

RHODES SCHOLAR 2024^{#11}

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RHODES SCHOLAR 2024

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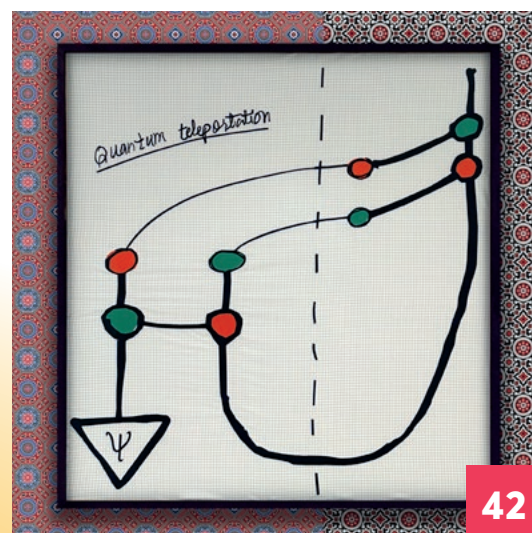
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Welcome

to the 2024 edition of the *Rhodes Scholar* magazine! This year's issue focuses on 'Creating Change' – a theme that lies at the heart of the mission of the Rhodes Scholarship as an investment in leaders and global citizens who have the energy and courage to make a difference.

The wonderful submissions in these pages – from Rhodes Alumni, Scholars in Residence and Fellows from our partnership programmes – powerfully speak to the fact that there is a myriad of ways to drive positive change. It can be local, national or global, across any sector, and pursued through research and thought leadership, public service, organisational leadership, direct activism and many other means.

Discerning and engaging the many ways to lead, serve and have impact is a strong element of our Character, Service and Leadership programme (CSLP), which this year celebrates its first decade. On behalf of all of us at the Trust, I would like to thank everyone who was part of establishing, forming, funding, evolving and refining the CSLP, as well as all the Scholars in Residence who have attended retreats and talks and been willing to challenge themselves and their peers through robust, civil and authentic dialogue.

Creating change is, of course, not always a comfortable experience. But all human progress



towards freer and more civil societies, greater environmental sustainability and expanding circles of opportunity depends on leaders willing to imagine a better future, and work to achieve it. In my article in the magazine, excerpted from a talk I have delivered to Scholars in Residence at CSLP retreats, I offer reflections on the light and shadow of leadership, and how individual self-awareness and collective solidarity can enable us to manage our shadow sides and become more positive forces for change.

Rhodes Scholars across the generations have demonstrated their willingness to tackle wicked problems and go to difficult lengths to create change – to 'fight the

world's fight'. I am inspired by the many ways Scholars are making a difference, and by how the friendships they make in Oxford and beyond support their journeys. I encourage all of us to forge bonds of connection and collaboration so that none of us needs to face that journey alone

Warmly,

Dr Elizabeth Kiss (Virginia & Balliol 1983)
Warden of Rhodes House

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Editorial Information

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Class of 2024

105 exceptional students representing 38 nationalities will arrive in Oxford in October 2024 to start their Rhodes Scholarship journey. They intend to study a wide range of courses, both taught and research, spanning subjects from philosophy and art to politics and international studies as well as biological, medical and engineering sciences.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that the world’s diversity of background and thought is reflected. In recent years, the Rhodes Scholarship has expanded to include Global Scholarships and new constituencies including West Africa, East Africa, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon & Palestine and the United Arab Emirates. Today, students from anywhere in the world can apply to the Rhodes Scholarship through specific constituencies or the Global Scholarship.

Among this year’s cohort of Scholars are Nia Robles Del Pino, a physicist from an indigenous Andean community in Argentina, and Sapolnach Prompiengchai, a neuroscientist from Thailand. They are the first ever Rhodes Scholars to be selected from their countries through the Global Scholarship.

Dr Elizabeth Kiss, Warden of Rhodes House and CEO of the Rhodes Trust, said: “We are excited to see the tremendous talents of this year’s Rhodes Scholars Elect, who come from countries all around the world. We know from 120 years of bringing exceptional people to Oxford to study and build a dynamic global community that when unlikeminded but likehearted people come together, we can forge brighter futures for everyone.”

Oxford Next Horizons

In January 2024, the first cohort of Oxford Next Horizons participants were welcomed to Oxford. The programme is the first of its kind in Europe and gives seasoned career professionals the opportunity to learn, explore and reinvent while being part of the unique communities of the Rhodes Trust and Harris Manchester College. For some, it’s a chance to study a subject or complete the project they’ve always dreamed about. For others, it’s the opportunity to figure out what issues or challenges they want to tackle next.

Spanning six months over two terms, the programme is an experience in Oxford alongside peers and our wider community. It draws on deep intellectual resources across the University and enables participants to connect with two unique communities within it – Harris Manchester College, Oxford’s only college devoted to non-traditional age students, and Rhodes House, home of the world’s oldest international graduate scholarship.



Members of the Oxford Next Horizons cohort

Oxford Next Horizons also draws on the unique traditions of Oxford’s educational system, offering direct access to world-class expertise, learning through peer-to-peer debate and discussion and deeper exploration through individual endeavour, including the opportunity to participate in Oxford-style tutorials.

“I can think of no better way to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Rhodes Scholarship in Pakistan than with this growth in our community. I know we are all excited to see what the next 75 years and beyond will bring.”

Dr Elizabeth Kiss, Warden of Rhodes House and CEO of the Rhodes Trust



Wasim Sajjad (Pakistan & Wadham 1964), former Chairman of the Senate and former Acting President of Pakistan, speaks at the celebrations of the 75th Anniversary of the Scholarship in Pakistan

Celebrating 75 years of the Rhodes Scholarship in Pakistan

2023 marked the 75th anniversary of the Rhodes Scholarship in Pakistan. We were thrilled to celebrate this milestone with the worldwide community of Pakistan Rhodes Scholars and were especially excited to mark the occasion with the announcement of the permanent endowment of a second Scholarship for students from Pakistan. This means that from now on, two Pakistani Scholars can be selected each year.

The first Rhodes Scholar for Pakistan was Aslam Murad (Pakistan & Brasenose 1949) who took up residence in Oxford in 1951. Since then, more than 70

citizens of Pakistan have been awarded the Scholarship. All Rhodes Pakistan Scholars unite exceptional academic ability with the drive to create a lasting impact and effect positive change worldwide. Their contributions span many fields, and Scholars include politicians, judges, scientists, business leaders and social activists.

The permanent endowment of a second Rhodes Scholarship for students from Pakistan was made possible thanks to several generous donations including a wonderful gift from Mohammed Khaishgi (Pakistan & Magdalen 1990) and Ms Faheen Alibhoy.

Our Character, Service and Leadership Programme

A Personal Reflection

In the summer of 2022, I began working with the Rhodes Trust as a Scholar team intern. In my first discussion with Daniel (J. Daniel Luther, Associate Programme Director), I was told that my work would be focused on the CSLP project and that I would be conducting a review by carrying out qualitative interviews and going through the CSLP archives to understand the historical trajectory of the programme, including impact, successes, criticisms, future direction and improvements that might be made. Whilst I was excited about undertaking this project, I was also a bit taken aback because I had not realised the true scope of the activity. I soon realised that mine was a big task and that there was a lot more intentionality behind the programme than perhaps we as Scholars in Residence had realised. Whilst interviewing an SPF (Scholar Programme Facilitator), they expressed a similar sentiment: “I do see how much work goes into it now that I’m on the other side” (CSLP Reflection Interview, February 2024). The programme is curated carefully to reflect the ideals of the Scholarship and the needs of the Scholars.

Khansa Maria (Pakistan & Harris Manchester 2021)

Picture: the 2017 second-year retreat

Reflecting on the First Decade

Begun in 2014, the **Character, Service and Leadership Programme (CSLP)** seeks to make the Scholarship's key selection criteria – intellect, character, leadership and commitment – into an integral and ongoing strand of the Scholar experience. Here, **Khansa Maria** (Pakistan & Harris Manchester 2021) considers the CSLP's first ten years.

Origins

The Character, Service and Leadership Programme (CSLP) is an integral component of the Scholar experience. Whilst different elements of the programme have always been a part of this experience, the official programme as it exists today was conceptualised by Warden Charles Conn, and its first iteration took place in 2014. When the Scholarship celebrated its 110th anniversary in 2013, Rhodes House had already become more inclusive over the preceding decades, welcoming many more Scholars of colour and women as a result of decades of Scholar-led activism and EDI work. Despite this progress, “There was still a feeling that more needed to be done to enhance the Scholar experience and open the doors of Rhodes House to the community” (CSLP Originator Interview, 2023). To address these gaps and reimagine the Scholarship for the 21st century, Charles Conn conceived a programme that aimed to revamp and rethink the Scholarly experience. While he recognised that the four essential criteria of intellect, character, leadership

and commitment to service were vital in selecting Scholars, he felt that they did not necessarily shape the Scholar experience in Oxford (Rhodes Trust, 2023).

Drawing inspiration from his transformative experience as a Crown Fellow at the Aspen Institute, he envisioned a space “Where Scholars could engage in meaningful conversations, ask deeper questions, and learn from one another” (Warden Conn, 2023). Although the Warden introduced the idea, it was the collective effort of many, including Scholars, moderators, facilitators, Rhodes House staff and others, that brought the programme to life. The conversation began with a rigorous brainstorming session that lasted two and a half days. The original architects of the programme included Michael Lamb (Tennessee & Trinity 2004), JanaLee Cherneski (Saskatchewan & Wolfson 2004), Ian Desai (Illinois & Merton 2005), and Max Harris (New Zealand & Balliol 2012). The differences that emerged from these perspectives, from the originators' disciplinary backgrounds, helped in situating the theoretical framing of the foundations of the programme. Together, they brought

‘Readings became more diverse, encompassing a wider range of perspectives’

to the programme key concepts like Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality and Barthes' notion of radical play.

The principal purpose of the programme was to “support, nurture and facilitate Scholars' lifelong commitment to lead and serve others”. The programme was developed to contain multiple components including two retreats, internships, workshops, discussion circles and skill-building sessions. The retreats were envisaged as the primary component of the programme, and this remains the case in 2024. Scholars are first introduced to the CSLP in their first term in Oxford with a CSLP orientation dinner, following which they have their first retreat in the March of their first year focused on leadership and in December in their second year focusing on the components of a ‘good life’. The CSLP framework synthesises and embodies the primary aims behind the opportunities offered by the Rhodes Trust. This is another avenue for Scholars to connect with each other and the wider world, engage with different communities and causes, lead and serve. The retreats also provide dedicated space for Scholar sessions.

Within the retreats, Scholars are divided into different learning pods. There is a mixture of pod-based reflection sessions and plenary sessions/panel discussions. The pod sessions are often based around some readings. Increasingly, recent retreats have also featured creative components like yoga sessions, movement workshops and even a tour of the town of Leamington Spa, where some of the residential retreats have taken place. There are also a lot of informal spaces and activities, allowing Scholars to reflect and rejuvenate.

‘Charles Conn conceived a programme that aimed to revamp and rethink the Scholarly experience’

“The programme is intended to be a way of enabling Scholars to connect with each other on a deeper level, and to set aside time for thinking about some of the big themes which sometimes get ignored in the face of deadlines, to-do lists and course content. The space for self-reflection and considering how you want to fight the world's fights is invaluable for many Scholars, as is the chance to explore new friendships and learn how to disagree agreeably.”

Dr Elizabeth Kiss, Warden of Rhodes House and CEO of the Rhodes Trust



Scholars in their learning pods as part of the first-year retreat

Moments of Evolution

Since its inception in 2014, the CSLP experience has continuously evolved and transformed. But it is possible to identify four main phases. These include, conception, adaptation, the COVID-19 era and the post-COVID-19 era. The initial iteration of the programme faced criticism due to its heavy emphasis on extensive reading materials, which lacked cultural diversity and an intersectional lens. The moderators predominantly consisted of experts in political theory, and there was a lack of representation for women and individuals from different parts of the world. However, following the first-year retreat, Scholars openly shared their reflections and provided valuable feedback, prompting significant improvements. As a result of this, the programme underwent important changes. The readings became more diverse, encompassing a wider range of perspectives and incorporating an intersectional approach. Furthermore, the selection of moderators became more inclusive, with a conscious effort made to include individuals from diverse backgrounds. By 2018, the CSLP was crafted from a well-rounded formula, which enables Scholars to engage with the issues on the different levels of

- Self: refine my internal compass
- Other: connect with others
- World: engage with the world

This was successful in ensuring a smooth programme and organised retreats with minimal disruptions or points of contention. However, the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 forced the programme to adjust once again. The retreats had to be shifted to an online format, initially causing Scholars to find the new format “tedious and awkward” (Scholar in Residence Interview, 2023). However, with their gradual immersion in the programme, Scholars

“Interacting with the new cohort of Scholars through facilitating their retreat was an absolute privilege. I was in awe of the cohort’s kindness towards one another despite their differences, their openness to sincere dialogue, and their impatience with inaction when it comes to injustice, especially on issues of colonisation. Bringing together these Scholars who may not have previously interacted much, and fostering spaces for them to grapple with profound questions about their roles and responsibilities in their communities and the broader world created deep connections where none would have existed before. Witnessing their passion, curiosity and commitment has filled me with immense hope.”

Majd Abdulghani (Saudi Arabia & Balliol 2019), CSLP Facilitator at March 2024 retreat

began to appreciate the unexpected opportunities that arose to make connections. The online setting allowed for the creation of meaningful connections, and Scholars were able to showcase their talents and thoughts in a different format through things like digital open mics, overcoming the initial challenges.

As pandemic-related restrictions started to ease and the ‘Big Build’ project in Rhodes House took shape, the retreats underwent yet another transformation. They transitioned into residential experiences, taking place outside Oxford. Scholars greatly valued this change, as it provided an opportunity to “disengage from the stresses of Oxford” (Scholar in Residence Interview, 2023) and expand their

“To facilitate is to prepare to be surprised. The sessions always exceed their design and the discussions are always greater than the sum of their parts. In our pods, we often break down big ideas like leadership and community into what they mean in everyday life and in terms of our daily practices. The sessions become sanctuaries of rest and sharing – Scholars swap ideas about how they stay in touch with families back home, or how they draw out idea-charts to think about next steps, or just list quiet spots in Oxford where they go to recharge and unwind. Scholars are also fiercely critical of what it means to hold a ‘retreat’ in a world torn by war and violence, and challenge curated spaces by bursting into spontaneous discussions and unspoken acts of care towards one another. Facilitating in such a space means being attentive to the sighs and the whispers and quietness, and using this awareness to creatively build and rebuild spaces that are truly inclusive and welcoming.”

Mayanka Mukherji (India & St Cross 2015), CSLP Facilitator

friendship circles. The new environment encouraged deep reflection on their experiences within the programme and their future plans, fostering personal growth and introspection. The programme has continuously evolved in response to feedback and changing circumstances. From addressing the lack of cultural diversity and intersectionality to adapting to the challenges posed by the pandemic, the programme has strived to create an inclusive and transformative experience for Scholars. The recent shift to residential retreats outside Oxford has further enhanced

the programme, offering Scholars a valuable opportunity for self-reflection and fostering connections beyond the university environment.

The CSLP Today

The programme receives widespread praise and support from the Scholar community, though critical voices are important to keep the programme evolving and growing for new generations of Scholars. A Scholar who attended the CSLP in recent years described it as “a double-edged sword” (CSLP reflection interview, February 2024). Whilst Scholars appreciate the ways in which the programme creates space for them to interact with one another and to get to know their cohort better, “many feel that the programme tends to be unrealistic” (CSLP reflection interview, February 2024) and the practical application of the abstract concepts being discussed could be greater. One of the Board Facilitators described this perfectly and said that they felt there needed to be activities which allow Scholars to practically explore these concepts. The fact is that we are now living in very fractured times with Scholars being mindful of how their political identities and activism manifest in spaces like the CSLP retreats. No longer are Scholars interested in debating these abstract notions behind closed doors. They have identified that they are very conscious of the spatial and temporal politics of hosting these conversations in Rhodes House. Whilst Scholars in Residence explain that they cherish these spaces because of the connections that it allows them to create, CSLP retreats have themselves become sites of activism with Scholars finding ways to protest against specific readings and politics. A Scholar Programme Facilitator summarised this perfectly: “There is a gap between what the CSLP retreats do and what they claim to do” (CSLP Reflection Interview, 2024). The SPF identified that “it would make more sense to explain the intentionality behind the programme better”.

One of the earlier creators of the programme described the programme’s purpose as “Having an ethos of being generous, listening, questioning, framing and phrasing”

“The programme has continuously evolved in response to feedback and changing circumstances”

(CSLP Reflection Interview, 2024). I believe that in its own way the programme succeeds in giving Scholars this space. One of the recent initiatives to emerge from CSLP conversations is the liberation fellowship circle. These kinds of spaces are similar to the CSLP in the sense of creating spaces for reflection and discussion. However, they are different because they are specifically set up to be political whilst overall, the CSLP attempts to ensure that there is space for political discussion to emerge, but also to ensure that this comes from a diverse range of political experiences and perspectives. Scholars in Residence have explained that whilst they are very critical of the programme, they are also happy with the ways in which the Scholar Programme team is very open to co-creation.

I have worked on researching the CSLP for almost two years now, and I have found this to be an ever-changing project of reflection and growth. The reality is that I think it will continue to evolve through co-creation as new Scholars join the Rhodes community. I also feel that the programme will have to evolve to engage more practically with the philosophical notions being discussed.

Celebrating 10 years of CSLP

As part of our year of marking the first decade of CSLP, we are asking Scholars to send us their recollections, thoughts and ideas for the future. These would be published in a digital publication which will be launched in late 2024.

Please email any contributions to communications@rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk

Shadow and Light

One of the themes which Warden **Dr Elizabeth Kiss** (Virginia & Balliol 1983) has discussed at CSLP retreats is the interplay of shadow and light in every human life. Here is a summary of this impactful talk.



The Warden joins a group photo for the first-year retreat in 2023

Parker Palmer describes leadership as the power to cast light or shadow on others. We all have inner shadows – brokenness, pettiness, insecurity, fear or anger. It is part of what makes us human. To show up as a whole and authentic person, and to be able to cast light on others, we need to recognise, accept and manage our shadow side.

Reading Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* led me to reflect on how our deepest shadows are connected with our greatest capacities to cast light. Here are four facets of this relationship between shadow and light that I have found meaningful:

1. If they go unacknowledged, our shadows can take over

Rhodes Scholars have a compelling combination of ambition, drive and energy. It enables us to lead and have impact. But without humility and perspective, power and success can derail us. I've seen people buy into their own hype, lose touch with their inner selves, and succumb to lying, corruption and abuse. If we ignore our shadow side, it can engulf us.

2. Our superpowers have a shadow side

Unmanaged, our strengths can become our blind spots. My superpower is empathy. I connect easily with people, and this has enabled me to work effectively with diverse stakeholders and to inspire and mobilise others. However, my empathy has a shadow side. I want to be liked, and that can make it harder to make tough choices, or to hold people accountable.

Other superpowers have different shadow sides. Rhodes Scholars can be warriors and advocates who 'fight the world's fight'. But these valuable strengths can lapse into self-righteousness, one-sided thinking, even cruelty or domination. Whatever your superpower might be, stay alive to its shadow side.

3. Brokenness can also be a source of strength and light

This one took me a lot longer to figure out. I grew up with a mother who was extraordinarily charismatic, loving and eloquent. But she was also paranoid, volatile and selfish. I eventually understood that her character was born from her life story, and the traumas she had experienced. Reflecting on her struggles allowed me to see how my own strengths were forged in the crucible of my complex relationship with her – and to feel more gratitude, grace and compassion.

4. When we name our shadows, we enable others to be more authentic

Sometimes we feel overwhelming pressure to show up as our 'LinkedIn selves'—successful, confident, in charge. But when we are willing to name our shadows and vulnerabilities, we enable others to be more authentic and whole. Conversely, we may get engrossed in our shadows and fail to see our own light. True friends hold a mirror up for each other, reflecting both shadow and light, a lifelong gift of strength and solidarity.

**Light is the left hand of darkness
and darkness the right hand of light.**

**Two are one, life and death...
like hands joined together,
like the end and the way.**

from Ursula K. Le Guin,
The Left Hand of Darkness

“I often find myself pondering: How can we truly measure and convey the impact of the CSLP to our Alumni, funders and others? Then, my thoughts shift to recalling the experience of that first-year Scholar arriving at Oxford, likely feeling a bit shaky and uncertain, then finding solace on realising that many others share similar feelings of 'dis-location' and disorientation. It's in such moments during the CSLP Orientation and the first-year CSLP Retreat that these shared experiences are acknowledged, normalised and affirmed, and that first-year Scholar feels seen. I also reflect on second-year retreat sessions with Scholars engaging in lively discussions about life 'after Oxford' and expectations they or others may have of how Scholars (ought to?) live their lives as individuals and in wider community. These reflections lead me to ask a different set of questions: how have Rhodes Scholars demonstrated character, served others and shown leadership, from coming up, to going down and then beyond Oxford? I'm starting to realise that CSLP 'impact' is not a one-dimensional concept; it's multi-layered and unfolds over time. The influence of the CSLP is both immediate and ongoing, shaped by shared experiences yet resulting in varied outcomes for each Rhodes Scholar. Perhaps there is 'no one way' to gauge impact of the CSLP in the Rhodes Scholar community.”

Dr Doyin Atewologun, former Dean of the Rhodes Scholarships

**“Our deepest shadows are connected to our
greatest capacities to cast light”**



At the 2024 first-year retreat

Stories of Leadership

Professor Elleke Boehmer FRSL FRHistS (South Africa-at-Large & St John's 1985) is Professor of World Literature in English at Oxford and a Rhodes Trustee. She has authored many works, including *Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction* (2008, 2023) and *Southern Imagining*, which will be published next year. Taking part in a CSLP panel conversation, she reflected on the nature of leadership and the power of stories.

In literary studies, we perhaps don't tend to think as much as in other circles about the business of leadership. Perhaps we are more concerned with guiding symbols and compelling metaphors – though those, too, are important for understanding good leadership. If you were to press me to identify where my own understanding of leadership lies, I would say that I find it in sharing the stories that leaders tell themselves and share with those they intend to lead.

