old friends from school and stay connected with York."

The Real Life Series also underlines one of the benefits of being part of such a vast alumni community. With a population of more than 250,000 and growing, there is a huge pool of very accom-



A CHANCE TO MINGLE: Belluardo (in blue) with fellow attendees

plished people who have great knowledge to share. "It's too good to waste," says Allan. "These alumni are eager to give back, so this is a golden opportunity to help them do that and to help recent grads at the same time."

Other speakers last year included finance Professor Moshe Milevsky (MA '92, PhD '96), from York's Schulich School of Business, who offered strategies grads could take to become financially independent and tips to start saving. Body and soul expert Nina Spencer (BA '79) empowered grads with the rules for staying positive and

motivated at work and home, while Roger Mittag (BAS '95) of Thirst For Knowledge walked participants through the beer and food session.

This summer, alumni were surveyed for topics they'd like to see for 2011-2012. Check out yorku.ca/alumni/get-involved/realliferies.htm to see the results of that survey and the 2011-2012 lineup.

Alumni Relations would like to hear your feedback about the Real Life Series. If you have a topic you'd like to know more about, send a note to alumnievents@yorku.ca or call 416-736-2100 ext. 21008. ■

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Class Notes:

1982

St. Denis, Derra (BA Spec. Hons. Glendon) decided to pursue a career in acting in film and TV after graduation. Her message to students is to pursue your dreams despite the odds.

1984

Amodeo, Joseph (MBA Schulich) has left Dryvit Systems Canada after 20 years to start his own sales company representing construction product manufacturers. He has lived in Toronto's Weston district since 1986 with his wife Nancy and their four children.

1988

Holigrocki, Richard (BA Hons. McLaughlin), a clinical psychologist specializing in psychological assessment, parent-child relationships and domestic violence, has been named dean of the School of Psychological Sciences at the University of Indianapolis. He has been serving as acting dean since last August.

1994

Rowan, James (BFA Spec. Hons. Winters) is the photo archives technician at the Canadian Air & Space Museum at Downsview Park in Toronto. He also continues to build on his own photographic portfolio and collection.

1995

McCormick, Kevin (BA Spec. Hons. '90 Winters, MA '91, PhD) has been president and vice-chancellor of Huntington University in Sudbury since 2006. He is the latest recipient of the Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand, a prestigious order conferred by the King of Thailand, for his international work in refugee rights and international education.

2001

Zhu, Eric (IMBA Schulich) worked in China as assistant director at Lenovo and a manager at Pricewaterhouse Coopers before moving to Hong

Kong. He says Schulich does well in training professionals for work all over the world.

2003

Pjescic, Minja (MBA Schulich) and her husband Tihomir Cvijic became parents for the second time. Baby Mia was born on May 23, 2011 weighing 8 lbs 2 oz.

2007

Mari, Joseph (BA Hons. McLaughlin) recently had his first short film, *Stealin' Home*, accepted to have its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in France.

Redigonda, Silva (BA Health) is studying at the University of Toronto, Mississauga Academy of Medicine program. She is also a student with the American Association of Family Therapy, and will be taking advanced pastoral counselling. She counsels as an intern and has also published a humorous dating guide called *Hey Guy, Buy Me*.

Skakun, Lisa (LLM Osgoode) recently won the Association of Women in Finance's Rising Star PEAK Award. She has been Coast Capital Savings Credit Union's general counsel and corporate secretary since early 2010.

2008

Ali, Dema (BES Spec. Hons. '08 Bethune) completed her graduate studies at the University of Toronto after her graduation from York. She lives in Toronto where she works as a policy analyst.

Panesar, Sheri (BA Vanier) opened Twin Sister's Mastectomy Boutique in 2006, where she works with breast cancer survivors. She fits women who have undergone a mastectomy or lumpectomy with prosthetic breast forms and mastectomy bras to restore their pre-surgical image.

2009

Gauthier, Michael (BA Vanier) recently completed his JD in French



John Saywell

at the University of Ottawa. His fiancé, Elise Andrea Goodman (BA '08 Founders), graduated from Carleton University with an MA in French linguistics. They met while completing their bachelor's degrees in French studies at York, and will get married in June 2012.

2010

Mayen, Nadia Idriss (BA Vanier) worked for a film production company in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 2008, and then in 2009 wrote for a magazine in Milan, Italy. She has also worked in Vienna, Austria at a private university.

Sieukaran, Daniella (BA Spec. Hons. Bethune) spent the past year as lab manager of the Research in Emerging Adults, Adolescents and Children (REACH) lab in York's Department of Psychology. In September, she will start an MA/PhD in clinical psychology (child clinical

stream) at Simon Fraser University in BC.