Teaching with story is something I have learned a lot about as part of my 15-year project of writing about and reflecting on the example of Nelson Mandela, the first democratic president of South Africa. Mandela famously said words to this effect, that “when the going is good, it is better to lead from behind and put others in front. But you take the front line when there is an urgency to move. It is at such times that people will appreciate more directive leadership.” Mandela's own shift to leading from the front in the early 1990s remains controversial. He took the decision to reduce consulting with his own party and to move forward, working with the then National Party South African government to negotiate the move to hold democratic elections.

Go to the other end of the twentieth century and you will find the example of another leader from the front, working in very different circumstances. The Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton was part of the great drive to the South Pole. In 1908, he was in one of Scott's parties and came within about 195 miles of 90 degrees South, turning back because of adverse weather conditions. In contrast with his rival Scott, Shackleton appeared to cultivate a style of leadership that was about relating to and consulting with his men. Yet, as for Mandela, when the point of crisis came, he moved forward. He had raised funds and taken a second trip to the Pole on the *Endurance* when he and his men got stuck in the ice on the frozen Weddell Sea. After the ship sank, he stopped consulting as much as before and took decisive command, leading the men to Elephant Island across the dangerous Southern Ocean, and so on to South

Georgia. Not a single man was lost.

Both stories leave us with an anomaly to reflect upon, and it is this. There is a contradiction in leadership, because at the end of the day, as a leader, you need to move together with those you are leading, and yet you need to give that movement definition. The magic of both Mandela and Shackleton's leadership is that they led from the front even while giving the appearance of working in step with their team. As a result, both of them saved lives. In today's terms, their colleagues also felt *seen*. It is a difficult model that is well worth thinking about further.

“For myself and some in my facilitation group, the CSLP retreats arrived as welcome moments to step back, reconnect with others and engage with ideas which are backgrounded in the busyness of everyday Oxford life. I found the most productive conversations were ones which directly addressed the tension in the programme being about ‘character’, ‘service’ and ‘leadership’, and yet happening in a cocoon while injustice occurs in the world, and I have been moved by the strength of the Scholars as they try actively to work within and without the programming to discover what those words truly mean for themselves. It is also a testament to the strength of the CSLP that it is able to grow from this dialogue and evolve organically from what I experienced as a Scholar to what I saw returning as a facilitator.”

Fuaad Coovadia (South Africa-at-Large & Lincoln 2017), CSLP Facilitator

‘Teaching with story is something I have learned a lot about’

A Life in the American Century

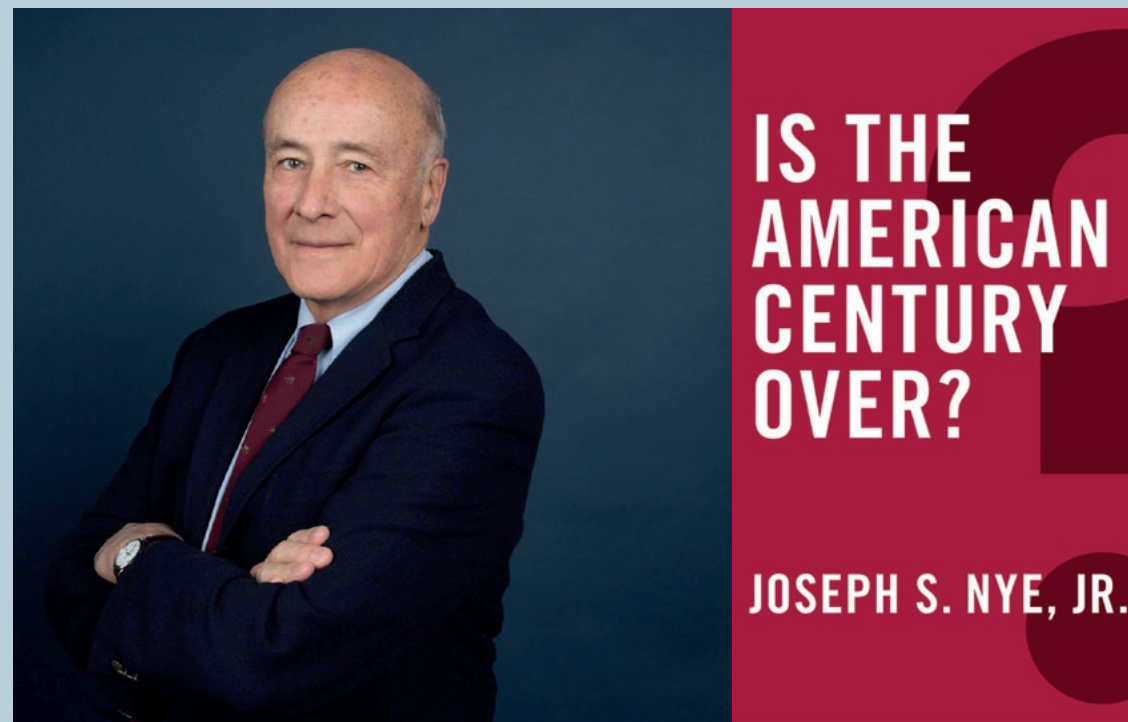
Joseph S. Nye, Jr. (New Jersey & Exeter 1958) is University Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus and former Dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Here, he reflects on changes in the world during his lifetime and looks to the future.

When I was born in 1937, one of every four Americans was out of work. War raged in Spain, and Hitler's growing strength portended world war. Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia and Japan

slaughtered Chinese civilians in the 'Rape of Nanjing'. This was also the year Pablo Picasso painted his iconic image of the horrors of the destruction of Guernica, but most Americans, including my family, were strongly isolationist, despite Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to coax Americans to look outward and broaden their horizons.

Today, the world debates whether we are witnessing the end of the American century in which the United States has been the dominant power. Some believe that we are about to be displaced by China, but I have argued that the future is still open. I have lived through eight decades of an American era that included World War II, Hiroshima and wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. Nuclear holocaust was always a background fear. School children were told that, in the event of a nuclear explosion, they should duck under their desks and cover their heads. The Cold War ended without the nuclear catastrophe that hung over our heads, but it was replaced by a period of hubris as America became the world's sole superpower. That unipolar moment was soon replaced by fears of transnational terrorism and cyber wars and analysts today speak about a new cold war with a rising China and fear of nuclear escalation following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Our mental maps of the world have changed dramatically over my lifetime.

So has our technology. When I was born, there were no real computers. Today, most of us carry a computer in our pocket that would have required a building to house just a few decades ago. I have an even smaller one implanted in my body that paces my heart. In 1937, transcontinental and transoceanic air travel was barely possible. Over the years, I have logged more than one million frequent flyer miles on



Our mental maps of the world have changed dramatically over my lifetime

more than one airline. And then, during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, I suddenly stopped travelling. Nonetheless, new technology allowed me to give talks on four continents in the course of a week without spending a drop of jet fuel. At the beginning of the American era, no one considered the impact of humans on the Earth's climate: today, it is a major concern as we confront ever more intense wildfires, storms, melting glaciers, rising sea levels and forced migration of peoples.

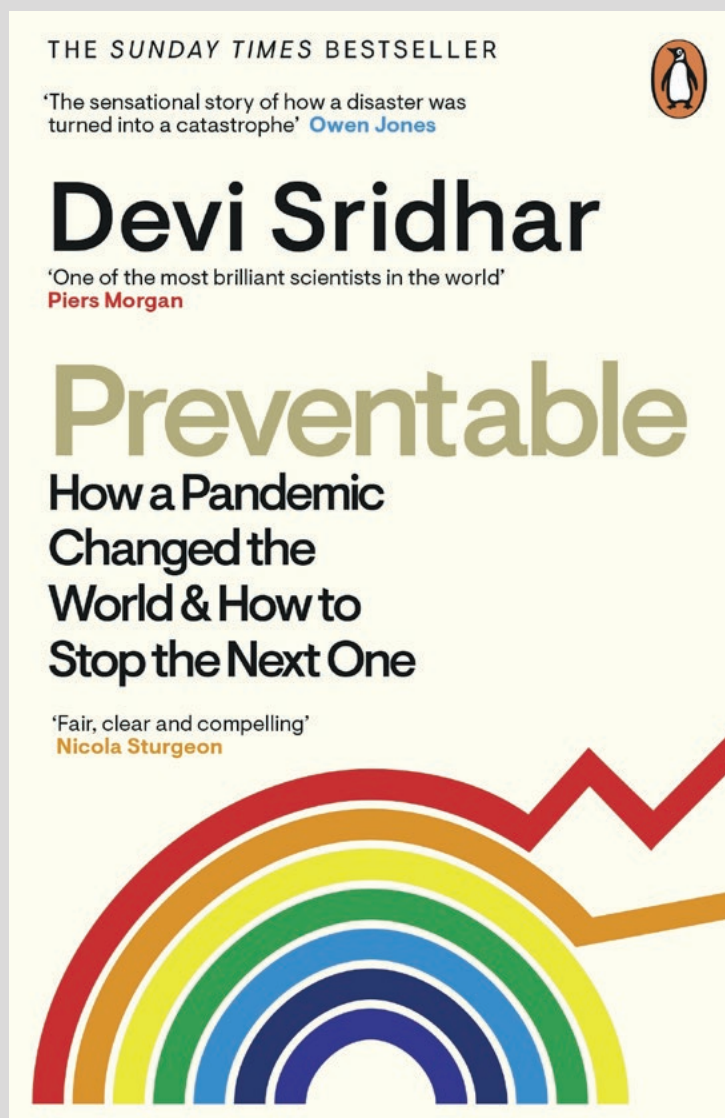
What sort of world are we leaving to our grandchildren? In my 2015 book *Is the American Century Over?* I concluded that the answer to that question was "No", but that American primacy in this century will not look like the twentieth century. I argued that the greatest danger we face is not that China will surpass us, but that the diffusion of power will produce entropy, or the global inability to get anything done. China is an impressive peer competitor with great strengths but also weaknesses.

If we succumb to hysteria about China's rise or to complacency about its 'peak', we could blunder into a major war. The historical analogy that worries me is 1914, not 1941.

My greater concern, however, is about domestic change and what it could do to America's soft power of attraction. Even if its external power remains dominant, a country can lose its internal virtue and attractiveness to others. The Roman empire lasted long after it lost its republican form of government. Civic life is becoming more complex, and technology is creating an enormous range of opportunities and risks as we cope with AI, big data, machine learning, deep fakes and generative bots – to name but a few. And even larger challenges are approaching from the realms of biotechnology, not to mention coping with climate change.

Some historians have compared the flux of ideas and connections today to the turmoil of the Renaissance and Reformation five centuries ago, but on a much larger scale. And those eras were followed by the Thirty Years' War that killed a third of the population of Germany. Today, the world is richer and riskier than ever before. I am sometimes asked whether I am optimistic or pessimistic about the future. I reply, "Guardedly optimistic".

America has many problems and there is a case for pessimism. At the same time, we have survived worse periods in the 1890s, 1930s and 1960s. For all our flaws, the US is a resilient society that, in the past, has been able to recreate and reinvent itself. Maybe Gen Z can do it again. The reasons for my optimism are described in my book, *A Life in the American Century* (Polity, 2024), an account of what it was like to live through the ups and downs of the first eight decades of the American century. But to be honest, I cannot be fully sure how much of my optimism rests on my analysis or in my genes.



Preparing for the Next Pandemic

Professor Devi Sridhar (Florida & Wolfson 2003) holds a Personal Chair in Global Public Health at the University of Edinburgh and is Founding Director of the Global Health Governance Programme. Here, she shares insights from her book *Preventable: How a Pandemic Changed the World & How to Stop the Next One* (Viking-Penguin, 2022).

One of the most frequent questions I get is, will there be another pandemic? Of course there will. The world will face a virus similar to SARS-CoV-2, and, while we cannot prevent these challenges emerging, we can change how we respond and learn from past mistakes. How much suffering can be prevented the next time around?

As we reflect on the past few years, the words that come to mind are 'never again'. Never again should millions of lives be lost to a new virus, a number that would have been unthinkable before COVID-19, when we thought infectious diseases that wiped out millions were consigned to history. Never again should children be taken out of school, unable to learn in classrooms or socialise with their peers, and sometimes even forced into marriages, employment and

caring roles because of the need to earn for their family or the loss of caregivers to COVID-19. Never again should the unemployment rate soar, as small businesses close and larger ones make sweeping redundancies. Never again should over a hundred thousand health workers die, many of whom lacked adequate protective equipment, clothing and priority access to vaccines.

As countries now look towards rebuilding and healing, they must also think longer term about the mistakes made, the gaps exploited by the virus, and how best to prepare and respond the next time. What will be the cause of the next pandemic? The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified priority diseases such as Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, Ebola, Marburg, Lassa fever, MERS, SARS, Nipah and Zika; some of these you may recognise,

‘Science holds the solutions for the future’

‘We need global cooperation and surveillance to identify disease risks’



others you may not. Scientists can make educated guesses about disease types we are already familiar with, but there could be others that we don’t yet know about: the so-called ‘Disease X’. What particularly concerns me is MERS mutating into a form that is more transmissible and that then has pandemic potential.

Five clear lessons have emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic on how best to prepare for the next one. First, the biggest public health risk that we face is an animal virus jumping to humans. Every time a virus circulates among animals, particularly bats, rodents, livestock and birds, and then comes into contact with humans, there’s a chance that one of those viruses will infect humans and lead to human-to-human transmission. If that virus spreads through breathing or droplets of moisture, it becomes extremely difficult to stop.

Ever-increasing international travel and global trade have connected the world and created new opportunities for diseases to spread. This is why we need global cooperation and surveillance to identify disease risks. We must invest in

a Global Virus Surveillance Network (almost like a weather service) to scan for new pathogens of concern, as well as identify spillover risks (when animals and humans come in contact) and mitigate them. Currently the process is more bottom-up, with either countries reporting to WHO that they have an outbreak, or scientists and doctors in a country reporting to a website called ProMed, the largest publicly available system for the global reporting of infectious disease outbreaks. We need more.

Second, governments must invest in the resources necessary to rapidly sequence new viruses. It is not only new pathogens that pose a problem of course, but, as we have seen with SARS-CoV-2, new variants can emerge as a result of uncontrolled spread, such as happened in England, Brazil, India and South Africa. Most countries do not have the capacity or facilities to sequence the genomes of virus samples to detect new strains or even new pathogens. The UK, US, Denmark and a select few others are outliers in being able to do the amount of sequencing they’ve done over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Why is sequencing

important? It is crucial in developing testing and vaccines within weeks and manufacturing and distributing enough doses within months. Three scientific tools through a pandemic are testing, therapeutics and vaccines.

Third, countries should now be thinking about their manufacturing capacity regionally, so as not to rely on other parts of the world, as Africa has seen first-hand, as well as coordinating worldwide to have these hubs ready to mass produce. Getting enough supply to the world is not only about IP waivers, tech transfer, donations, or building more factories. It is about all of that, together. And African countries are tired of relying on the goodwill of rich countries to donate doses. Rich countries will never give valuable doses overseas if their citizens are waiting.

Instead the challenge is to create regional hubs with enough supply, so that it is about mass market production everywhere, and not just charitable donations of leftovers from the West. Countries will need financial and technical support to do this, which points to the key role of the World Bank in providing funding for infrastructure.

Fourth, given that we know that a pandemic influenza is on the horizon, we should already be focusing on a universal influenza vaccine. Our current flu vaccines are given annually, with experts predicting which strain will become the most common. In some years these guesses are off, resulting in a vaccine that isn’t effective for the circulating strain. To boost effectiveness against all strains, our ambition should be for a one-dose universal vaccine that provides immunity over several years and against various influenza strains. The first human clinical trial of a universal flu vaccine has been completed using a new technology that mixes different pieces of flu strains; it was successful. We must accelerate this progress now.

Finally, governments need to carefully examine their ‘flu pandemic playbook’ on how we respond to any incoming acute respiratory pathogens based on what we’ve learnt from the COVID-19 experience. Much of the early COVID-19 debate fixated on whether it was like flu, or like

SARS, or something entirely different. It would have been more productive to focus less on ‘Is it flu?’ and more on ‘What can be done to stop, or at least delay, spread?’

In the process of managing COVID-19, countries unintentionally eliminated seasonal flu and other respiratory infections. For countries the question is: should governments ever move into the mitigation phase (where they accept spread) before a vaccine is rolled out, rather than containment? How many could have survived COVID-19 had we found a way to buy time and delay infections until a life-saving vaccine could have been given to them? Can we plan for pan-coronavirus and pan-influenza vaccines so that we have the scientific solutions in place? And then can we focus on rapid manufacturing and distribution? How can we build on our seasonal flu infrastructure and move towards a global pandemic flu response infrastructure?

As I also describe in this book, one of the lessons from COVID-19 is that science holds the solutions for the future. It feels like magic to have vaccines or treatments, but these reflect years of research, training and building on the work of the scientists who came before. When Sabin’s polio vaccine was approved in 1961, it was met with universal celebration and relief. In 1963 mass vaccinations became widespread against measles, mumps, rubella and rabies, saving millions of lives, first in the US and Europe and then across the world. Antibiotic development, starting with Fleming’s discovery of penicillin in 1928, made life-threatening medical procedures such as C-sections and surgeries safe. They currently treat most bacterial infections and stop people dying who are having organ transplantation, urinary tract infections and even cancer treatment.

Now is the time to be stepping up to invest in science so that when the next pandemic arrives we are ready with the words ‘never again’ burned into our minds. And now is the time to be mentoring and cultivating the next generation of children to pursue scientific careers.

Mapping Tuberculosis in Ho Chi Minh City

Ruan Spies (Paul Roos Gymnasium, Stellenbosch & Brasenose 2022) is all too familiar with the devastating consequences of TB through his work as a medical doctor in South Africa, where TB is a major cause of death and disability. Here, he reflects on his research within Vietnam, another area with a high burden of TB.

According to the latest edition of the World Health Organization's Global TB Report, 10.6 million people fell ill from TB in 2021, 1.6 million of whom died. 90% of this burden occurs in just 30 low- and middle-income countries. In the Global North TB or 'consumption' has been romanticised as a historical, now extinct, disease which claimed the lives of intellectuals, writers and poets. In the Global South, TB-related suffering remains an everyday reality. Significant progress has been made in reducing the global burden of TB over the last century but has at times stalled, most notably following the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic. When global health is vulnerable TB thrives.

TB is a complex problem to solve. Foremost, the social determinants of health need to be addressed, but alleviating poverty continues to be a painstakingly slow process. In the meantime, research and innovation into our understanding of the disease and improved diagnostics and therapeutics are essential. An old saying goes "What gets measured, gets done." This is where epidemiology becomes important – if we cannot understand the determinants and distribution of a disease, we will never be able to control it.

In May 2023, I travelled to Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, to work with researchers at the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU) and to conduct research as part of my dissertation for the MSc in Global Health Science and Epidemiology. Ho Chi Minh City is Vietnam's largest metropolis with a population approximating nearly 10 million people. The country also has one of the world's largest burdens of TB and multidrug-resistant TB. Despite this, no recent studies describe the burden of TB in the city, represented by the incidence of the disease and the characteristics of people with TB, nor do any previous studies describe the spatial distribution of the disease within the city. These descriptions are crucial starting points for further research and for TB control



**I quickly felt enlivened
by the city's energy
and vibrancy**

**When global health is
vulnerable TB thrives**



efforts. Contextually relevant solutions require local data. For example, understanding where the burden of TB is greatest in the city may help inform policymakers and local health authorities when deciding where to locate healthcare facilities. Active case finding, where healthcare workers proactively screen and identify potential TB cases in communities before they are sick enough to need to seek healthcare, may prove to be a crucial tool in interrupting TB transmission and could also be optimised by spatial targeting.

We analysed data from all TB cases recorded in Ho Chi Minh City between 2020 and 2023. We demonstrated that TB incidence was highly spatially heterogeneous with hot spots of disease occurring in the central parts of the city for both drug-susceptible and multidrug-resistant TB. The geographically overlapping nature of the drug-susceptible and multidrug-resistant TB epidemics also raised interesting questions about how drug resistance is acquired – questions we hope to explore with the use of whole genome sequencing-derived genetic data in future.

Travelling to Ho Chi Minh City was an experience I'll remember forever. In the words of Anthony Bourdain, "Motorbike exhausts, fish sauce, the far-away smell of something... is that pork?... grilling over charcoal. Vietnam. It could be no place else." While initially overwhelmed by the city of 10 million people and nearly 10 million motorbikes, where I was more nervous about crossing the road than even my Rhodes Scholarship interview, I quickly felt enlivened by the city's energy and vibrancy which pulled me in from every direction. I walked the bustling streets of District 1, seemingly in perpetual motion, and enjoyed the tranquillity of the Saigon River, imagining all it had witnessed and the stories it could tell. I visited the War Remnants Museum and learnt about atrocities too quickly forgotten but also resilience that endures. Every street provided delicious foods like Bánh mì and Phở and some of the best coffee I had ever tasted (at prices that made coming back to the UK and buying coffee from Pret A Manger a soul-destroying experience).

Travelling to Vietnam, as a South African, to work on TB research (with a British supervisor) initially felt a bit... odd. Global Health and Tropical Medicine as disciplines have some sticky colonial roots and I was cautious about being part of a research system that was extractive – benefitting the careers and livelihoods of academics in an ivory tower in the Global North at the expense of people with disease in the Global South. I was quickly reassured, however, upon learning about OUCRU's vision, mission and priorities. Vietnam is an extraordinary country, developing rapidly following widespread poverty in the post-American war era, and has become a regionally and internationally important centre of commerce and industry. The country is affected by many of the most important diseases worldwide, in terms of their global burden, and

thus provides a unique setting in which locally important research has tremendous global relevance. OUCRU has produced numerous practice-changing scientific achievements. Central to the unit's vision, however, has been the training of Vietnamese scientists and the development of local research infrastructure and capacity. OUCRU has managed to combine local interests and international expertise and resources to create a world-class Vietnamese research unit, in the heart of Vietnam.

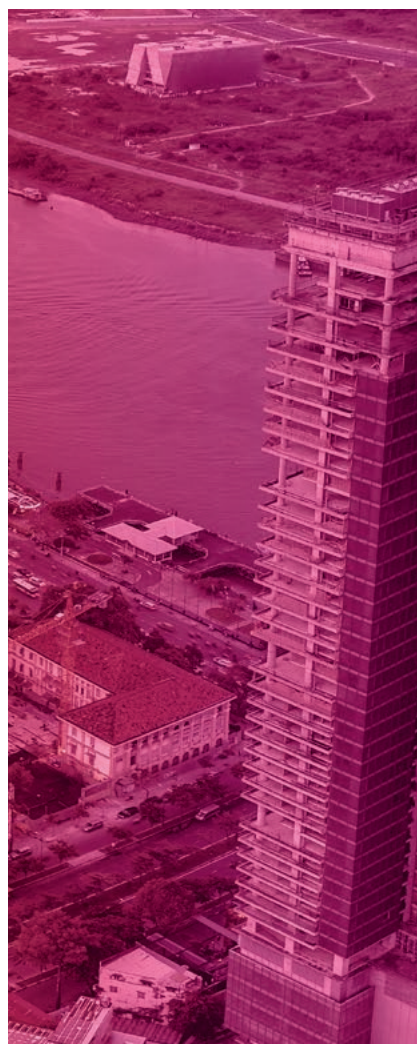
The opportunity to work with the TB group at OUCRU, which is active at the cutting edge of translational research, was not only intellectually nourishing but career-defining. I had the chance to join the group's academic meetings, discuss TB with field-leading researchers and bounce ideas off the group members, strengthening the quality of my own work. I also had the opportunity to join clinical rounds at the neighbouring Hospital for Tropical Diseases – an instructive first return to the clinical environment after temporarily hanging up my stethoscope on departure to Oxford in September 2022. Most importantly, I was able to expand my knowledge and skills in a field that I'm passionate about – knowledge and skills I hope to apply towards the fight against TB in South Africa and globally. I was excited to travel into the office every morning (it may have helped that my ride in was on the back of a motorbike!).

I travelled to Ho Chi Minh City to conduct research as part of my Master's dissertation. I left a few weeks later having accomplished so much more. As someone who was not particularly well-travelled, I could never have guessed how enriching experiencing new sights, smells, tastes, scenes, people and cultures could be. I formed lasting relationships, professional and personal, and I was inspired to keep fighting the good fight against TB. In the 2023/24 academic year I will enrol for a DPhil in Clinical Medicine where I will work with the TB group at OUCRU to try to answer the question 'How do people acquire multidrug-resistant TB?' I can't wait to go back.

I am beyond grateful to have received the Murray Speight grant which supported my travel to Ho Chi Minh City and allowed me to work with researchers at OUCRU as part of my MSc dissertation.



Central to the unit's vision has been the training of Vietnamese scientists



South African Literary Journeys

Justin Fox (South African College School, Newlands & Brasenose 1991) is a former editor of *Getaway* travel magazine and the author of more than 20 books. His latest travelogue is called *Place: South African Literary Journeys* and is published by Penguin Random House.

This book has been 15 years in the making and is the product of a number of journeys around South Africa. Much of my career has been in travel writing, either as a photojournalist or author of books ranging from coffee table to literary travel. But I also have a background in academia, having taught part time at the University of Cape Town (both in the English and Film & Media departments) off and on for 20 years.

The aim of *Place* was to try to marry those two worlds. I have an abiding love for travel literature (Chatwin, Raban, Macfarlane, Thubron, Dyer) as well as literature that foregrounds travel (Sebald, Conrad, Kerouac, McCarthy). Indeed, my own novels and poetry mostly have journeys of one kind or another as central themes.

Place is the account of a series of journeys around South Africa in which I use literary works instead of maps as my guides. While it is rewarding to engage with landscape through the pages of great books, it's even better to put boots on the ground, text in hand, and experience first-hand something of the authors' relationship with place, to hear the voices of their characters in situ.

This travelogue is, in a sense, my own love letter to South Africa, combining places and books that are close to my heart. It gave me a chance to explore notions about 'spirit of place', home and emigration, patriotism and the particular attraction of the South African landscape. *Place* is thus a kind of manifesto, bringing together my ideas

about writing and travel, land and literature.

The journeys for this book took me to the mountainous, moonstruck eastern Karoo of Olive Schreiner; the big-game Lowveld of Sir Percy FitzPatrick; the vast expanses and star-spangled nights of the open veld evoked by Deney's Reitz; the Bushveld of Eugène Marais's Waterberg; the savannah of Herman Charles Bosman's Marico; the plains of thirst and dust of JM Coetzee's Moordenaars Karoo; the subtropical hamlets of Zakes Mda's Wild Coast; and finally to the

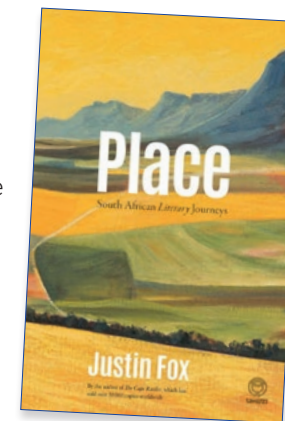
sandstone crags of Stephen Watson's Cederberg.

My choice of literary works was all about places of the heart, both for the authors and for myself. In some chapters, such as with Deney's Reitz, I set out to pursue plotlines, following a forensic trail

that sniffed out the book's exact locations, mirroring my work as a travel journalist. In other chapters, such as with JM Coetzee, my attention shifted to the author's intellectual and emotional response to a particular locale, and leant more towards academic delving.

The works I have chosen depict landscapes that have remained wild and largely unspoilt, rather than built environments. In each case, setting is no mere backdrop, but an integral part of the work and a reflection of the author's heartland. I wanted to celebrate how local writers, characters and readers are shaped and inspired by the South African landscape ... and how this troubled, beloved country of ours continues to be shaped by the vagrancy of our footloose imaginations.

I use literary works instead of maps as my guides





Bushbuck on a termite mound and waterbuck on the floodplain, both in Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique (images by Kathryn Grabowski)



Humans Versus Habitats

Kaitlyn Gaynor is a 2019 Schmidt Science Fellow exploring how human disturbance is impacting animal behaviour, work that could help us coexist on a crowded planet. Schmidt Science Fellows is an initiative of Schmidt Sciences, delivered in partnership with the Rhodes Trust, that identifies, develops and amplifies the next generation of interdisciplinary science leaders.

Wild animals need a lot of space, and we are taking that away from them. How do they navigate a world where human disturbances are everywhere and natural habitats are shrinking? Ecologist-turned-data-scientist Dr Kaitlyn Gaynor explores how our presence is changing the behaviour

of large animals across the globe, from black bears to snow leopards.

As a child, Kaitlyn was always interested in animals and why they do what they do. But it was watching monkeys brawling over juice cartons and chicken bones that first sparked her curiosity about how human presence changes the way wild animals behave. “I spent a year living in

‘Humans are changing the natural world on all scales’

‘We all have to become data scientists in ecology’

Kenya and watching these monkeys in these habitats that look really different from those they evolved in. They were living in monoculture plantations at the edge of villages and fighting over garbage. The more I watched, the more I realised how much their behaviour was shaped by humans,” she explains.

Kaitlyn’s work focuses on understanding how human disturbance shapes ecosystems, including its effects on animal behaviour and interactions between different species. Sadly, humans are changing the natural world on all scales. Climate change. The spread of diseases. Deforestation. Over-exploitation of natural resources. Roads and fences slicing through habitats. The list is long. By understanding what animals are doing in response to these disturbances, and why, researchers can better understand how to manage their behaviour and find ways for people and animals to co-exist on our ever more crowded planet.

A landmark study led by Kaitlyn in 2018 reveals the remarkable lengths to which wild animals will go to avoid us. Her research pooled data from many studies across the world and discovered a widespread effect: that animals living close to people are becoming more nocturnal. This held true across species, continents and habitat types, from antelope in the Zimbabwean savanna to tapir in the Ecuadorian rainforests.

In Nepal, where tigers and humans share the same forest trails at different times, this strategy works well to reduce human-animal conflict. But for other species, it could have far-reaching consequences for whole ecosystems. For example, in the Californian mountains, coyotes disturbed by daytime hikers now eat rodents by night instead of squirrels and birds by day. “That could potentially have impacts for the small mammal community: even though the small mammals aren’t directly responding to the hikers, their predators are,” explains Kaitlyn. “We need to

think about how we change our behaviour and policies to minimize that impact on animals. Co-existence is a two-way street. We can’t expect animals to do all the work.”

An ecologist by training, Kaitlyn is now assistant professor in biodiversity data science, leading her own lab at the University of British Columbia. She’s come a long way from her field research days, tramping around in rubber boots, clutching a clipboard. Today, she carries out bigger picture research. Her team uses GPS collars to track animals’ movements around the landscape and employs AI to classify and analyse thousands of images from camera traps, which take pictures of passing animals. By doing this, they can visualise the entire wildlife community of every animal species in both space and time.

Critical to this pivot into new research areas was Kaitlyn’s 2019 Schmidt Science Fellowship, which she says “really centres and values interdisciplinary collaboration”. Schmidt Science Fellows is an initiative of Schmidt Sciences, delivered in partnership with the Rhodes Trust, with a mission to support interdisciplinary science, accelerating discovery and driving societal benefit.

“As we increasingly turn to these tools like GPS collars, we all have to become data scientists in ecology. It’s not enough to sit there with your clipboard, you’ve got to actually process the data. You need a lot more technical skills in computing and statistical analysis,” Kaitlyn says. “What the Schmidt Science Fellowship did was offer me some time to hone those skills and to develop those collaborations with data scientists and computer scientists, so that I could speak enough of their language to work with them. This helped me to extract information from my data, and then to do statistical analyses to extract meaning from that information.”

During her postdoc, Kaitlyn worked with collaborators to develop an AI algorithm to classify which species could be seen in camera trap photographs from Gorongosa



Kaitlyn Gaynor deploying cameras during a workshop in Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique (images by Kathryn Grabowski)

National Park in Mozambique. Now, she’s heading up a major research project there. Thanks to the skills gained during her Schmidt Science Fellowship, she has joined the new AI for Biodiversity Change (ABC) Global Climate Center, an international collaboration of ecologists, conservationists and computer scientists who are developing better ways to merge AI and ecology to understand how biodiversity is responding to global changes.

Civil war in the 1970s had a catastrophic effect for both people and animals in Gorongosa. Once a renowned biodiversity hotspot, 90% of the animals were wiped out during the conflict in order to feed the country’s desperate, war-torn population. But recently, wildlife has been bouncing back and conservationists have reintroduced leopards, African wild dogs and hyenas. Research in Kaitlyn’s group at UBC is monitoring how human disturbance has changed the balance of animal species that are present compared with before the war and how these new predators will shape the ecosystem.

What Kaitlyn loves most about her job is her colleagues, who share a “childlike curiosity and a motivation to do meaningful work. It can be discouraging to work on conservation issues, because there’s a lot to be pessimistic about. But it’s really the people that I work with at my university and around the world that help me stay optimistic and excited,” she explains.

Conservation success stories like the restoration of Gorongosa also give her reason to be cheerful. “Every year I go back, I can see more and more animals and it gives me hope. And also where I live in North America, the default was, until recently, to just kill wild animals. Especially large carnivores, because they were dangerous and eating our livestock. But attitudes are changing, policies are changing, and there is now a desire to find solutions for co-existence. And that gives me optimism.”



Is There a Case for Optimism in Technology?

Peter Andringa (Virginia & Exeter 2021) is a journalist and technologist working on public-interest news and is currently a visual investigations reporter at the *Financial Times*. Here, he draws out the themes of a discussion about public interest technology at the recent Rhodes Technology & Society Forum.

This is the question moderator Rachael Merritt (Michigan & Exeter 2022) asked, turning to the assembled panel of activists, human rights researchers and social entrepreneurs beside her on the Public Interest Technology panel at the Rhodes Technology & Society Forum. Stephen Damianos (Pennsylvania & Balliol 2020) nodded, then paused. “I don’t think in terms of optimism or pessimism,” said Damianos, Director of Technologies and Human Rights at Perseus Strategies. “I think the reality is that the technology is here and is evolving at an exponential pace. The key question is how do we maximise the potential good and minimise the potential harms? Because there will be good and there will be bad.”

The panel on public interest technology was a much-needed dose of thoughtful consideration during a Tech & Society Forum that was – for the most part – looking forward to the exciting potentials offered by advancements in generative AI, robotics and other emerging innovations. During the panel, speakers turned a (constructively) critical lens on the way new technologies are built and sometimes used against the public.

For instance, consider automated tools like chatbots and robo-calls that now manage customer service at the vast majority of companies. While these might bring cost efficiencies and maybe speed up response times for the average customer, Damianos argued that eliminating humans can often foreclose opportunities for empathy, justice or special assistance – especially for customers (or citizens) needing special accommodations or experiencing edge cases. “When entire offices, agencies or products are digitised, you erase humans. If there’s not a physical person to talk to, a lot is lost. And one of those things is accountability,” he said. “I don’t know if anyone here has tried to get a visa appointment or a passport renewal recently – you probably didn’t talk to a person. If there’s no human to talk to, or if a government has subcontracted to a company that is based between five different countries... It’s very hard to even trace it, or find justice.”

The conversation highlighted the tensions created by innovation,



How do we maximise the potential good and minimise the potential harms?

efficiency and automation – which can sometimes benefit (at least parts of) the public, but usually also centralise power and control. “The panel is about ‘public interest technology,’ which almost implies the existence of ‘private interest technology,’” said Nasser Eledroos, an Atlantic Fellow and Policy Counsel at Color of Change. “We don’t often say it that way, but it’s the default of technology as we know it today.”

Adam Parr, an entrepreneur and investor, pointed out that the structural environment of capitalism makes truly public interest technology difficult. “It’s very hard to build a business,” he observed. “You have to make rules. You can’t just expect businesses to do the right thing, because they’ll do what’s needed to survive and to grow.”

Anna Brailsford, CEO of Code First Girls, agreed, noting that entrepreneurs, especially, have to be relentlessly focused on their own growth. “Start-ups bend over backwards for clients,” she said. “When you’re starting out, you’ll do things that you won’t do down the line.”

How then, can we ensure that technology is not only used to advance private interests? To start, the panel agreed it was essential to spread technical talent not only throughout profit-seeking firms, but within government, civil society, NGOs and other organisations oriented towards public service. Parr noted that plenty of technologies throughout history have caused social, political or environmental harms – and argued that collective institutions, not technologies, were usually the best checks and balances.

Brailsford argued that educating more technologists and increasing diversity within the ranks of designers and developers is another prerequisite to ensure innovations are public-minded. She pointed to a partnership between Code First Girls and GCHQ – raising eyebrows among other panellists – to argue that it was more important to ensure that even the most controversial technologies are built by teams representative of the public.

Nasser argued that it wasn’t enough to have public watchdogs or mere representation, but that we need to install leaders to pursue the public interest at the top of governments and organisations. “The pipeline from non-profits to government or non-profits to corporations is exactly what we need to encourage,” he said. “It’s one thing to have that adversarial, knowledge-based approach to understanding technology – but that isn’t power itself. You need to give them positions to produce meaningful change in the public interest.”

How Can We Better Train Health Workers About Disability?

Many healthcare providers feel unprepared and unsupported when helping people with disabilities. How can we change this to reduce health inequalities for disabled people? **Sara Rotenberg** (Ontario & St Catherine's 2020) travelled to Ghana to see how this country's integrated disability training for health workers is leading the way.

At some point in our lives, most of us will become disabled. Congenital impairment, accidents, chronic and terminal illnesses or ageing makes it highly likely each person will become part of the 16% of the global population that is currently disabled. People with disabilities often have greater health needs than people without disabilities, and face a range of health inequities, including higher prevalence of HIV, diarrhoeal disease, diabetes and obesity. These inequities lead to higher mortality, resulting in a staggering 10- to 20-year difference in life expectancy globally.

While healthcare providers frequently treat with people with disabilities, there are several studies that show health workers feel unprepared and unsupported to provide care for people with disabilities adequately. Therefore, one of the key questions to improve these health inequities for this population is: how can we better train health workers about disability to reduce health inequities for people with disabilities?

To answer this question, and with the generous support of the Murray Speight Research Grant and Wallace Watson Career Scholarship, I travelled to Ghana – a country that has been leading on disability training for health workers. Most health workers in Ghana have received some form of training, ranging from a one-off workshop about disability and health to several years of sign language training as part of their health worker training. Since most countries do not have this level of integration, it is critical to learn how trained health workers use their training and what others can learn from this example to improve and implement their own efforts to train health workers.

In Ghana, I was fortunate to speak to a range of health workers who had been through training, as well as individuals who had led the training. These individuals spoke at length about the significant impact the training had on them individually and professionally. Two stories stick out as demonstrating the catalytic impact of this training.

First, one health worker told me she used to hiss at the people with



Most health workers in Ghana have received some form of training around disability



I am extremely grateful to the Murray Speight Research Fund, the Rhodes Trust and the Wallace Watson Career Scholarship for their support of this fieldwork and my research.

disabilities who would sit outside the sexual and reproductive health clinic, since she believed that they did not need or deserve sexual and reproductive healthcare. Since the training, she welcomes them into the clinic, gives them her phone number for any emergencies and understands how to support them in accessing their right to health.

Second, a trainer told me about the impact the training had on one of the community health workers. Because of the training, she ensured she saw the children with disabilities in each household she visited. At one home, she recognised the children with disabilities were not only kept inside and hidden from the community, but also did not attend school. She used her training to lead a dialogue with the family about the rights of children with disabilities, which encouraged them to send their children to school.

These examples demonstrate just some of the stories that showcase the transformative impact of this training and how a simple, cost-effective intervention can have such drastic impact on the health and lives of people with disabilities. While this highlights the effect of training, several challenges to full implementation remain, including sourcing sustainable funding for training programmes, having formal recognition in the health worker curriculum and having sufficient buy-in from health workers.

This research shows that training on disability can be an important tool to challenge negative attitudes that health workers may have about disabled people. However, the unsystematic nature of training currently leaves healthcare workers with different competencies dependent on their geography, educational background and level of seniority. Instead, health educational institutions and licensing boards should work towards standardising requirements for health worker training on disability, for example, listing it as a licensing requirement to ensure everyone has some form of training as part of the health workforce. This approach, rather than legal solutions, provides a tangible and enforceable way to integrate disability training into health worker curricula.

As health systems continue to recover and be re-imagined in the post-pandemic era, there is renewed focus on how to upskill, task-shift and retain health workers who are leaving the field in ever-increasing numbers. Empowering them with the appropriate tools to deliver high-quality care to people with disabilities – who have higher rates of health utilisation, worse health outcomes and higher mortality rates – is an important component of building disability-inclusive health systems. Therefore, disability training for health workers is an essential to empower health workers to treat all patients and should be rapidly scaled to meet people with disabilities' right to health.



Image by Tom Lindboe

Daughter of Art and Science

Dr Joy Buolamwini (Tennessee & Jesus 2013) is the founder of the Algorithmic Justice League. As a poet of code, she uses art and research to illuminate the social implications of artificial intelligence. Here, she reflects on where her search for truth began.

I am the daughter of art and science. My mother, Frema the Akan, is the first artist I knew. As a child, I sat next to her as she filled canvas after canvas with powerful colours and made creative ideas reality. Art supplies littered our garage, mixed among drawing books, portfolios, artificial fruits and flowers. My mother explored human conditions of the heart. Her work, she told me, was aimed at moving people to experience healing, to glimpse the divine, to be enraptured and swept into another place of awareness. I would observe her, deep in focus, considering the next stroke to apply to an evolving

piece of art. Her experiments and works in progress were a constant presence for me. Seeing her sculpt, paint, draw, and etch out art was a delight to my senses. Her four-foot paintings towered over me, and the smells of charcoal and turpentine tantalised my nose. Our world was an open invitation for me to try my hand at creative expression. I soon had sketchbooks filled with whatever had recently caught my interest – ramps, skateboards, mustangs, animated characters, guitars and amplifiers. My mother's voice of encouragement, a constant echo, gave me the audacity to explore my capacities and my curiosity. But artistic experiments were not the only ones that

‘From a very young age, I was emboldened to explore’

peppered my childhood. My father, Dr John Buolamwini, is the first scientist I knew. He worked on topics that would take time for me to learn to pronounce: medicinal chemistry, pharmaceutical sciences and computer-aided drug discovery using neural nets. Trips to his lab were fun and full of many things not to touch, a lesson I often learned the hard way. Chalk is not for eating. Dry ice burns. Walking to his office I would see hallways filled with scientific posters as he waved to colleagues and students. And then if I was lucky, while he worked on the latest grant, research paper, or other desk work, I got to play on one of the computers. When he walked to the freezer in his lab I trailed him like a shadow. He put on purple gloves, pulled out a tray, and placed it on a lab bench. I struggled to get the oversized gloves on my hands as my dad beamed at my efforts. Once I was protected, he placed a pipette in my grasp and gently applied pressure on my right thumb with his. Liquid drops bathed the cancer cells beneath our cradled hands, while my eyes widened with fascination and his beard tickled my head. Next to the lab bench sat more computers. He would show me machines linked to concepts like *flow cytometry*. I would look at the squiggles on the computers that I would later learn to call graphs.

Like my mother, he was working on experiments that required bold curiosity to ask unexplored questions. But while my mother asked questions of colours, my father asked questions of cells. In the midst of their explorations, I began to ask questions about computers. For instance, how did the images that I saw on the scientific papers come to be? They looked like abstract paintings to me. My dad showed me the software on his huge Silicon Graphics computers that would create these images containing ringlets and rods of bright reds and blues, representing different protein structures. The goal of feeding the cells,

designing medicinal drugs on the computer, running all the tests, and scrutinising the squiggles was to help people who were struggling with different conditions, from heart disease to breast cancer. He showed me the software to introduce me to chemistry, but I found myself more and more enamoured with the machines themselves. I quickly found games like Doom and Cycle that came preloaded. I listened to the whirs and beeps of a dial-up connection. In that office, I opened Netscape, my first browser experience into a portal I would later learn was the internet.