In Memoriam

Davidson, Douglas, a film editor, television producer and director who taught film studies at York for more than 30 years, died April 3 at 82.

Layton, Jack (MA '72, PhD '83), leader of the opposition and of the federal NDP, died of cancer Aug. 22 at 61 (see page 16).

Saywell, John (Jack), noted Canadian historian and member of the Founders Society of York University, died April 20 at 82. He served as founding dean of York's Faculty of Arts & Science from 1964 to 1973 and in 1970 was shortlisted to succeed founding president Murray Ross, a much-chronicled episode in York's history (the ultimate choice was David Slater, who later resigned amid deep controversy). York has often been called "the house that Jack built".



YORK ALUMNI

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How I got my Ghanaian groove back. **BY ALEXANDER GELFAND**

Distant Drums

Etisse! I was browsing the shoe selection at Daffy’s, a discount clothing store in midtown Manhattan, when I heard it: the unmistakable sound of Twi, the West African tone language that I had once spent years trying to master. I spun around to see a middle-aged African man talking into a cellphone. My heart leapt.

Twi is about as musical a language as one could hope to find. Every word has its own unique melody, a sequence of pitches that rise and fall according to some inscrutable logic. You don’t so much speak Twi as sing it. It was fitting, then, that I first

These guys were unlike

heard it in DACARY Hall, York’s former acoustical lab in McLaughlin College.

I was earning a master’s degree in ethnomusicology, and had signed up for a non-credit workshop in West African drumming led by a group of immigrants from southern Ghana. They spoke Twi and played a kind of court music called fontomfrom, which they beat out on five-foot-tall drums carved from tree trunks. I was a timid white Jewish kid who had a sheltered childhood in Montreal. These guys were unlike any group of people I had met before, and I fell in love with them instantly.

They made it easy: after the workshop was over, they basically adopted me, dressing me in a traditional Ghanaian toga which kept slipping down around my backside; showing me their cool finger-snap handshake, a sweet manoeuvre that has you snap your partner’s index finger and thumb with your own; and teaching me to play those massive drums until my hands blistered and bled. After a while, their leader, Kwame Obeng – a master drummer who didn’t speak much English – began calling me *mi nua*, or “my brother”, and we became thick as thieves.

I left my new-found Ghanaian family to get my PhD in the United States, and gained a wife – a professional percussionist, yet – in the bargain. Three weeks after we got married, Ingrid and I travelled 8,000 kilometres to study with Kwame in Ghana. It was quite a honeymoon. We drummed for chiefs, appeared on national television and saw more animal sacrifice than I care to remember. Ingrid got dysentery and nearly died.

Alexander Gelfand (MA '95) is a writer in New York City.

I passed out in the middle of a religious ceremony and was treated to an exorcism. It was thrilling. It was terrifying. It was the best four months of my entire life.

And then we came home. I hammered out my dissertation and taught just long enough to realize that I was profoundly unsuited to life in academia. So I quit.

And when I say quit, I mean quit, as in cold turkey. I didn’t just stop teaching, I stopped drumming, stopped listening to African music, stopped hanging out with Africans and stopped thinking, as best I could, about this thing that had consumed me for nearly a decade. It was as if I had to burn the entire experience out of my brain before I could do anything else.

We moved to New York City, where I went about reinventing myself: first as a wage ape at an online education company, then as an amateur jazz pianist and professional jazz critic, and finally as a freelance writer and father of two. Always, in the back of my mind, there was a gentle drumbeat, but I kept it at bay, or tried to.

And then something funny happened: I got over it. Got over the disenchantment, the disappointment, the weird psychological hiccup that had made me think that I needed to ditch my whole identity as a West African drummer in order to move on with my life.

My recovery has been slow, and it’s still in process. I haven’t joined the nearest drum circle, but I will now step forward whenever Ingrid needs an extra djembe player. I’ve been writing a memoir about our experiences in Ghana: the drumming, the dancing, the dysentery. And I’ve begun reaching out, in my now badly rusted Twi, to the Ghanaians whom I occasionally stumble across – like that guy with the cellphone looking for cheap shoes in Midtown the same day I was.

Etisse, I said hesitantly – “How’s it going?” *Wo te twi!* he cried, his eyes wide – “You speak Twi!?” *Yoo, me te Twi, kakra kakra* – “Yeah, I speak Twi, just a little.” Then he grabbed my hand, snapped my fingers, and I was home. ■





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