And so it was that, surrounded by art and science from a very young age, I was emboldened to explore, to ask questions, to dare to alter what seemed fixed, and also to view the artist’s and the scientist’s search for truth as common companions.

My parents taught me that the unknown was an invitation to learn, not a menacing dimension to avoid. Ignorance was a starting place to enter deeper realms of understanding. At some point, though, they would tire of my endless questions; after entertaining my curiosity for some time, my mother would sometimes bring me back down to earth with a gentle, “Why has a long tail . . .” elongating her words as she spoke. In addition to my parents, I turned to another source of knowledge, television. As first-generation immigrants settling into Oxford, Mississippi, my parents wouldn’t let me watch commercials: they wanted to shield me from the materialism that appeared to be the backbone of American culture. “You will never find your worth in things,” they cautioned. However, they encouraged me to watch educational programmes, so PBS became the television channel of choice in our home. I soon found myself anticipating shows like *Nature*, *National Geographic*, *Nova* and *Scientific American Frontier*.

There was one episode in particular that left a lasting impact on me. When I was around nine years old, I watched a segment about robots. The programme host visited a place called the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He spoke to a graduate student named Cynthia Breazeal

about her work on what she called social robots. Unlike the industrial robots I had seen before – hulking machinery set to tasks like stamping out sheet metal – her social robot was not focused on work but on connection and communication. She sat next to a robot she had built named Kismet, a dazzling and intricate web of metal and wires topped off with enchanting eyes, animated ears and a cheeky smile. The moment I saw the machine appear to come to life, I was mesmerised. Could I make something like Kismet? Could I go to a place like MIT, the ever-present backdrop to so many of the science and technology shows I watched? From that moment, I decided I wanted to go to MIT and become a robotics engineer. I was blissfully unaware of any barriers or requirements. I had more questions to ask of computers, nurtured in the incubator of youthful possibilities by the belief that I could become anything I imagined.

My first step toward building robots was learning how to program machines to do what I wanted. To give machines instruction, I discovered different kinds of programming languages. I started by learning the basics of HTML and CSS to build a website. These programming languages focused on structure and formatting. HTML allowed me to define the elements I wanted to see on a webpage, like a block of text, a button or an image. CSS let me determine what these elements would look like, from the colour of the text to how much space existed between elements. Each programming language had its own rules for how to give a computer directions. Soon enough I was using these skills to code websites for my high school sports teams and make some pocket money or barter. Even if I was a benchwarmer on the basketball team, at least I did not have to pay for my uniform or shoes.

I wanted to go deeper than websites, and I was curious about how to make games like the ones I played with my brother on his Nintendo 64 or Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2, which I enjoyed on my Sony PlayStation. So, I learned

another programming language called Java. Here, I was introduced to the concept of an algorithm. An algorithm, at its most basic definition, is a sequence of instructions used to achieve a specific goal. To make my character move around the screen, I would write code that followed a logical sequence. For instance, if the user hits the left arrow, move the character left on the screen. Algorithms like this, as I would eventually learn, would become the basis for more powerful and dynamic systems.

I followed my desire to work on robotics into college. By my third year at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, I was working on social robots. One of the professors I worked with, Andrea Thomaz, was a former student of Cynthia Breazeal’s. And to my delight, when I started working on Thomaz’s robot Simon, I learned that the code that was used to power it had descended from the *CREATURES* code library that once animated Kismet. My assignment with Simon was to see if I could have the robot engage in a social interaction with a human. I settled on working on a project called peekaboo Simon. The

aim was to have the robot participate in a simple turn-taking game with a human partner, similar to one that a parent might play with a young child. The larger aim behind this project was to see if we could have a robot play social games with young children and analyse how children responded and behaved during those interactions, thereby helping to diagnose early developmental delays or even early signs of autism. This kind of early detection could help a child receive necessary support as soon as possible.

To make this game work, I would need to get Simon the robot to detect a human face and direct its head toward the person. This was my introduction to face detection.

‘I was blissfully unaware of any barriers or requirements’

This is an excerpt from *Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines*. For more about this book visit www.unmasking.ai

"Shining A Light": Artworks at Rhodes House

Created by the Studio of Nicola Green to celebrate the Rhodes Trust's 120th anniversary, *I Am Because We Are* faces the history of the Trust through the lived experience of those in the Rhodes community. We discover some of the stories behind the work.

This collection of powerful pieces uses the history of symbols, images and patterns to tell the complex story of the Rhodes Trust's history and its community today. In taking the decision to produce a work of this kind, Nicola made clear that she aimed to "address the story of the Rhodes Trust, and the legacy of imperialism and white supremacy, by shining a light on the achievements of Rhodes Scholars in their full global diversity".

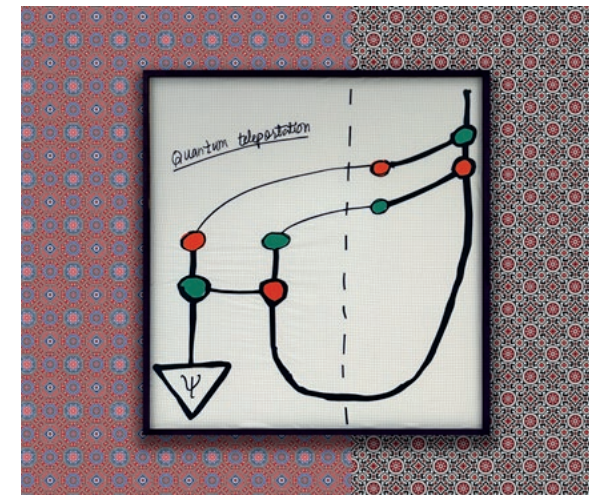
The arresting artworks were all constructed in two 'layers'. The first, 'Entangled Threads' consists of fibre artworks constructed using different techniques and embellishments. The second, 'Tapestry', sets each piece on a bespoke patterned background. Nicola's emphasis on fibre arts acknowledges how the history of textiles is interwoven with imperialism, industrialisation and capitalism. Nicola's use of patterns in the background tapestries reflects the way patterns allow us to make sense of the world, and the work proposes that textiles have been historically coded with racial otherness, in opposition to the primacy given to European fine arts. Woven together, all ten of the background patterns form a 'Rhodes Tapestry', showing unity in diversity and the Trust's commitment to equity and inclusion.

I Am Because We Are involved close collaboration between Nicola and her research team and ten members of the Rhodes community, ranging from Rhodes Scholars through Rise Finalists and Mandela Rhodes Scholars to Schmidt Science Fellows and members of the Atlantic Institute team. Here, we take a closer look at the 'Entangled Threads' artworks that grew from Nicola's work with the five Rhodes Scholars involved in the project and learn more about what inspired each piece.

Woven together,
the patterns show
unity in diversity

'QUANTUM TELEPORTATION'

Muhammad Hamza Waseem
(Pakistan & Magdalen 2019)



Hamza is studying for a DPhil in Physics and his work specialises in understanding the foundations of quantum physics, computing and linguistics. Before coming to Oxford, Hamza studied electrical engineering and helped to develop a quantum physics lab in Lahore. He is passionate about the popularisation of science and alongside his studies, he contributes to science festivals and outreach activities in the UK and Pakistan.

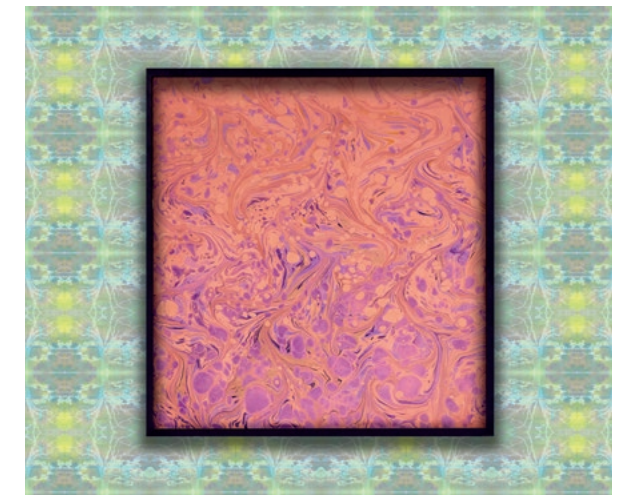
Using one of Hamza's hand-drawn diagrams, which employs Quantum Pictorialism (a diagrammatic formalism pioneered by Bob Coecke), this work has been embroidered, referencing the rich history of embroidery on the Indian subcontinent (where fragments of work from the Indus Valley Civilisation between 2300 and 1500 BCE have been uncovered during excavations).

"The joy of science, of comprehending what surrounds us, can be shared by all. Indeed, the laws that make the heavens go round stand above race, colour, caste, creed or religion and reveal themselves to those who wonder... science accepts all with open arms and an open heart."

Muhammad Hamza Waseem

'IRIDESCENT FUSIONS'

Lillian Ngo Usadi
(New Jersey & Magdalen 2021)



After graduating from the US Naval Academy, Lillian came to Oxford to study for an MSc in Engineering science in the Physical Acoustics Lab. Her work considers acoustics, the study of sound and acoustic cavitation, bubble formation in the presence of a sound field. Alongside her studies, Lillian is working on a project (with TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities) for the 3-D printing of ancient musical instruments in order to create an intercultural orchestra. Long term career goals include the advancement and exploration of music, science and technology, and after Oxford, she will go on to the US Navy as a submarine officer.

A luminescent piece that shows Lillian's multitude of identities, this work combines ideas from her current research on bubbles with her experience as a US naval officer and her background growing up in Basking Ridge, New Jersey with Vietnamese and Jewish heritage in a mixed family of artists, musicians, writers and scientists.

'WE LIVE FOR EACH OTHER'

Elizabeth Tuck
(Maritimes & Linacre 2020)

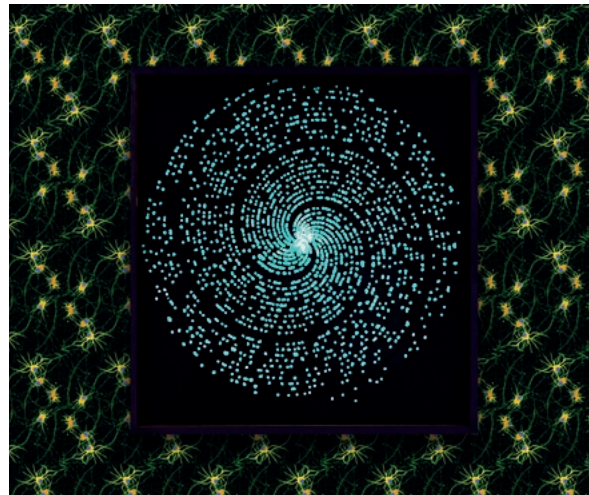


Originally from Newfoundland and Labrador, Elizabeth studied for an MSc in Comparative Social Policy before coming to Oxford. Her previous and subsequent degrees focused on Human Rights and Human Rights law, and she is involved in a number of organisations working for gender equity. She is a member of Fora: Network for Change and is proud to chair Fora's Rise on Boards steering committee, which places young women and gender diverse people from across Canada on governance boards in their communities.

This piece grows from Elizabeth's emphasis on her work as part of a community and her belief in our responsibility to others. The interlacing knitted yarn represents the strands that bind us together and stresses the importance of knitting as a social and community tradition, with knitting circles often serving as hubs of progressive causes.

'FINDING BEAUTY IN THE UNKNOWN'

Carina Letong Hong
(China & Hertford 2022)



Now working towards a DPhil in mathematics, Carina has already taken an MSc in neuroscience. Her time as a Rhodes Scholar has allowed her to branch out and explore new disciplinary areas and she has a particular interest in building communities.

Drawing on Carina's work in number theory, this work is designed to show the beauty of pure mathematics and the value it has when applied to fields from neuroscience to quantum computing. It depicts the Ulam spiral, a pattern made when plotting the distribution of prime numbers. Each dot represents a prime number in space and has been embellished by hand with diamond dust.

'ROUGH TERRAIN'

Jessy Phillips
(Ontario & Merton 2016)



After finishing her DPhil in Zoology (as part of which she conducted fieldwork in Antarctica), Jessy now works as a Community Support Specialist at the NGO Ocean Networks Canada in Victoria. Here, she supports community based ocean science monitoring. During her time as a Scholar, Jessy became fascinated by the landscapes she encountered while conducting fieldwork in Antarctica.

This piece draws on the history of Romantic artworks celebrating the power of nature. It deliberately contrasts the Jogakbo/chogak po style of Korean Pojagi patchwork (traditionally associated with the feminine and the domestic) with the way masculinity is often associated with Antarctic exploration. For Jessy, the question of colonialism's legacy is an important one when confronting the political aspects of Antarctic research.

“Antarctica has its own magic. Civilisation releases its grip, and you plunge into a new normal... Life on Nelson Island wasn't ordered by social norms, it just happened. Beauty, pain, life and death, all mixed together.”

Jessy Phillips

To see the full collection of artworks, and to find out more about the makers and craftspeople who worked on the project, see www.nicolagreen.com

The Rhodie

Dr Akudziwe Mawere (Zimbabwe & Balliol 2023) is a medical doctor studying for a DPhil in paediatric neurosurgery. Here, she recalls stories shared by her family, a brutal encounter, and her own reaction to a piece of terminology with a freighted history in her home country.

My father, bless his soul, grew up in *Rhodesia*, a small landlocked country in southern Africa. He was born in 1964, right in the middle of one of the great civil wars of the country, the second Chimurenga war. His birth certificate and official records register his birthdate as 1966. When the war escalated, he had to stay home for two years, much like what happened during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The only difference was that online learning wasn't an option back then. Even if it were, it certainly would not have been available to the poorly funded schools black children were confined to during the era of the Rhodesian government. The solution? Shift every kid's age by two years to erase the record of the 'furlough'.

He was lucky. During the war, he was just a *mujiba* and all he had to do was act as a look-out with the other young boys. He was too young to be enlisted into the liberation army. His older sisters were not. One almost died during the battle of *Sinoia*. She survived only because she muddled her face with a fellow dead comrade's blood and played dead. The other was driven into psychosis and still has recurrent PTSD symptoms. *Qué pena*. My father told me she was the smartest of them and could have become a medical doctor like me. Now she spends her days fighting off the side effects of antipsychotics.

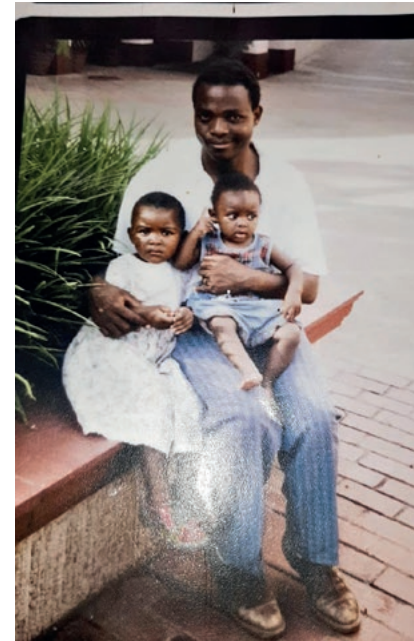
These are some of the stories I grew up hearing about the pre-1980 period. The stories are not just ones I learnt and read about in history classes, although I did a fair share of that during my O-levels. They are lived experiences of loved ones just a generation from me, people who somehow managed to find happiness during such an uncertain time. Ever optimistic, when they narrated their stories, they prefaced with the fact that worse things happened to other people in *Rhodesia*.

For obvious reasons, this period of overt racial discrimination and human rights abuse is not one Zimbabweans (or any decent human being really) generally reminisce about. Well, that is except for a subgroup



Finding happiness in an uncertain time – my grandmother, her sister and my father as a child in 1965 in Fort Victoria, now Masvingo

**Stories of civil war that
are lived experiences
of loved ones**



My father, with my sister and me

of Zimbabweans who have never identified as Zimbabweans since the beginning of Zimbabwe in 1980 and are hopelessly nostalgic about the Rhodesian era. They rejected this identity despite their glistening new ID cards and passports (where a new spectrum of colours have replaced the coat of arms flag) saying otherwise. I am talking about white supremacist Zimbabweans who still identify as Rhodesians or more tenderly as 'Rhodies'. Surprised, right? I kid you not.

Just so we are clear, I am not saying that every white Zimbabwean, even one hailing from the period, identifies as a Rhodie. Just a subset of ever so bigoted individuals who pass on the hate along the generations. Ones so overt that they liberally use the word 'munt' to refer to their black class or workmates, even in this age of heightened woke culture. Others are quite covert, so that you may be tempted to dismiss their comments about "Making Zimbabwe Rhodesia again" as a joke. The name, at least initially, was not imposed on them by anyone but rather used as a term of endearment within their circles, at their niche hang-out spots. I got a lesson in history once from a Rhodie.

I was in a plush Hararean suburb doing who the heck remembers what there. As my mother occasionally likes to remind me, over 40 years ago this place was out of bounds for people like us (unless you were a domestic worker). I got into a public conversation with a friend on the economic situation of the country and how things can be fixed (a whole different conversation which merits a 1000-page essay). A towering long-bearded gentleman, a contemporary of my father, was within earshot,

and so, of course, he had to join the discourse. His version of Rhodesia was much more glorious and rose-coloured than any I've ever read. Heck, I wanted to live there too! Then he told us all the ways 'we' ruined the country for 'everyone' in 1980. He proudly flaunted the Rhodesian flag tattoo on his arm. Talk about patriotism, am I right? I should say something, right? I tend to act quite cowardly when it comes to things like this. I am even hiding behind this reflection piece to initiate a conversation that will open the box of Pandora. So of course, I said nothing, but just remained wide-eyed in amusement. I thought such (overt) hate was a thing of the past. I felt a stab through my chest sharp enough to give an emotional tamponade.

You can imagine then my initial shock and horror when I was first publicly addressed as a Rhodie* in a Rhodes Scholar forum!

**Author's note: As I was doing some 'research' for this piece, I found out that the plant *Rhododendron* is also known as a Rhodie.*



Proudly Zimbabwean – me in a green jacket



The Rhodes Service Year Bolder Decisions, Uncertain Paths

The Rhodes Service Year is occasionally granted to Scholars when it is clear that such a year will be as transformative an experience as further study would be. Here, **Anish Gawande** (India & Brasenose 2020) shares experiences of Pink Sabha, an ambitious Service Year project in LGBTQ+ rights.

W

hen I applied for the Service Year towards the end of my second year at Oxford, I was uncertain as to whether

I would receive funding for the ambitious project I had proposed. After all, a third year of funding – and for a Service Year, too – was highly unusual, so I did not have high hopes of a successful application. Anxious, I applied for a DPhil in addition to stave off the question of what life after the Rhodes would look like.

When I was informed that my application for a Service Year had been successful, I was thrilled. Until this point, I had been applying for jobs in policy and public relations in the UK to stay on in London after completing my Master of Public Policy at the Blavatnik School. I changed track immediately, hastily prepared to move to India, and started searching for apartments in New Delhi to work on LGBTQ+ rights in the country. My Service Year project built upon the work I had begun before the Rhodes with The Pink List, an LGBTQ+ political advocacy organisation I had created in 2019. Titled Pink Sabha, the project sought to hold the first parliamentary summit on LGBTQ+ rights in South Asia.

Moving to India was a difficult choice: it was much easier to be out and proud in London, much easier to have a strong political voice in the UK than in the contested political landscape in India. Moving to New Delhi was an even more difficult choice: I had grown up in Bombay and had no family in the city and only one friend I was close to. The first few months were hard. It took a while to get started on work, primarily because I was busy setting up a new home and trying to set the foundations of what have – over the course of the past year – become important friendships that have served as sources of care in a new city.

The work was two-fold: the first part involved revamping the database created by The Pink List of statements made by Indian politicians on LGBTQ+ issues. This was a technologically intensive process and was certainly beyond

my individual skillset. That's where Muhammed Razzak (Diocesan College, Rondebosch & Hertford 2020) and Tala Ross (South Africa-at-Large & Keble 2020), fellow Scholars and computer science DPhil students, came in. With their help, I applied for the Minderoo Oxford Challenge Fund in AI Governance – and secured funding to create a cutting-edge platform that would allow anyone to type in their address and find their MP's report card on LGBTQ+ issues.

The second part involved reaching out to MPs and bringing them on board for the parliamentary summit. This was more challenging than I had previously assumed. Multiple attempts to meet parliamentarians were met with lukewarm interest, with only a handful of India's 543 elected MPs being willing to engage in a substantial way on LGBTQ+ issues. Delays in actually receiving the funding from the Minderoo Oxford grant – which resulted in subsequent delays to the creation of the platform – also meant that precious time was wasted in coordinating logistics rather than focusing on the task at hand.

In January 2023, however, a significant development changed the trajectory of my work. The Supreme Court of India, in a landmark move, admitted a clutch of petitions from across the country – including ones by fellow Indian Rhodes Scholar and my mentor Menaka Guruswamy (India & University 1998) – on marriage equality. Over the span of the next four months, the court heard the matter at a record pace in a move that

generated unprecedented national interest in LGBTQ+ issues. The findings of Pink List India's database were presented before the Supreme Court and the work we had done so far became a part of a historic constitutional court's deliberations on equal rights.

This allowed me to engage in public deliberations on LGBTQ+ rights in the mainstream print and television media. Articles in the *Times of India* and the *Hindustan Times* and interviews to Times Now and Mirror Now helped establish the need for political engagement by the queer community. Conversations with lawyers and

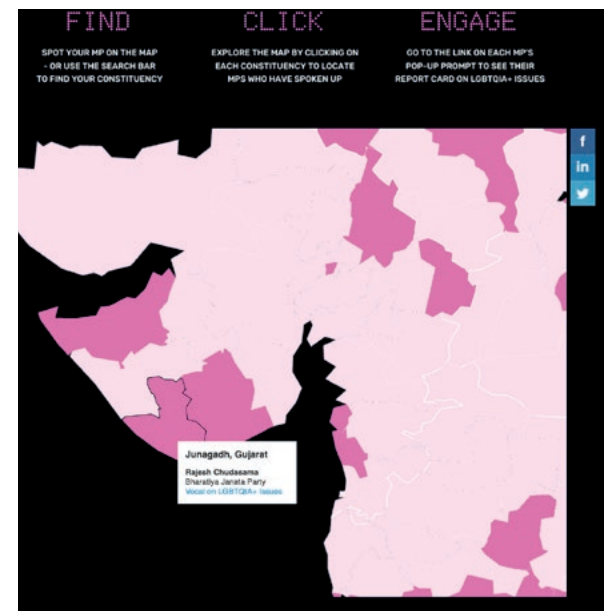
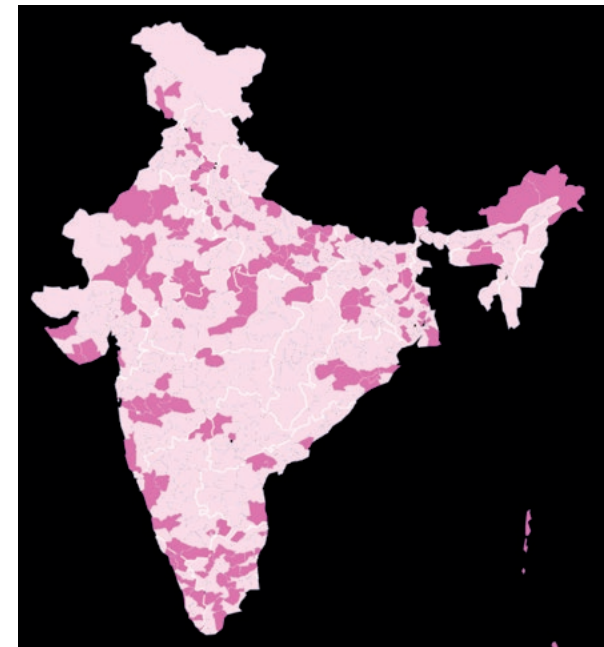
activists, journalists and friends helped build the case for a Plan B in case the Supreme Court did not rule in favour of marriage equality.

In October 2023, the Supreme Court of India passed its verdict on the matter. While establishing the

need to prevent discrimination against queer people, the court stopped short of granting marriage equality and instead left the decision up to the government by saying that it was not the job of the judiciary to legislate. This came as a major setback to many of us who had expected at least some concession – in the form of a recognition of civil unions or some form of partnership – for queer couples.

The aftermath of the verdict has re-energised the push for political accountability on LGBTQ+ rights. While unfortunate, the court's decision has made the urgency of Pink List India's work – and the Pink Sabha project – even more evident. Our work has attracted not just national but international attention – after the verdict, we have been featured on NPR and the BBC World Service and I have spoken at the Human Rights Campaign's annual Global Summit in Washington, DC.

The Service Year served not only as an opportunity for me to embark upon an important project that gave back to the communities I belonged to, but as an integral enabler of bold decisions that go off the beaten path. While the Service



Year funding might be over, the progress made over the course of the past year – which would have been impossible had I needed to also work a full-time job alongside heading Pink List India – has laid the foundation for more ambitious projects in the months to come.

‘The work we had done so far became a part of a historic constitutional court’s deliberations on equal rights’

ROTC to Rhodes: A Sikh Military Scholar's Experience in Oxford

Jupneet Singh (California & Green Templeton 2023) is reading for a Master of Public Policy and is also a Second Lieutenant in the US Air Force. Here, she reflects on her Rhodes experience (so far) and why diversity in the military is so important.

"You? But, you don't look like you're in the military." I've gotten this comment many times during my time in the Air Force. I remember the first time I heard it here was when my taxi driver picked me up in front of the nearest US Air Force base to Oxford. He said "You are NOT what I was expecting! They let people like you in the military?" It was definitely jarring to hear that after stepping into the car, but he ended up asking me about my entire backstory of why I joined, what I'm doing at Oxford and my future career plans. Here at Oxford, I've had the chance to unpack these statements with my military and non-military friends, and further understand my stance on important issues.

In many ways, I understand where the comment comes from. In my degree programme, the Master of Public Policy, there are a number of military members. I am the only person of colour out of all of us. The US military is less than 20% women, and women of colour are an even smaller minority. I'm also not a very imposing figure in stature, being 5 feet 1 inch (although I try to round up sometimes). But deeper than this is the issue of diversity in the military, which is something I want to advocate for. Our military is an incredibly influential institution on the domestic and international stages. It should represent in view and in demographic the country that it fights for.

Coming to Oxford, I knew I would be an active-duty Air Force Lieutenant, but I did not know what that would look like. Being the first Air Force ROTC Rhodes Scholar, there were no predecessors to lean on. Everyone else is a United States Air Force Academy graduate, along with the two other academies, West Point and the Naval Academy.

Doing Air Force ROTC, or Reserve Officer Training Corps, was a defining part of my college experience at MIT. Experiencing the community and leadership in ROTC was what made me stay. My final semester in ROTC was when I started taking a hard look at what I wanted to do in the military. I was the commander of our detachment, the highest-ranked cadet, and after the semester, I found out I was the first



Me at commissioning after receiving a sword for being a Distinguished Graduate (in the top 10% of Air Force ROTC graduates in the nation)

Our military should represent the country that it fights for



My dad, my grandparents and I when I took Amrit at Harmandir Sahib in August 2019. The sign above translates as 'Amrit Sanchar Hall at Sri Akal Takht Sahib. Amrit Sanchar is every Sunday and Wednesday at 12'



My family and I when I commissioned into the Air Force in June of 2023, from Air Force ROTC Detachment 365, Doolittle's Raiders, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

person of colour to be commander. During my semester, many of the younger female cadets who were also people of colour would come up to me and express how seeing me in this position of leadership made them feel they could also succeed in the military. At a time when the entirety of our senior leadership had no minorities until very recently (General CQ Brown, Jr became our first African-American chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff last year), and is still 90% white, representation is very important to inspire our next generation of military leaders.

My reason for joining the military has shifted considerably over time. One thing that has stayed constant is the connection with my Sikh identity. Being Sikh is a large part of my life, as right before college I took Amrit, or became 'baptised,' which means I pledge to follow Sikhism and never cut my hair, along with carrying a kirpan, or a small knife. Sikhs have a long military heritage, dating back to the 1500s when we fought the Mughal Empire, and since then we have fought for the oppressed. Being in the military has allowed me to deeply connect to this part of myself.

Coming to Oxford, I love being a part of the Rhodes community, the Rhodes military community and the wider military community. I'm grateful to be among peers with whom, even if they do not agree with all the institutions I am a part of, I can still have thoughtful and kind conversations. Ultimately, these conversations are the most special to me, because they force me to answer questions about what

I want to represent and do with my eventual platform.

Representation is just the first step. After the Rhodes, I will be attending medical school. I plan to become an Air Force surgeon and work to close the inequities in health outcomes that racial minorities experience. Part of this will be advocating for larger policy changes outside of healthcare, such as the need for outreach to diverse communities, a stark lack of representation at high leadership positions and a focus on this issue from the institutional level.

Grappling with questions about my place in an institution is not unique to the military - it applies to Rhodes itself and Oxford, to name a few. But I believe that these questions are what allow us to continue being pioneers.

From Silicon Valley to Oxford: A Career Odyssey

Lara Hoyem has spent 25 years in the world of consumer start-ups, including work for BabyCenter.com, Shutterstock and Study.com. She applied to Oxford Next Horizons, a six-month experience for those in mid-to late-career looking to reflect and reinvent, to explore new possibilities. Here, she shares her journey.

I came to Oxford to initiate change in my career. After 25 years of working at internet start-ups in Silicon Valley, I wanted to explore international development. I was looking for a new career path with a clear sense of purpose, one that allowed me to leverage my experience while continuing to learn and grow, and honestly, I didn't feel like I still fit into the start-up culture that reveres youth. That may sound like a dramatic shift, and it certainly felt that way to me. However, after eight weeks on this journey, I can already see progress toward my goal, and I am eager to reflect on what has propelled me forward.

Firstly, I must credit the community that surrounds me. This primarily includes my Next Horizons cohort and leaders, but it also encompasses the broader ecosystem of students, faculty and researchers. I've also been using LinkedIn to reflect on my journey and finding support in that online ecosystem as well. These communities have provided me with support, encouragement, connections and testimonials that offer daily inspiration on this quest.

I realise I am fortunate to have the structured programme of Next Horizons and the resources of Oxford. However, reflecting on my career exploration five years ago, I spent almost three years intermittently discussing and evaluating my options with others before taking a leap and leaving the company I had been with



I have discovered a passion for exploring youth entrepreneurship

for 15 years. It took time because I was also a single parent, prioritising my children's needs, as various family milestones unfolded.

My efforts this time are more focused and condensed. I am basically following the same game plan: reaching out to friends and former colleagues, even before arriving in England, and then utilising introductions and references from my tutor and others to set up calls, grab coffee and meet to discuss my ideas and seek their reactions and suggestions. Through

these conversations, I have begun to formulate a plan.

The second thing I am doing as I pursue this journey is to take time for self-reflection, to understand my strengths, and the skills and experiences I want to leverage going forward. I know in my heart that I am an operator. I want to be close to the action and ideally partner with individuals or organisations that share a vision I can help execute. I also have extensive experience launching and growing consumer products that can serve me well in other settings.

Starting with such a broad area of exploration, I have been carefully reflecting on what excites me and what doesn't as I learn about different aspects of international development. From the environment to education, and agriculture to digital jobs, there are amazing initiatives around every corner, but I am not equally drawn to all of them. I have discovered a passion for exploring

youth entrepreneurship. I wouldn't have been able to pinpoint that at the beginning, but when I realised I was eagerly reading studies late into the night about effective educational interventions for entrepreneurial outcomes, I knew I had found it.

Finally, I recognise that this next step in my career change doesn't have to be a lifelong commitment. Reflecting on the first 30 years of my work life, I could never have predicted that a human biology major who started working in non-profit arts organisations raising money would end up owning the strategy for photo books, while developing a passion for data and insights spanning industries as diverse as online education and food delivery. As I explore what's next, I am looking to taking a step in the right direction, knowing there are likely to be several more steps afterwards.

The next exciting step for me involves applying to the Oxford Venture Builder programme to see if I can secure funding and find partners to develop a youth micro-entrepreneurship curriculum into a pilot in Kenya.

By the time the Next Horizons programme concludes, I hope to have something to share with students and funders, and I am confident that I will have gained valuable connections and knowledge about international development to take home with me.

While reflecting on what I wanted to share about my personal journey towards career change, I came across a *Medium* article about the Kotter Method of leading organisational change. I clicked through to see if there might be parallels between my career change and organisational change, and indeed, Kotter highlights these three steps, as well as others in an organisational context. He encourages the role of community through coalition-building. He specifies forming a vision by clarifying what will be different in the future and taking initiatives linked to the vision. Then he directs leaders to generate short-term wins to start building momentum.

To follow along on my career change odyssey, please find me on LinkedIn.



The Rhodes Outreach Ambassadors Program in Africa, in Partnership with the Carnegie Corporation of New York

In 2016, the Carnegie Corporation of New York supported the creation of the Rhodes Scholarships for West Africa and currently, 20 Scholars are selected from Africa each year. The Corporation has expanded their support, helping us launch our inaugural Rhodes Outreach Ambassadors Program in Africa.

20 Rhodes Scholars are selected from Africa every year; we offer three Scholarships for the region of West Africa, one for East Africa, two Scholarships for Kenya, two for Zimbabwe, two for Zambia and ten for Southern Africa. Our vision is to grow from 20 Rhodes Scholarships in Africa to 32. This will result in a cohort of up to 100 African Rhodes Scholars in Residence at Oxford at any one time.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York significantly propelled the Rhodes Trust's efforts to develop the continent's change makers by supporting the creation of the Rhodes Scholarships for West Africa in 2016. In recent years, the Corporation expanded their support to help us launch the inaugural Rhodes Outreach Ambassadors Program in Africa.

We are deeply grateful for the Carnegie Corporation of New York's ongoing commitment and investment in our shared vision. As we continue to work together towards our mutual goals, we look forward to building upon this foundation of collaboration and creating lasting impact in Africa and beyond.

THE RHODES OUTREACH AMBASSADORS PROGRAM IN AFRICA

The Rhodes Outreach Ambassadors Program in Africa is designed as a joint collaboration between the Rhodes Trust, the National Secretaries for Selection in each region, the intergenerational Rhodes Scholars in Residence and Alumni network and partnering academic institutions in the recently added constituencies of East



Brian Micheni (Kenya & St Cross 2020) a Rhodes Outreach Ambassador for East Africa, speaking to students in the University of Lay Adventists of Kigali, Rwanda

and West Africa. The mission of the program is to broaden awareness of the Rhodes Scholarship opportunity and the application pool in these regions.

On the ground, outreach is largely facilitated by current Scholars in Residence from Africa. Over the course of several weeks each year, they travel from Oxford to conduct both large-scale application workshops and small-group coaching and mentoring sessions at established partner universities in East and West Africa. During these sessions, the Ambassadors

connect with current students about the importance of seeking a world-class education to launch meaningful careers and positively impact their home continent. Along with an abundance of knowledge and experience exchange, students and faculty at the partnering institutions, as well as the Rhodes Ambassadors, gain an extensive, permanent network of talented, like-minded individuals.

In addition to broadening awareness of the graduate Scholarship opportunity among Africa's student hubs, one of the reasons that the Ambassadors program has become a priority at the Rhodes Trust is that we believe the Scholarship application process itself can unleash the potential and confidence of all applicants, even unsuccessful Rhodes Scholar candidates. It takes courage and often others' reinforcement to set a challenging goal like applying for a Rhodes Scholarship. Yet, it is just this kind of bold decision that serves as a building block for intrinsic motivation, clarity of purpose and a hunger for lifelong achievement. Applying for the Rhodes Scholarship – a process that requires self-reflection, critical thinking, seeking mentors and advocates and participation in preparation workshops – opens doors to even more opportunities for the most talented and motivated students. As just one example, in 2019 five of the ten West Africa Rhodes Scholar finalists (who were not selected for a Rhodes Scholarship) used the skills they had learned from the process to earn

successful admission to either Oxford, Cambridge or an Ivy League school in the US on alternative, full scholarships.

HOW IS IT GOING SO FAR?

In its first two years, the Rhodes Outreach Ambassadors Program in Africa has proven to be very successful in increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of submitted Rhodes Scholar applications across East and West Africa, while also fostering long term, mutually beneficial relationships between Rhodes Scholar Alumni

and a network of university faculty and students.

Over the past year, our Rhodes Ambassadors from Africa engaged in successful outreach visits to Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Cape Verde, Togo, Gambia and Sierra Leone. In East Africa, they visited Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi. In each of these regions, the Ambassadors conducted in-person outreach presentations at 40 different institutions, with student

attendance ranging from 20 to 200 during each event.

Since launching the Rhodes Scholar Ambassadors in African Program, we have observed a remarkable 150% increase in completed Rhodes Scholarship applications from West Africa, notably in countries where outreach efforts were expanded for the first time, such as Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Benin. Similarly, in East Africa, we witnessed a notable increase of up to 71% in completed applications from Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan.

We are confident that the successful launch of the Rhodes Outreach Ambassadors Program in Africa will set the stage for more meaningful collaboration between the Rhodes Trust, Oxford University and our African university partners in future years.

Elizabeth Nwarueze (Nigeria & Trinity 2021), a Rhodes Outreach Ambassador for West Africa, speaking to students at the University of Abomey-Calavi in Cotonou, Republic of Benin

“Applying for the Rhodes Scholarship was an occasion to think critically about my life journey, understand how my past experiences have shaped the person I am today and more importantly, plan my goals and future direction.”
Franck Nijimbere
(Burundi & Linacre 2019)



Arts and Social Justice as Local Act with Global Impact

Cristina A. Bejan DPhil (North Carolina & Wadham 2004) is an award-winning Romanian-American woman of culture. Her creative highlight of 2024 is launching her recently published anthology of plays *FINALLY QUIET: Four Plays from Bucharest to Washington DC* and script *Buchenwald* at the Drama Book Shop in New York City.

“In the beginning the theatre was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls ... The coercive indoctrination began! Now the oppressed people are liberated themselves and, once more, are making the theatre their own. The walls must be torn down.”

Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*

I learned recently to describe my professional life as a ‘portfolio career’. A multi-hyphenate theatre artist, author and spoken word poet, I have been extremely fortunate to work at the intersection of arts and social justice. My ‘day job’ has consistently been in education and research, most recently teaching history and theatre at Metropolitan State University of Denver: Colorado’s most inclusive institution of higher education and the first university in the state to offer in-state tuition irrespective of immigration status.

Ever since completing the DC Coalition for Theatre and Social Justice’s intensive training on Theatre of the Oppressed in 2015, I have taught Augusto Boal’s opening quotation and practice to my students. With my MSU Denver multicultural theatre course, the final exam has been a showcase of the plays we study in class, always followed by an illuminating talk-back discussion with the audience. Last semester’s showcase took place in a local art gallery and consisted of scripts by an array of playwrights (Palestinian, Nigerian, Jewish, Native American, Puerto Rican and African American).



Student Jaia Lovett performs a piece by James Brunt about police brutality in the US at Professor Bejan’s multicultural theatre student showcase, December 2022 (produced by MSU Denver and BiB)

For me, ‘social justice’ is a way of life. Each day I am guided by Desmond Tutu’s words: “Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.” With art in all forms, we can be constructively critical and honest, hold a mirror to ourselves, mourn, learn from our differences, celebrate our shared humanity, take risks and challenge the status quo. For ten years, I have been fighting this fight by running the grassroots cultural platform Bucharest Inside the Beltway (BiB), an initiative inspired by the fearless arts scene in my heritage country, Romania. And I have sought to promote social change in my own work, such as the subversive play *The Scholarship* (co-written with Denver actor James Brunt and performed by us on Zoom and Facebook Live during the pandemic), which argues for a name change in light of

“ I truly believe that art and social justice are inextricable ... [A]rtists have long been on the front lines of [social] movements because we document human lives, emotions and ideas ... My work as a writer and critic has been indelibly influenced by social justice work. I also constantly work to inject art into spaces where it isn’t always welcomed or appreciated.”
Tope Folarin (Texas & Harris Manchester 2004)

“ It seems to me that the arts – poetry, yes, but all forms – are the most complex technology we have for closing the distances between us.”
Jacquelyn Bengfort (North Dakota & Wolfson 2006)

Cecil Rhodes’ troublesome history.
But social justice requires more ‘us’ and less ‘me’. If we are going to return to the carnival that Boal describes, we need to tear down the dividing walls in our local communities and larger Rhodes community. For starters, the arts can teach us a lot about mutual support: more generosity and imagination, leading to more authentic dialogue, understanding, empathy, kindness, dignity and respect. What better way to encourage more “singing [together] in the open air” than by using this article, this space, to amplify those in our Rhodes community who are actively being the change by living their creative truths?

I am passing the mic to –

“ Growing up I was a competitive Ballroom & Latin dancer [and] one can only achieve the desired results by working as a team ... During my Theatre studies, performing on stage as an actor in front of unknown audiences further pushed me to show my drive and character to the public, regardless of its size, background or status.”
Bogdan Lytvynenko
(Québec Rhodes Scholar-Elect 2024)

“ Theatre is the art form that promotes freedom of assembly and communal witnessing ... [I]ts essence is collaboration ... Theatre trains its artists to listen and value and depend on each other ... I’ve made more than one show that gets people riled up and talking to each other and that is how social justice gets moving.”
Banuta Rubess (Ontario & St Antony’s 1978)

Countries represented by the Scholars quoted here include Kosovo, Nigeria, USA, Ukraine, Canada and Latvia. With the Rhodes Scholarship representing more constituencies across the world, we welcome new perspectives, experiences, history, memories, languages and stories. As we all fight for justice in our respective fields of expertise, opening our Rhodes community to truly embrace and celebrate the arts is a more concrete step to being the change than superficially referencing ‘social justice’ in your next application or job interview. Ready to tear down some walls and sing in the open air? Turn to your family, friends and local community. I took an arts and social justice facilitator training at Creative Strategies for Change right here in Denver. You might just find similar opportunities near you! And don’t forget to have fun.

You can find Cristina A. Bejan on cristinaabejan.com and LinkedIn.



MSU Denver alum Naweed Hoshmand participates in an evening of storytelling for Colorado’s refugees at Aurora’s Mango House, January 2024: sharing his father’s story of surviving three years of imprisonment by the Mujahideen in Afghanistan before moving to the US (event produced by Focus Points Family Resource Center and BiB)



Courtney Ozaki, Cristina A. Bejan and Christine Woods pictured after ‘ZOTTO’, Japanese Arts Network’s immersive theatre production in downtown Denver, August 2023: a show based on oral history of Japanese internment in Colorado during World War II (play promoted by BiB)



Spoken word poets Sir Harvey Fitz, Adela Sinclair, Lady Godiva and Bypo Phoenix pose after their performance at the Romanian Festival in Washington, DC, July 2023 (show produced by BiB)

“ We need to tear down the dividing walls in our local communities...
the arts can teach us a lot about mutual support ”

‘Çiknia jonë: Our Girlhood’

Elena Gallina (Idaho & Brasenose 2019) is the Rhodes Trust’s first Artist in Residence. In her exhibition ‘Çiknia jonë: Our Girlhood’, Gallina examines the Kosovar practice of collecting and trading paper napkins. After Rhodes House, this exhibition will be displayed first in the USA before moving across to Kosovo.

I grew up in Kosovo following the war of ’99. My parents were humanitarian aid workers/missionaries who moved there when I was just five years old and the country was never anything other than my home, even before we were a ‘country’ and instead a ‘UN occupied territory’. Kosovo didn’t declare independence until 2008.

This exhibition in particular is centred in Mitrovica, Kosovo, the city where I spent most of my childhood. It was often called the ‘epicentre’ of the war, and still today, if there are tensions, they often begin near the bridge which divides our city in half (Serbians to the north, Albanians to the south).

Since leaving Kosovo as a teenager to study and begin my career (focused primarily on women’s empowerment in post-war environments), people have often asked how I’ve done the work I’ve done. As a researcher and activist focused on combatting sexual violence in refugee camps and other volatile environments, I’ve witnessed immense violence. The #MeToo movement brought a lot of that to the fore, and increasingly we are able to articulate what it really feels like to exist as a female body within a patriarchal world.

However, there is also something about the warm light we emanate as women. What keeps me dancing in the face of some of what I’ve seen is the power of intergenerational circles of women who’ve held me and supported me, communion, laughter, cooking, practices of conservation, that unique combination of softness and strength. A particularly feminine grace. This exhibition was made in an effort to pay homage to the small beautiful creative ways in which girls and women the world over manage to live, work, play and exist, despite, and resisting, the parameters of a world dominated by violence.

This exhibition is about our (Kosova) napkin trading practice specifically, but it is metaphoric for our general tendency to *me rrujt* (guard and love and conserve) beautiful light-hearted things that are *vetem per na* (just for us.) This practice goes as far back as the ’60s (my oldest interviewee was 89), carried right through to my own post-war epoch. Through aunts, grandmothers, sisters, friends, cousins, daughters, many collections were passed down from generation to generation. Unfortunately, in my city (Mitrovica) most homes were burned during the war. My interviewees of the pre-war era talked about their collections

‘There is something
about the warm light we
emanate as women’

My Time in Oxford

Kathleen Burk (Rhodes Visiting Fellow & St Hugh's 1977) is Professor Emerita of Modern and Contemporary History at University College London and a Fellow of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. Here, she reflects on her experience in Oxford as a researcher under the auspices of the Rhodes Trust.

My time in Oxford began in September 1970, when I came up to St Hugh's College from California as an undergraduate; this was followed by postgraduate work from 1972 to 1976. I took my MA and DPhil degrees in the summer of 1977. Meanwhile, the Rhodes Professor of American History and Institutions, H.G. Nicholas, had alerted me in late 1976 that a Rhodes Fellowship, of which I had never heard, was coming up. I applied, was awarded it, and from 1977 to 1980 was the Rhodes Research Fellow for North America and the Caribbean, attached to St Hugh's. The Fellowships had been set up (I was later told by the chairman of the Rhodes Trustees, Lord Harcourt) as a means of breaking Rhodes' will, in order to include women amongst the Scholars. There were five Fellows, one attached to each of the women's colleges, although they were not all there at the same time. We were hardly included in the life of Rhodes House: I only recall one time when I was invited to a Rhodes event. I should add, however, that I was contacted once and asked to give a video interview about my life, so I do have a place somewhere in the Rhodes archive.

I was not fancy-free during my time as a Fellow. I had taken out an undergraduate student loan from the Bank of America, which apparently saw Oxford as an American university. My stipend from the Rhodes was £150 per month, and once it began arriving in my account, the Bank took one-third of it each month to begin repaying my loan. Thus, I had to work for 20 hours a week towards supporting myself. Professor Nicholas was putting together a book of the letters of Isaiah Berlin from Washington to the Foreign Office during World War II, and I was his assistant. As my field was Anglo-American relations, this was a comfortable fit. I also worked hard at my research, publishing three articles in major journals in 1979 and beginning a book based on my thesis. This did not, however, preclude an active social life: with lots of male and female friends and a fiancé, there was no lack of opportunities. Yet a profound memory of Oxford is walking in the autumn from the Bodleian to Magdalen for Evensong and then to St Hugh's, shuffling through the leaves on my way. My Oxford: work, friends and atmosphere.

The Fellowships had been set up in order to include women amongst the Scholars



burning, but also how they started again with helping their young daughters in the 2000s, my own generation.

As part of my praxis, in interviewing I asked women to comment not just on the nostalgia of our napkin trade, but on what womanhood meant to them: then, now, into the future. Too much photography and art focuses specifically on violence *against* women or the patriarchal barriers that define us. Here I am asking women simply to define themselves outside of that. This was an effort as almost every interviewee responded in the first instance with reference to our *sfidat* (challenges.) Their eventual thoughts, to dig deeper on what womanhood really means to them, are interspersed within the exhibition.

Documenting and commemorating something as 'simple,' 'cute' and 'mundane' as our napkin collections, what they meant to each of us in girlhood (ages 6 to 14), how they bound us to our aunts, mothers, cousins and other female neighbours, and what they still mean to us in our shared nostalgia and simple joy, is a sort of loving political resistance.

As I laid out my sister's and my own collection inside my studio (all 280 napkins), sitting with memories, moments, triumphs, silliness – our girls' world, amidst the backdrop of a divided city (Mitrovica) in a country awaiting independence (Kosovo), the place that still holds some PTSD for me, there's a warmth to our collections I hope to convey. We had *this* thing; it was ours.

Rhodes House is also a complex place with a very complex history; the legacy is heavy. I'm still figuring out what it means to be a Rhodes Scholar and artist simultaneously. But I think for me the significance of having women's voices, from my home, filling up the walls and bringing colour and joy into the room is significant and makes me proud we are making a place inside a space which has historically been emblematic of colonialism and patriarchy.

I hope that visitors to this exhibition will take away colour, a tenderness and a felt understanding that even amidst difficult boundaries there's something beautiful and special about the way women live, breathe, connect and celebrate the mundane – in this case, paper napkins. I hope the show provides a place for celebration and reflection of girls' history and ways of play.

You can read Elena Gallina's full artist statement at elena-gallina.com/project/ciknia-jone-our-girlhood/



The English Major in the Information Age

Blaine Greteman (Oklahoma & Merton 1997) is currently chair of the English department at the University of Iowa. **Jacquelyn Bengfort** (North Dakota & Wolfson 2006) spoke to him as he prepared to take up a new role as Dean of the Kendall College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tulsa.

Liberal arts is really about enabling free thought and free action



Blaine Greteman

I have been admiring your public defence of the liberal arts. You've quoted Brandon Busteed saying the term itself is a branding disaster. But I can't think of a better phrase – 'Freedom studies'?! A Gallup poll tried '21st-century skills'...

I think 'Skills' is wrong – for sure. I don't think it requires renaming, but we must remind people that liberal arts is really about enabling free thought and free action in our students and in ourselves. I think the other thing is making sure that we are speaking publicly. When I went for that initial Rhodes interview, I got the very typical question of, "Where do you see yourself ten years from now?" My answer was ultimately pretty modest: I wanted to be somewhere in an English department, teaching and writing about literature, and I wanted to be writing for the public.

And the general public is not reading literary studies journals.

You've got to be publishing stuff in the *Des Moines Register*. I wrote a piece on the liberal arts for *Tulsa World* the other day. That's a tradition that at times has been stronger in liberal arts disciplines than it is right now. During the 1980s and 1990s, our discipline became a little more inward-looking than it probably should have, and we maybe lost a little bit of that imperative to be justifying and communicating what we do.

The English department at Iowa is, nevertheless, very strong. How do you account for that?

In 2014, back when I was the director of undergrad studies, you could really see the numbers starting to drop, nationally. We dropped, too. As a department, we started to ask what we could do to be distinctive. On some level, it was pretty obvious. Iowa City is the first US UNESCO City of Literature. It's the home of the Writers' Workshop. We have at least three top MFA programmes here. On the other hand, it *wasn't* obvious, because we didn't have faculty, and we didn't know if we could responsibly teach a creative writing curriculum. We spent a lot of time talking about how we would ground it in our values. We launched the programme in 2015. Almost immediately, our numbers

started to go up, and the quality of our students went up. Ultimately, what I think the message is for other departments is not "Start a creative writing programme". It's "Figure out what you have to offer that is distinctive". My vision for the University of Tulsa is – Tulsa sits in the middle of multiple tribal lands and headquarters. It has one of, if not *the* best, collections of Native artifacts in the country, with the Gilcrease Museum. The campus sits a few blocks from the Greenwood District, which is where Black Wall Street was, and the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921. Tulsa has a really fascinating left-wing labour history to it. The Woody Guthrie Archives are there in Tulsa. Tapping into that history is something that we can do.

So it's not just, "We need to diversify our major offerings". It's figuring out *the* particular thing, locally, you can tap into.

That's what you build great humanities programmes around. Giving students the foundation, which is very capacious and global and trans-historical, but that also gives them the toolkit to figure out what they can do with those local resources that enables them to say something new and distinctive.

How does generative AI fit into this?

There are great opportunities with AI. If there's a threat to it, it is a threat to freedom, because it's a decision-making technology. It is very good at making decisions about the most probabilistic outcome. That's why AI is going to be good at telling our cars to make a right turn or a left turn or stop, and at diagnosing the right medicine for a particular ailment. There's this phrase that is being used a lot around AI that says, "You need to have a human in the loop". But that human needs to be more than somebody trained like another machine. They need to be deeply trained in what it means to be human. Taking that phrase "human in the loop" and making it meaningful, by informing it humanistically, is essential. That's what schools of arts and sciences and humanities programmes – well, it's not *what* they should be thinking about, but it's one thing they should be thinking about in these conversations around AI.

Borders, Binaries and the Certainty of Change

Nicola Browne is Atlantic Fellow for Social & Economic Equity, Northern Ireland. Here, she reflects on how changes in Northern Ireland have both mirrored and shaped the political, economic and cultural nature of this special place, sweeping away old truisms and bringing new opportunities and challenges.

Belfast city centre on a Saturday evening is full of life, with people animatedly chatting in groups and pairs, pouring out of the Victorian pubs and high-end restaurants, into waiting taxis and off into the night. “This place is transformed by peace; made technicolour by peace; made whole by peace.” So said US President Joe Biden, during his visit to Belfast in May 2023 to mark 25 years

since the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast agreement, which ended 30 years of conflict on this island. A conflict which cost the lives of almost 4000 people, injured more than 47,000 and injured communities across the political and religious divide to the trauma that comes with living under threat for three decades.

It was a peace agreement which required then US President and Rhodes Scholar, Bill Clinton (Arkansas

Belfast City Centre at night (image by Getty Images)

& University 1968), to take a “leap of faith” in becoming involved in the intense, detailed and often fraught negotiations of the 1990s. Today, Belfast City Centre is indeed transformed, most notably at its northern end with its modern glass buildings and the open plazas of the new University of Ulster campus, officially opened by President Biden during his short visit less than a year ago. Alongside them, brand new gleaming stacks of expensive student accommodation tower blocks, evidence of the economic peace dividend claimed by developers and investors in the regeneration of the city.

However, at the time, President Biden could hardly claim that every potential peace dividend had been realised since his visit took place against yet another period of collapse of the governing Stormont Executive and Assembly. This latest impasse had been prompted by the boycott of Stormont by the largest Unionist party, the Democratic Unionists, as a response to the post-Brexit arrangements in the Windsor Framework which they perceived as a threat to the future of the Union with Great Britain that lies at the heart of their political project.

Fast forward a year and following interminable political wrangling and a £3.2 billion cash injection from the British government, the Northern Ireland Executive is once again up and running. But even while this so-called ‘normality’ has been restored, one thing is clear. Northern Ireland’s skyline and cityscapes may be changing, but so, too, are its people in ways both obvious and subtle.

First, the obvious. This “Protestant State for a Protestant People” as described by Sir James Craig, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in 1934 is today led by Sinn Féin First Minister, Michelle O’Neill. That a state, gerrymandered into existence to preserve the privilege of one section of its people could, a century later, be led by a young woman whose family is steeped in Irish Republicanism has inevitably been the subject of

international media attention.

Secondly, and vitally, the UK Census of 2021 tells us that while our political structures continue to reflect only the ‘two main communities’ (Unionist and Nationalist), our population is radically changing. Those from a Catholic/Nationalist background now outnumber those who are Protestant/Unionist, a fact which understandably hit the headlines. Perhaps even more significant though, is the clarity about how the population is evolving, merging into three ‘blocs’: Unionist, Nationalist and Other with a roughly respective 40-40-20 breakdown. The binary is gone and old truisms are being swept away.

So, what does this mean for the future?

First, the Good Friday Agreement has at its heart a neoliberal economic model; a ‘rising tide lifts all boats approach’ where trickle-down investment of the type evidenced by Ulster University’s Belfast campus is a vital part of our daily reality of peace here. But this investment is leaving our most marginalised communities watching from the shoreline. As student blocks are

erected at pace, social housing construction has slowed to a trickle. Market-driven agricultural policies adopted by the Northern Ireland Executive have contributed to Lough Neagh, the biggest freshwater lake in the islands of Britain and Ireland, and the source of 40% of Northern Ireland’s drinking water, being declared an ‘ecological disaster’ replete with harmful blue-green algae. A peace founded on an extractive economic model harms us all, particularly the most marginalised communities, and is something that should concern us all.

Second, “Binary thinking will never get us beyond partition selves or partition nations.” So states Naomi Klein in her 2023 book, *Doppelganger*. How the people of Northern Ireland see themselves is changing, but the political structures of the Good Friday Agreement remain predicated on the binary thinking of the ‘two main communities’.

‘We are seeing a fading of the traditional community binary’

With the return of Stormont, Northern Ireland’s peace process has entered yet another new dawn but with none of the fundamental problems fixed. For some politicians, maintaining the binary is a winning card, allowing them to invoke the spectre of the ‘other’ on election day. But reform is on the horizon, and that challenge must be met if the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement are to be future-proofed.

Third, while the call for real engagement on constitutional change on this island grows louder, those who will cast the deciding votes are actually the 20% of ‘Others’ who do not define themselves as part of either of Northern Ireland’s ‘main communities’. Who will engage them? The cycle of politics in Northern Ireland, founded on the premise of division into polarised opposing camps, leads many to disengage from party politics. But this should not be mistaken for apathy.

The organisation I work with, Act Now, a people-powered campaigning community for Northern Ireland, is showing something both inspiring, and yet unsurprising at the same time. People here will readily act across differences to take action on issues that they care about from Lough Neagh, to poverty, to racism when they are given the opportunity, means and motivation to do so. Act Now works to provide campaign opportunities to people who do not see themselves as activists, but who care deeply about Northern Ireland as their home and where they live, work and raise their families.

Act Now recognises that traditional activist spaces are off-putting for many and so aims to give space for people to take different roles in change-making. The importance of this to me was driven home

during the Atlantic Fellows Global Leadership Convening in Sao Paulo, Brazil, last August. There, as part of a group of international Fellows, we visited and were inspired by the Landless Workers Movement pressing for land reform and for access to be given to the poorest of society, and by the Pimp My Carroça movement, working for greater recyclables by creating art through collective participation.

The fading of the traditional community binary is bringing our borders between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, between Ireland north and south, between the haves and have-nots, into sharp and unrelenting focus. How we, the people of these islands, respond to this changing demographic landscape will determine whether the “place transformed... made technicolour... made whole”, can be delivered to a sustainable future and a fairer, healthier, more inclusive society.

Nicola Browne (front row, second from left) attending the Atlantic Fellows Global Leadership Convening in Sao Paulo, August 2023 (image by Tuca Vieira)



Gaps are Gifts

Chishimba Kasanga (Zambia & Wolfson 2021) took her MSc in Social Science of the Internet from Oxford in 2022. Next year, she will begin her DPhil research. Here, she shares how it has felt to experience a pause in her studies and embrace the value of a time in between.

Getting the Rhodes Scholarship was meant to be my journey of being and becoming. Three years on, it's now my journey of being, becoming and unbecoming. As someone who struggles with uncertainty and spontaneity, I had neatly mapped out my Oxford academic journey. I would move straight from master's to DPhil, and it's a wrap. But life is what happens when you are busy making plans. I completed my master's but was not admitted to my DPhil programme of choice. I had no backup course or plan; it was the DPhil or nothing. I had nothing. My next best bet was taking a gap year.

At the time, the gap year felt like failing on a grand stage. How would I go back home (Zambia) and face everyone? Remember that I mainly applied for the Rhodes Scholarship to pursue a DPhil. A year ago, I was the girl in the local newspapers who was going to Oxford to pursue a DPhil. Still, my reality looked like going back home and living with my parents for a year before reapplying and hopefully getting readmitted. How do I explain the gap year concept to my working-class parents, who hardly ever take breaks from anything? I wasn't taking a break because I 'needed' one but because I did not get an admission. I found myself questioning my abilities. Do Rhodes Scholars get rejected from programmes? Was this the confirmation that I did not belong in Oxford? The hardest part was seeing the friends I came up with in 2021 'progress' while I remained 'behind'. While I was happy that they got admissions to exciting new programmes, I couldn't help but ask, why me? I had done everything by the book, so why was I not admitted? Being part of a group often makes us forget that while we are on a journey together, there are also different, unique paths one should take alone.

I was fortunate to spend my gap year working in Oxford. It allowed me to experience the city, not as a student. I was still connected to my Rhodes community, which allowed me to contribute to the Rhodes Legacy, Equity and Inclusion (LEI) working groups and the 120th anniversary celebrations. The working world is different from studying; it

requires you to speak even when your voice shakes, and working with the LEI groups helped me find my voice. The LEI groups comprise Rhodes Scholars from different years and constituencies. During our meetings, they constantly encouraged me to speak up and reminded me that my opinions and presence in the groups mattered. A reminder that I was enough. I don't think they knew how important it was for me to hear those affirmations. I was at a point where I was questioning myself and my sense of belonging.

My new reality was challenging; I constantly found myself in between. I was in Oxford but not as a Scholar. While on the one hand, I was immensely grateful to be spending my gap year working in Oxford, I was also despondent that my academic trajectory was not going according to plan. I decided to speak with our Scholar Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser, who encouraged me to embrace the in between and find joy there. I took her advice and reflected on other activities I could do while waiting for the next academic year. One of the things on my bucket list was travel. However, because of visa parity issues and the intensity of my previous master's programme, I had not been able to travel at that time. I decided to use this break as an opportunity to travel. Solo travel taught me that I could handle and navigate different situations.

That gap year was a much-needed pause to find my voice and carve out my space in Oxford

Initially, I thought I did not need the break, but I did. While coming to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar is a life-changing opportunity, more often than not, it feels like you are being uprooted from everything you know.


You are tested in ways you never anticipated because, by nature, Oxford is a complex, fast-paced environment; there are not many opportunities to stop and catch a breath before getting back in the arena. That gap year was a much-needed pause to find my voice and carve out my space in Oxford.

Things eventually worked out; I received not one, but two DPhil offers. It may not have been how I planned it or on my timeline, but it worked out beautifully. While I am on this journey of becoming Dr Kasanga, I am also 'unbecoming', choosing to let go of my timelines, embracing the detours and affording myself grace for the bumps along the journey. Reflecting on my gap year, I see it was a product of one of my most challenging moments but one of my best growth moments. With hindsight, gaps are gifts.



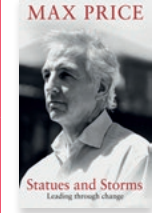
The Rhodes Virtual Bookshelf 2024

A selection of books written by Rhodes Scholars



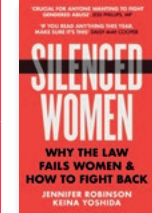
Courting India (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023) by Nandini Das (India & University 1997)

When Thomas Roe arrived in India in 1616 as James I’s first ambassador to the Mughal Empire, the English barely had a toehold in the subcontinent. Their understanding of South Asian trade and India was sketchy at best, and, to the Mughals, they were minor players on a very large stage. In Nandini Das’s fascinating history of Roe’s four years in India, she offers an insider’s view of a Britain in the making, a country whose imperial seeds were just being sown. It is a story of palace intrigue and scandal, lotteries and wagers that unfolds as global trade begins to stretch from Russia to Virginia, from West Africa to the Spice Islands of Indonesia.




Statues and Storms (Tafelberg, 2023) by Max Price (South Africa-at-Large & Magdalen 1980)

Statues and Storms offers a gripping insider’s account of Max Price’s tenure as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town during a transformative period in South African higher education. With a focus on leadership, the book also explores enduring themes in academia, including academic and artistic freedom, the limits of protest rights, institutional racism, culture and inclusiveness and the funding of higher education.



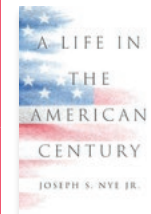
Silenced Women (Hachette, 2023) by Jennifer Robinson (Australia-at-Large & Balliol 2006) and Keina Yoshida

In 2017, allegations against Harvey Weinstein prompted a worldwide sharing of sexual harassment and abuse stories on social media. Just as #MeToo began to empower survivors to speak out about their abuse, perpetrators and their lawyers got to work trying to silence them. In *Silenced Women*, leading human rights barristers Jennifer Robinson and Dr Keina Yoshida expose the ways that the establishment has mobilised against change and sought to reinforce a system that keeps women voiceless. From the difference between the Amber Heard cases in the UK and the US, to the story of how Zelda Perkins became the first person to break her NDA against Weinstein, they draw on their own and others’ cases to explain how the law is being used to curtail women’s free speech – and what we can do to fight back.



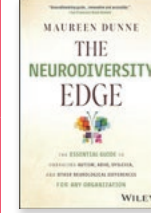
Unmasking AI (Random House, 2023) by Joy Buolamwini (Tennessee & Jesus 2013)

Unmasking AI goes beyond the headlines about existential risks produced by Big Tech. It is the remarkable story of how Buolamwini uncovered what she calls “the coded gaze” – the evidence of encoded discrimination and exclusion in tech products – and how she galvanised the movement to prevent AI harms by founding the Algorithmic Justice League. Applying an intersectional lens to both the tech industry and the research sector, she shows how racism, sexism, colourism and ableism can overlap and render broad swaths of humanity “excoded” and therefore vulnerable in a world rapidly adopting AI tools. Computers, she reminds us, are reflections of both the aspirations and the limitations of the people who create them.



A Life in the American Century (Polity, 2024) by Joseph Nye (New Jersey & Exeter 1958)

For the past eight decades, we have lived in ‘The American Century’ – a period during which the US has enjoyed unrivalled power – be it political, economic or military – on the global stage. In this deeply personal book, Joseph Nye shares his own journey living through ‘The American Century’. From his early years growing up on a farm in rural New Jersey to his time in the State Department, Pentagon and Intelligence Community during the Carter and Clinton administrations where he witnessed American power up close, shaping policy on key issues such as nuclear proliferation and East Asian security.




The Neurodiversity Edge (Wiley, 2024) by Maureen Dunne (Illinois & New College 1999)

The Neurodiversity Edge introduces a transformative framework for addressing the most important human resources opportunity of the 21st century. This trailblazing guide presents a groundbreaking new approach for bridging the staggering divide between organisations starved for motivated workers and the enormous untapped talent pool defined by cognitive differences – the 15% to 20% of the global population comprised of the autistic, ADHDers, the dyslexic, synesthetes, the dyspraxic and others with neurological differences.


SCHOLARS’ LIBRARY

Part of the Lifelong Fellowship portfolio, the Scholars’ Library is a monthly book talk series, open to Scholars and the general public. In each event, Scholars present, discover and debate their literary works with those in the community and beyond. Visit bit.ly/scholars-library to watch previous events, including several of the authors featured here.



The Knot of My Tongue (McClelland & Stewart, 2024) by Zehra Naqvi (British Columbia & Green Templeton 2018)

Naqvi follows a cast of characters from personal memory, family history and Quranic traditions, at instances where they have either been rendered silent or found ways to attempt the inexpressible: a father struggling to speak as an immigrant in Canada; a grandmother as she loses her children and her home after the 1947 Partition; the Islamic story of Hajar, abandoned in the desert without water; the myth of Philomela who finds language even after her husband cuts off her tongue. Brilliantly blending the personal and the communal, memory and myth, theology and tradition, the poems in this collection train our attention – slow and immediate, public and private – on our primal ability to communicate, recover, and survive. This example is striking for the power of its speaking through loss and a singular, radiant vision.



Boundary Lab (India Viking, 2024) by Nandan Kamath (India & Balliol 2000)

Why should we care about sport and its governance? Sport is a petri dish. In it, society tests not only human limits but also individual and collective attitudes and norms, often before they impact the wider world beyond the boundary. In its quest for universal rules, organised sport must regularly balance multiple interests and answer difficult questions. This helps sport – and through sport, society – to tweak laws, markets, morals and technological advances. The outcomes of the resulting debates influence the way we live, view each other and organise our world.

How Social Media Helps Us Reach the Next Generation of Rhodes Scholars

With copycat scholarships on the rise, attracting top global talent is becoming ever more competitive. Communications Manager Susanna Griffiths outlines the role of social media in helping us to maintain the edge in our outreach efforts and remain one of the world’s most prestigious international scholarship programmes.

HELPING US TO REACH POTENTIAL APPLICANTS GLOBALLY, AT SCALE

We can target and tailor content according to each constituency’s particular needs and challenges: whether that’s attracting more women in STEM in India, helping smaller constituencies reach students who might already be studying overseas, or raising the profile of the Global Scholarship where it is virtually unknown, for example in Latin America. Last year’s paid outreach campaign reached 20.8 million potential applicants, and when asked ‘How did you find out about the Rhodes Scholarships?’ 23% of eligible applicants cited social media as the source.

We can use the results of campaigns to refine and improve activity (for example, the 2024 campaign reached 38% more potential applicants with the same budget as 2023). We can learn which tactics and messaging work best in different parts of the world, and feed this back into our wider outreach campaigns and activity.

FACILITATING DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

We respond to hundreds of comments and direct messages about the Rhodes Scholarship every year. Some are simple requests to signpost information; many are complex queries about application and selection processes. This is a great opportunity to address common misconceptions or concerns and offer a positive experience to young people still considering their scholarship options. From the very first exchange we can establish trust and meaningful connection.

Direct digital interaction, coupled with wider social

listening and data research, allows the Trust to gather feedback, identify trends and make informed decisions about how we support and encourage prospective applicants through our communications. When we understand the topics that applicants are struggling with most, we can address these in real time. For example, last year we trialled two Instagram Q&As with the Rhodes Trust Selection team answering questions on ‘Eligibility’ and ‘The Global Scholarship’, prompting a flood of discussion and engagement.

ALLOWING POTENTIAL SCHOLARS TO PICTURE THEMSELVES IN OXFORD

We have heard from both sides of the selection table that the down-to-earth, ‘behind-the-scenes’ style content that social media lends itself to so well has made a real difference in helping potential applicants feel comfortable to apply.

While a video detailing ‘cheap eats in Oxford’ might not seem the weightiest of topics, this kind of content performs an important function in helping potential applicants to understand what the day-to-day reality of life as a Rhodes Scholar will be like, and to decide if it is something that is right for them. Social media campaigns such as take-overs by Scholars in Residence allow potential applicants to learn about the Oxford experience directly from those living it at the moment.

The mythology of Oxford’s ‘dreaming spires’ might be a huge draw for some, but it can be alienating for others; and only tells part of the story. Social media can be a great way to draw attention to the many other wonderful things about this culturally rich, diverse and globally connected city.

CONNECTING POTENTIAL SCHOLARS TO THE WIDER RHODES COMMUNITY

When a prospective applicant visits our social media profiles they don’t just see and hear what the Rhodes Trust has to say. They also gain insight to the breadth and depth of work being undertaken by the wider Scholar community.

They can explore academic backgrounds, career paths and research interests shared by Scholar Alumni. They can experience a taste of life after the Scholarship, and see the impact Scholars have in their chosen fields. So, when you share your news with us, know that together we can inspire future generations of leaders and change-makers.

UPHOLDING THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP BRAND

Every post is an opportunity to tell the story of the Rhodes Scholarship in a unique and distinct way. We can explore the diversity of disciplines, demographics and perspectives that make up the global ‘unlikeminded but likehearted’ Scholar community. Social media offers myriad ways to express our values, mission and vision by shining a spotlight on different themes and voices.

The golden thread running throughout this is the commitment of each and every Rhodes Scholar to leave the world a better place than they found it. Through consistent and authentic communication, we can articulate what sets us apart from other scholarships. We can increase our credibility by tackling myths and stereotypes, and we can demonstrate transparency by addressing difficult and complex aspects of our legacy.

GIVING US THE ABILITY TO REACT TO SHIFTS IN DIGITAL HABITS

Generation Z, born roughly between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, exhibits distinct digital habits compared with previous generations. A preference for visual and interactive formats over traditional text-based content has driven a shift towards platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube and bite-sized content, such as short videos, and informational snippets.

However, looking at the global picture, Facebook still retains dominance in a number of parts of the world,

notably the continent of Africa, the Commonwealth Caribbean, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand. Luckily, we are able to spread our budget where we think our outreach effort will have most impact, but it does require a step-change in the content we produce – and being present on a greater number of platforms.

Gen Z values authenticity in their online interactions and they are more likely to engage with content that feels genuine and relatable rather than polished or overly curated. They expect openness and honesty; the long-term health of our brand will depend on our willingness to engage with this.

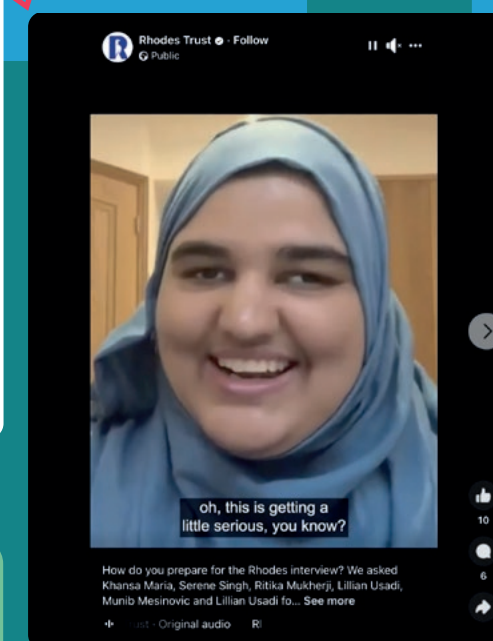
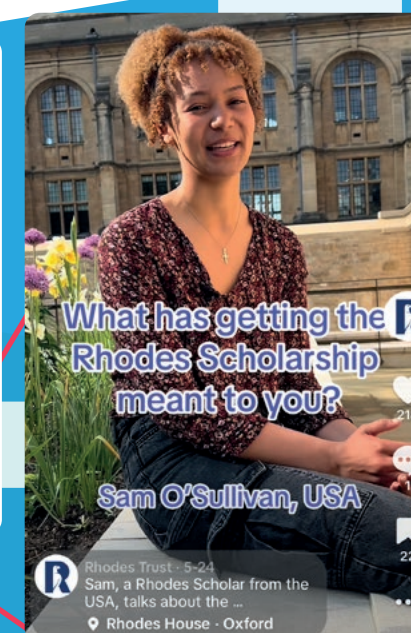
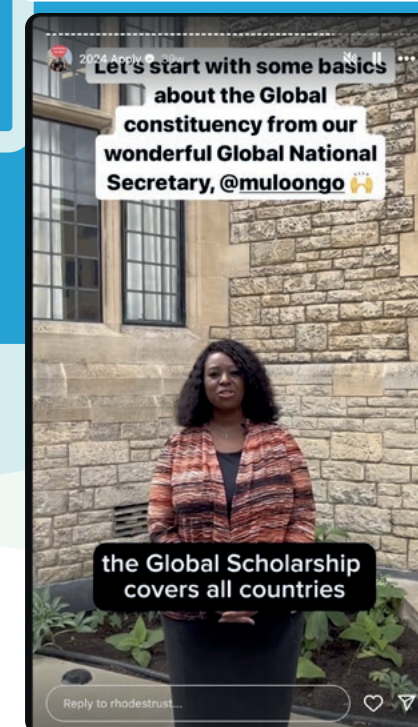
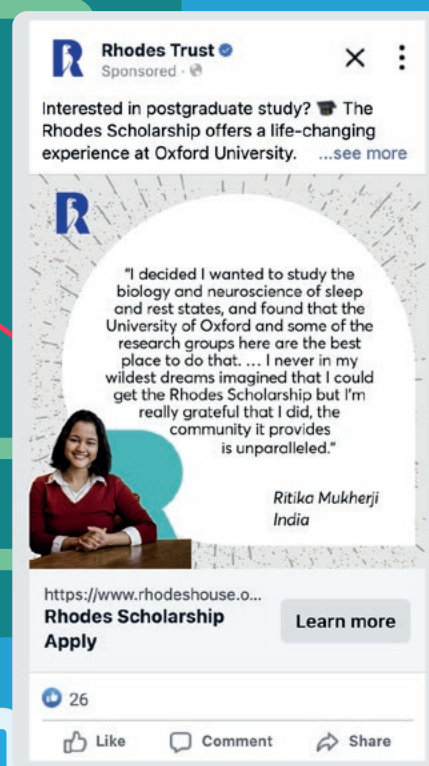
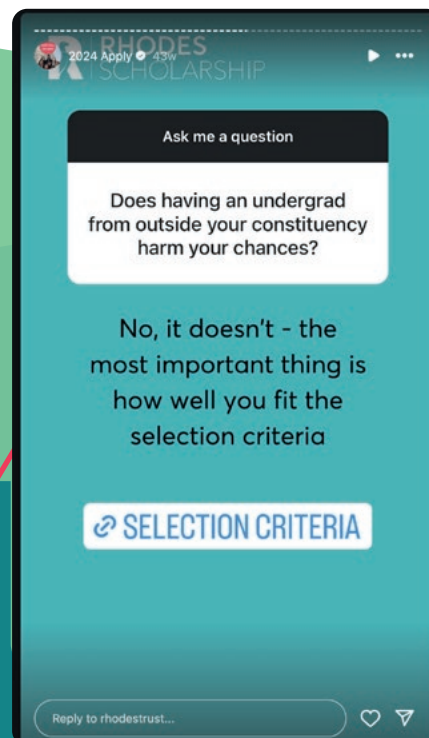
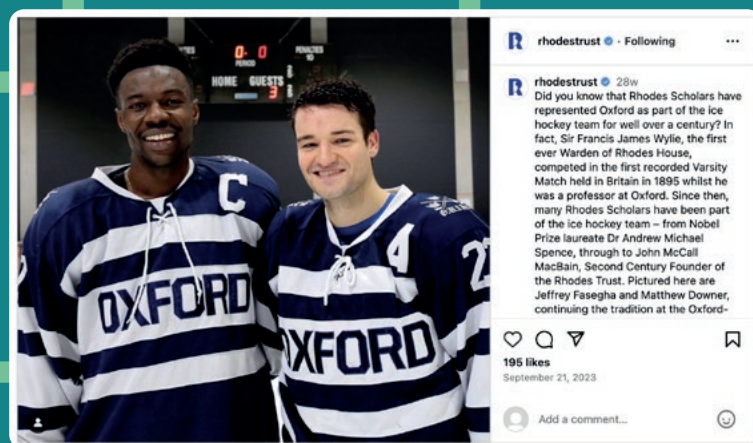
ENABLING US TO REACH NEW AUDIENCES

Increasingly we are looking at how we can use social media to widen our outreach. This might be about looking to institutions that can encourage and support talented students in their decision to apply, or reaching potential Scholars at different stages of the application pipeline, such as when they are still in high school or at the point when they need to be contacting referees. Whichever direction our outreach takes us, social media can augment and scale our efforts, and it is here to stay.



“When I saw the video with Rahul about how welcoming Rhodes is to people with disabilities. That’s when I decided to apply.”

Khansa Maria
(Pakistan & Harris Manchester 2021),
Social Media Ambassador



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Follow us on social media to stay up to date with your fellow Scholars, the Trust, and our partnership programmes. Use our handles (above), or scan the QR code.

Let us know what you think of our social media output.

Do you have any ideas for campaigns? Is there anything you would like to see featured that is currently not being covered? Have you seen something working on social media that you think could be an effective way for us to connect with the next generation of Rhodes Scholars? If you have a story you would like to share with others in the Rhodes community, then get in touch! Whether it's a thought leadership blog, a podcast with a Scholar in Residence, some nostalgic photographs from your time at Oxford or your latest research project, we would love to share the impact you are having with the world.

Lord Patten of Barnes announces his retirement

Christopher Patten, Lord Patten of Barnes, has announced that he will retire as Chancellor of the University of Oxford at the end of the 2023-24 academic year. He has been Chancellor since March 2003. In his retirement letter, Lord Patten expressed his deep connection to Oxford and his hopes that he will still be able to work for the University from time to time.

(Image by John Cairns)



Oxford malaria vaccine receives WHO recommendation

The highly effective vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and the Serum Institute of India, leveraging Novavax’s adjuvant, is critical to reducing over half a million malaria-related deaths annually. The World Health Organization’s recommendation enables UNICEF to procure and GAVI to purchase the vaccine, paving the way for the vaccination of children in populations most at risk.



(Image Copyright © University of Oxford Images/Public Affairs Directorate)

New Oxford research hub to propel transformative AI innovations

The University of Oxford is to share in a major £80 million investment to develop next-generation artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. The funding, provided by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), will support nine new AI research hubs in the UK. The Oxford hub, based at the University of Oxford’s Department of Computer Science, will focus on the mathematics and computational research which is foundational to AI and could unlock new, more efficient AI systems.

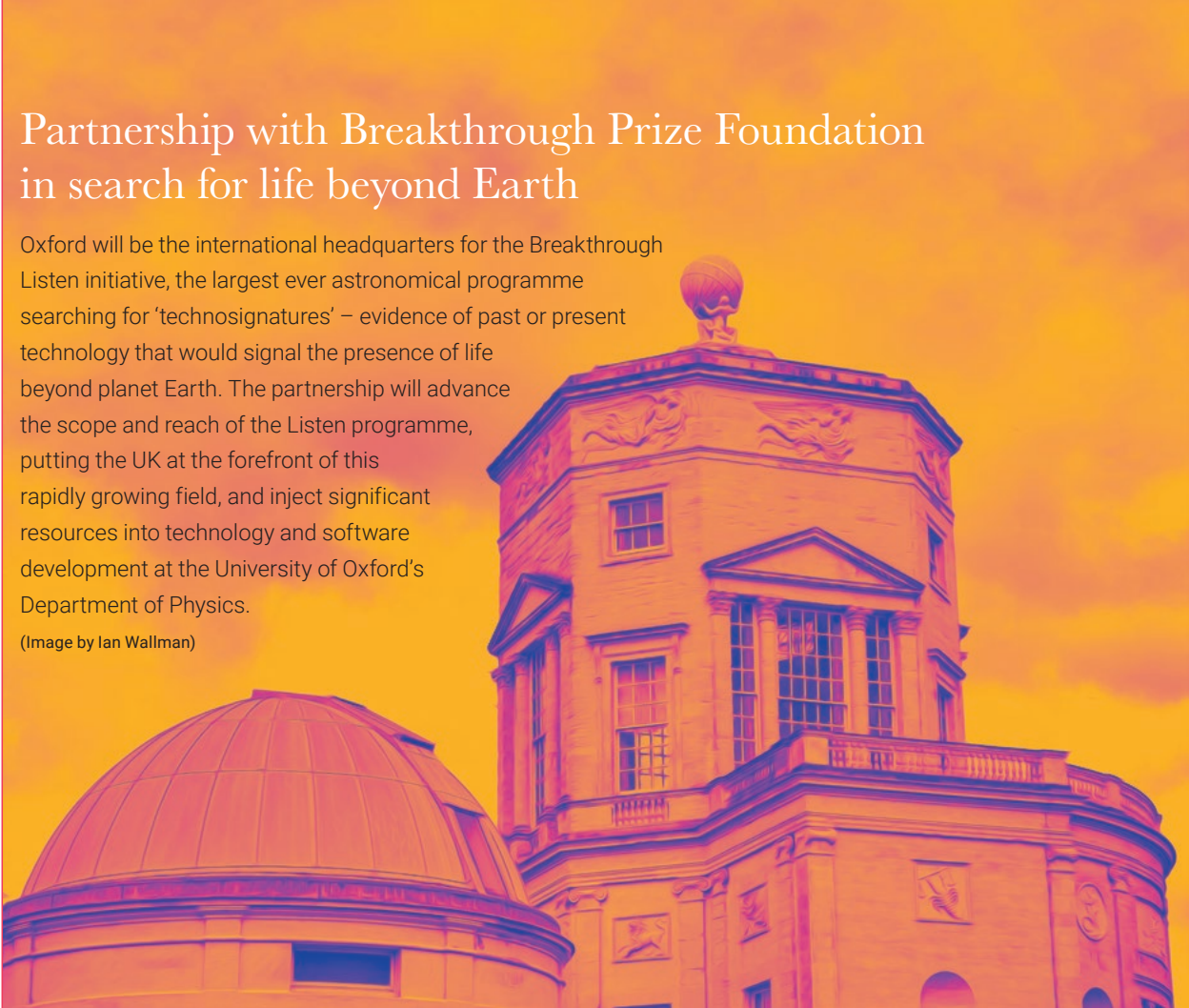
(Image by John Cairns)



Partnership with Breakthrough Prize Foundation in search for life beyond Earth

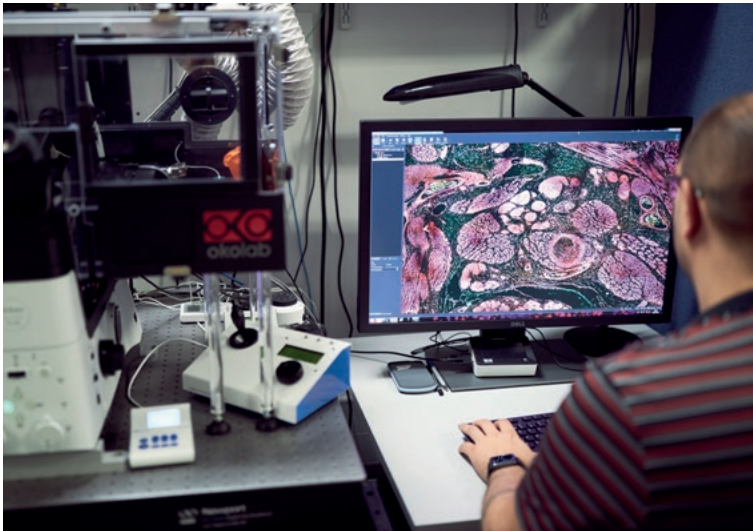
Oxford will be the international headquarters for the Breakthrough Listen initiative, the largest ever astronomical programme searching for ‘technosignatures’ – evidence of past or present technology that would signal the presence of life beyond planet Earth. The partnership will advance the scope and reach of the Listen programme, putting the UK at the forefront of this rapidly growing field, and inject significant resources into technology and software development at the University of Oxford’s Department of Physics.

(Image by Ian Wallman)



Research into ancient DNA sheds new light on neurodegenerative diseases

Research led by scientists from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Copenhagen, Bristol and California (Berkeley) reveals the evolutionary origins of multiple sclerosis (MS). This new insight into the genetic architecture of this disease not only alters scientists’ view of its causes but also carries implications for its treatment and paves the way for further investigations into related diseases. Published in *Nature*, the study utilises DNA analysis of ancient human bones and teeth held in museum collections across Europe and Western Asia.



(Image Copyright © University of Oxford Images/Fisher Studios Ltd)

Obituaries

Selected obituaries from the past year.
For all Rhodes Scholar obituaries, please visit
www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/alumni-volunteers/obituaries/

JUSTICE LAURIE ACKERMANN
[\(Cape Province & Worcester 1954\)](#)
14 JANUARY 1934 – 25 MAY 2024
Justice Laurie Ackermann made significant contributions to South Africa’s transition to constitutional democracy. Appointed by President Mandela to the first Constitutional Court of South Africa, Ackermann played a pivotal role in shaping human rights law and constitutional jurisprudence. His landmark judgments, most notably in cases regarding human dignity and equality, have left an indelible mark on South Africa’s legal landscape. In addition to his judicial contributions, we are grateful for his service as National Secretary for the Rhodes Scholarships in Southern Africa from 1988 to 2002.



JULIAN OGILVIE THOMPSON
[\(Diocesan College, Rondebosch & Worcester 1953\)](#)
27 JANUARY 1934 – 11 AUGUST 2023
JOT served as a dedicated Rhodes Trustee for many years and was a founding

Trustee of the Mandela Rhodes Foundation from 2003 to 2020. He played a pivotal role in connecting the founding CEO of MRF Shaun Johnson (South Africa-at-Large & St Catherine’s 1982) to Nicky Oppenheimer, resulting in the donation of the Rhodes Building to Nelson Mandela which later became the headquarters of the Mandela Rhodes Foundation.

KAREN BAKKER
[\(Ontario & St John's 1995\)](#)
6 DECEMBER 1971 – 14 AUGUST 2023
Karen was a member of the geography department at the University of British Columbia for 21 years and brought her geographical fascination with environmental perception and scientific world-making to the realm of sound. She authored more than 100 academic publications and seven books, including *The Sounds of Life* (2022), which builds a prismatic portrait of planetary ecology through sound and which garnered immediate critical acclaim.

PALATHINKAL GEORGE ISAAC
[\(India & Balliol 1952\)](#)
16 APRIL 1928 – 8 SEPTEMBER 2023
The managing partner of Malabar Coast Products and former chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Kottayam, he was the first Rhodes Scholar from Kerala. His brilliant academic track record, unique business skills and enviable contacts made him a spectacular personality. The areas of his studies spread out from political science to philosophy and economics and he held degrees in all of these subjects.

FRANKLYN PRENDERGAST
[\(Jamaica & Lincoln 1969\)](#)
7 MARCH 1945 – 12 OCTOBER 2023
Dr Prendergast was a force in science and medicine and a trailblazer in civil rights. In 1995, he became the first Black director of an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. Prendergast was a role model who encouraged young men and women to pursue careers in science and medicine at mainstream institutions. His opening of minds and widespread acceptance created opportunities for many others.



DICK STEWART
[\(Ohio & University 1961\)](#)
12 FEBRUARY 1940 – 3 NOVEMBER 2023
Richard Stewart was a University Professor and John Edward Sexton Professor of Law. He was recognised

as a pre-eminent scholar in environmental law and administrative law. Whilst serving as Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the US Department of Justice, he was instrumental in crafting major environmental legislation, including the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

EDWIN YODER
[\(North Carolina & Jesus 1956\)](#)
18 JULY 1934 – 30 NOVEMBER 2023
Edwin M. Yoder Jr. was a journalist who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1979 for his stylish and erudite editorials at the now-defunct *Washington Star* and went on to become a columnist syndicated by The Washington Post Writers Group (WPWG). The Rhodes Trust are grateful for his long service to the Rhodes community through his role as Class Leader.



SUSAN CRAIGHEAD
[\(Vermont & Merton 1986\)](#)
18 MARCH 1964 – 29 DECEMBER 2023
Appointed to the King County Superior Court in 2007, Judge Craighead served as presiding judge during

the completion of the Clark Children and Family Justice Center and was a leader in efforts to eliminate racial disparities in the juvenile system. Judge Craighead served as a commissioner for the Washington State Court of Appeals for five years before her appointment to the Superior Court.

MICHAEL BENNETT
[\(Virginia & Balliol 1952\)](#)
7 JANUARY 1931 – 16 NOVEMBER 2023
Bennet was a world-renowned authority in the field of intercellular communications in the nervous system. His studies showed that electrical synapses play critical roles in connecting neurons and are especially important in synchronising inhibitory interneurons in the mammalian brain. He was a prolific member of the University of Chicago Marine Biological Laboratory scientific community for more than 70 years through his role as a trustee and co-founder of the MBL Neurobiology course.

DENNIS MORRISON
[\(Jamaica & Balliol 1975\)](#)
4 DECEMBER 1950 – 3 FEBRUARY 2024
Called to the Bar in Jamaica in 1975, Morrison practised for 25 years before transitioning to the Bench. He was appointed to serve in the Court of Appeal of Jamaica in 2008 and in January 2016, he was appointed president. He also served as a judge of the Court of Appeal of Belize, acted as a judge of the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal and served as a judge of the Court of Appeal of the Cayman Islands from 2015.

Appointments and Awards

Congratulations to these Rhodes Scholars on their recent achievements!

RICHARD POTOK AM (New South Wales & St John's 1984), NATASHA HENDRIK AM (Australia-at-Large & University 1993) and DAVID BEAN OAM (Western Australia & New College 1976) recognised in the Australian Day Honours for their outstanding service and contributions to Australia.



SERENE SINGH (Colorado & Christ Church 2019) and AIMEE CLESI (Florida & Balliol 2022) named as John Robert Lewis Fellows.

NANDINI DAS (India & University 1997) announced as winner of the 2023 British Academy Book Prize.

SUMMIA TORA (Afghanistan & Somerville 2020) listed in the BBC's 100 Women 2023.



KATHLEEN MCLAUGHLIN (Arizona & Balliol 1987) & ANA UNRUH COHEN (Texas & St Edmund Hall 1996) listed in TIME's 100 Most Influential Climate Leaders in Business 2023.

GINA RAIMONDO (Rhode Island & New College 1993) listed in TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2023.

SIR JOHN BELL (Alberta & Magdalen 1975) appointed a Companion of Honour in the King's Birthday Honours list.

CHRISTOPHER BROWN (Maryland & Balliol 1990) awarded Yale's George H.W. Bush Lifetime of Leadership Award for his work as a historian of Britain and the British Empire with special interests in the comparative history of slavery and abolition.

SHU NYATTA (Kenya & Linacre 2004) named an Aspen Institute Henry Crown Fellow for 2024.

WAWA GATHERU (Connecticut & St John's 2020) named an inaugural member of the National Environmental Youth Advisory Council of the US Environmental Protection Agency – the first-ever federal advisory council in US History to be led by youth.

MERATA KAWHARU (New Zealand & Exeter 1994) appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor Maori of Lincoln University.



MARK CASSIDY (Queensland & New College 1995) appointed Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) at the University of Melbourne.

SÍOFRA PIERSE (Ireland & Trinity 1994) awarded Chevalier of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques for distinguished contributions to education.

RILEY FAULDS (Western Australia & Worcester 2023) awarded the Jon Stallworthy Poetry Prize.

RICHARD JOSEPH (New York & New College 1966) selected as a 2023 ASA Distinguished Africanist by the African Studies Association for outstanding scholarship in African studies.

MIRRIAM MUENI (Kenya & St Cross 2021) awarded the Diana Award 2023 for her dedicated work in mentorship, volunteerism and charity in Kenya.



SAGARIKA GHOSE (India & St Antony's 1987) nominated as Member of Parliament (Elect) for the Rajya Sabha.

If you have a new appointment or award, please email: communications@rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk

1954



Robert O. Paxton (Virginia & Merton 1954) and his wife the painter and poet Sarah Plimpton moved to a retirement community, Kendal on Hudson, in Westchester Co., NY, at the end of 2022. They have found many congenial neighbours there, and often spend a day or two in Manhattan. They are largely retired, but Bob published a review of Julian Jackson’s book on the trial of Marshal Pétain in the December 2023 issue of *Harper’s Magazine* and Sarah continues to paint.



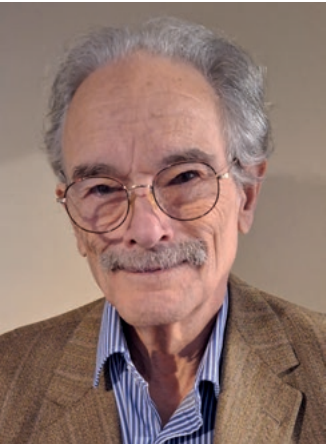
Robert (Bob) Porter A.C. (South Australia & Lincoln 1954) After retiring as Dean of Medicine at Monash University in 1997, Bob was recruited by the Queensland Government to plan and bring into operation Australia’s first regional medical school at James Cook University in Townsville. The school opened in 2000. He was also appointed Chair of a National Expert Advisory Group on Safety and Quality in Health Care (1998 & 1999) which reported to Australian Health Ministers. The group produced two reports which led to the establishment of a national health safety council in 2000. He is now retired and living independently in a retirement village in Queensland. He had been married for 62 years when his wife, Anne, died in May 2023.

1964



Robin Boadway (Saskatchewan & Exeter 1964) Robin retired and assumed the moniker David Chadwick Smith Emeritus Professor of Economics after a rewarding career of 45 years at Queen’s University in Canada. He misses especially working with, and learning from, enthusiastic undergraduate and graduate students, but relishes the opportunity to pursue other interests not too far from economics. These include some of the most difficult issues of our time facing Canada, notably federalism, environmental policy, tax-transfer policy and the advancement of indigenous peoples. Oxford has never been far from his thoughts. He particularly enjoys a lifelong connection to Exeter College and the many close associations he formed there, including especially the 1965 Cuppers-winning Exeter College rugby team.

Garry Brown A.O. (South Australia & Magdalen 1964) Garry worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Caltech where he began to build his subsequent academic career. He returned to the department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Adelaide, and after several years returned to Caltech as Professor of Aeronautics. After several years he returned to Melbourne, Australia, as the Director of Aeronautical Research Laboratory (Dept. of Defence) and then, after several years, he was invited to return to the US as Chair of the Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering Department at Princeton University. He remained in this position until returning to Melbourne in retirement. It has been a source of great pleasure and privilege to maintain close contact with former students from 1964 (graduate and undergraduate) at Magdalen.



Nicholas Bunnin (California & Corpus Christi 1964) is a philosopher who remained in the United Kingdom after obtaining his Oxford DPhil. He taught in Glasgow and Essex before returning to Oxford with a Leverhulme Grant to co-compile a *Dictionary of Western*

Philosophy in English and Chinese. Earlier, he and the eminent Chinese philosopher Qiu Renzong founded the Philosophy Summer School in China. For several decades, his publications have dealt mainly with Chinese and Comparative Philosophy, currently including three contributions to a forthcoming volume on Comparative Metaphysics. He has argued that the Rhodes legacy is safe only if the Trust publishes assessments of the good and harm done by Rhodes, the Trustees and the Scholars themselves, perhaps modelled on *Dictionary of National Biography* entries.



J Edward (Ted) Chamberlin (British Columbia & St Edmund Hall 1964) After a degree in mathematics at UBC, he read literature in Oxford and completed his doctoral studies at the University of Toronto. At the heart of Ted's work was storytelling, and he nourished this by teaching and writing (*If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* and *Storylines: How Words Shape Our World*) and by working with indigenous communities in Australia and South Africa as well as Canada and the US, helping in the preparation of their sovereign territorial land claims. He was senior advisor to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and is an Officer of the Order of Canada. He lives in Halfmoon Bay, British Columbia.

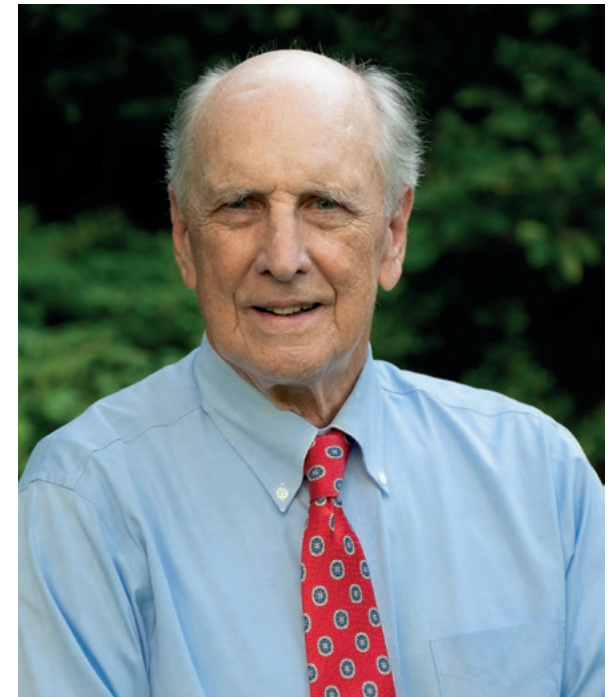


Richard W. (Bill) Johnson (Natal & Magdalen 1964) was elected a Fellow of Magdalen, teaching politics within PPE, in 1969. His years at Magdalen, dealt with in his memoir, *Look Back in Laughter: Oxford's Post-War Golden Age*, saw him author many books and articles. In 1995 he moved back to South Africa to become Director of the Helen Suzman Foundation. Having been an anti-apartheid activist in his youth he wanted to see the culmination of that struggle, though his experience of the ANC in exile had left him with no illusions about its ability to provide decent governance. Above all he wanted to study and write about this unique experience in which a relatively advanced country was taken over by a radical liberation movement. The results were catastrophic: 40% unemployment, steadily falling GDP per capita, runaway corruption and a failing state. Through it all Bill has continued to write and analyse South Africa's travail. Now 80, he is leading a major study of the country's 2024 election. He has no plans to retire.



David J. Lutzer (Nebraska & Balliol 1964) After leaving Oxford in 1966, Lutzer completed his mathematics PhD in 1970. His subsequent professional career has been a mixture of teaching, research and academic administration at the departmental and college levels in four US universities. He spent the last 24 years of his full-time faculty career at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia and retired in 2011. After retirement, Lutzer taught on a part-time basis at William and Mary and the University of Illinois until 2020. He and his wife Victoria now live in Urbana, Illinois.

Colin J. McMillan (New Brunswick & Oriel 1964) After post-MD training in Internal Medicine & Cardiology at McGill University, Colin practised cardiology for 44 years and upon retirement was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for services to the medical profession. He continues to work on a number of historical projects, including the history of the Rhodes Scholars elected from Prince Edward Island, 1904-1926, which includes a former Dean of Christ Church, Rev. Cuthbert Simpson. Colin, Sandy and daughter Virginia reside in Stratford, Prince Edward Island, in a renovated rural residence built by Scottish settlers in 1852.



Paul M. Pressly (Georgia & Balliol 1964) After working for an investment bank in Beirut, Paul went into secondary education, served as president of The Savannah Country Day School and chaired the boards of the National Association of Independent Schools and the Cum Laude Society. On retiring, he changed direction while remaining an educator at heart. As an environmentalist, he worked for the Board of Regents on state-owned Ossabaw Island. As a historian, he authored two books and co-edited two others, published by the University of Georgia Press. He was recognised for his research on Black Georgians heading south during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As a civic leader in Savannah, he chaired several boards of non-profits designed to address issues of sustainability and equity in that town.

Gerald Robertson (Diocesan College, Rondebosch & Balliol 1964) After leaving Oxford, Gerald Robertson spent three years as an assistant lecturer in theoretical chemistry at the University of Manchester and then held a French government postdoctoral bursary at the Université de Paris VI (Jussieu). In 1971 he was appointed to a lectureship in physics at the University of Cape Town, where he spent the rest of his career. In 1986 he was appointed manager of the UCT Laser Laboratory. This laboratory, financed by the National Energy Council, specialised in Coherent anti-Stokes Raman scattering spectroscopy, a non-linear optical technique which allows non-intrusive measurements to be made inside a running internal combustion engine or gas turbine. A principal application was investigating the kinetics of abnormal combustion in motor engines of Fischer-Tropsch synthetic fuels containing olefins.

Lee Saperstein (Montana & Queen's 1964) With his DPhil, Lee Saperstein went to Penn State as a faculty member in Mining Engineering; he served as Section Chair and Faculty Senate member, which he chaired in 1978-79. Thence, as Chair of the Department of Mining Engineering at the University of Kentucky, he helped to establish its academic credentials. His last academic position was Dean of the School of Mines and Metallurgy at the University of Missouri-Rolla, now MST. Throughout his career, he propelled engineering education quality through ABET, which he served as President, 1999-2000. Professionally interested in environmentally compatible mine design, workforce training and the health and safety of miners, he continues as a consultant to the mining programmes at NIOSH examining potential H&S impacts of modern technology.

Gavin Williams (Cape Province & Trinity 1964) taught at Durham University in 1967; he retired in 2010 as Fellow of St Peter's College and UL in Politics in Oxford. He learned from his students and 'taught them how to think'. He supervised 48 DPhil students, from 14 countries; five (co-)dedicated books to him. He studied Nigerian politics and societies, the World Bank's perversities, and the Idea of 'Development'. In 1991, he could return to South Africa and he researches the wine industry from 1655. In 2012, Rhodes University conferred a DLitt for published work in politics, sociology and history. He has retired, almost, from a career as a university 'troublemaker' (against an honorary degree to Mrs Thatcher, and 'modernising' Oxford's constitution). He still tries to write.



Peter H. Wood (Maryland & Merton 1964) attended a meeting of the American Historical Association in January 2024, where a session on 'Black Majority in the Age of Black Lives Matter' examined the lasting impact of his 1974 book about slavery in colonial South Carolina. That same month, W.W. Norton published an expanded and updated 50th-anniversary edition entitled *Black Majority: Race, Rice, and Rebellion in South Carolina, 1670-1740*, directed at a new generation of readers. After a career teaching early American history at Duke, Professor Wood now lives in Longmont, Colorado, with his wife, fellow historian Elizabeth Fenn. He continues to grow gourds and work on a book about the impact of forced Black illiteracy during the long era of enslavement.

1974



Nick Allard (New York & Merton 1974) wrote that the light of his life is his girlfriend of more than 55 years, Marla, and their large extended family. Recently when a young woman asked him, "What was the best thing about Oxford?" he answered without hesitation, "The people". Allard's Rhodes activities include long service as class secretary, secretary and member of various selection committees and the elected North American representative on the Global Alumni Advisory Board. His forthcoming book *The Long and Winding Rhodes* contains stories excerpted from nearly 1000 pages of 1974's annual class letters in *The American Oxonian*. Now the Founding Dean of Jacksonville University's new College of Law in Florida, previously Nick was President and Dean of Brooklyn Law School. His career spans significant government and political experience and senior partnerships in some of the world's most respected law firms. He is a Bodley Fellow at Merton, President of the Merton College Charitable Corporation, AARS Secretary, Trustee of the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC, member of Cambridge's Lucy Cavendish College Foundation Board and chairs the ABA's Committee on the Law Library of Congress.



Tom Barron (Colorado & Balliol 1974) served as president of a private investment firm in New York, then had the fun of switching careers. With his wife, Currie, he moved back to Colorado in 1990 to become a full-time writer and conservationist. Since then, he has published 32 highly acclaimed books under the name T.A. Barron. His podcast, *Magic & Mountains*, explores topics ranging from environmental challenges to tales of Merlin to young heroes. In addition to writing, speaking and producing documentaries, he's served on the boards of many environmental groups and Princeton University. He also founded a national award, the Gloria Barron Prize, to celebrate heroic young people. His favourite times are, as always, with his family outdoors in the Colorado mountains.



Theodore Burk (Kansas & New College 1974) is now in his 42nd year as a Professor of Biology at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He teaches a variety of biology courses at all student levels. His research for the last 26 years is a long-term study of butterfly populations, their flower visits, and their significance as pollinators at several tallgrass prairies (America's most endangered ecosystem). Much of his current activity involves citizen-science projects directed toward preservation of species and natural habitats.



Richard Cogswell (Tasmania & St Peter's 1974) moved to Sydney after completing his PPE degree. He practised law at the NSW Bar, holding a series of public sector appointments. He was appointed Senior Counsel and later became the State's Crown Advocate. He became a judge of the District Court of NSW and then President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal. He is retired and holds a part-time appointment as an Honorary Professor at the University of Wollongong teaching mental health law. He has been President of his Real Tennis Club and Chair of the Guiding Board of the World Community for Christian Meditation. He is presently Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese of Grafton. He has been married to Anne Collier since 1979 and they have two adult children.



Graham Craig (South Africa-at-Large & Brasenose 1974) On going down Graham worked on projects for the southern African mining industry, including development of educational facilities. Since moving to Australia, he has been active in financial services. During the past decade he has served as Treasurer and Victorian Secretary of the Association of Rhodes Scholars in Australia, on the Rhodes Trust's Global Alumni Advisory Board and as a selector for the John Poynter Scholarship which makes an annual award for study in Australia to a runner-up from Rhodes Scholarship selections in Africa and the Indian sub-continent. He and Helen have enjoyed their 49-year association with and participation in Rhodes activities and reunions and look forward to the 50th anniversary reunion of the class of '74 in Oxford.

Dominic L. Fenech (Malta & St Peter's 1974) After completing his DPhil with a dissertation on Anglo-Vatican diplomatic relations, Dominic joined the Malta Labour Party as general secretary, thinking that he would make a political career. But after a few years he yielded to the pull of academia and embarked on a career teaching and researching history at the University of Malta. There he occupied (and still does, as professors are not easily put out to grass as long as they're sound of mind) a number of positions, including Head of the History Department and Dean of the Faculty of Arts. His main research and teaching interests are political and constitutional history, international relations and contemporary Mediterranean politics.

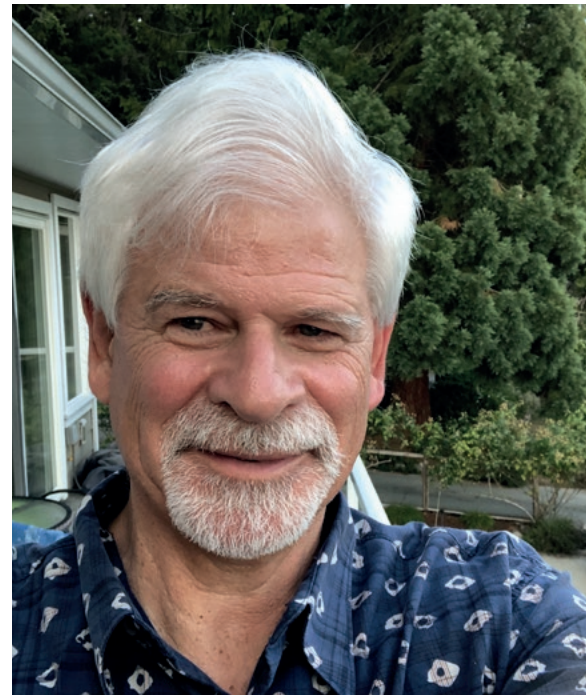


Charlie Garvin (Mississippi & University 1974) After graduating from Harvard Law School, Charlie joined the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), later departing as an officer and director to co-found a BCG venture capital affiliate and several start-up companies. Charlie currently leads a biotech firm, Riptide Bioscience, developing cancer therapeutics. Charlie may have begun a family latest among our 1974 class, with one of two sons still in high school; those two and Charlie's wife Leslie conspire to keep Charlie young (well, at least in attitude).

Elliot Gerson (Connecticut & Magdalen 1974) retired last year as the US Secretary for the Rhodes Trust, after almost 28 years of service. In contrast to that retirement, Elliot is now busier than ever at the Aspen Institute, overseeing its domestic and foreign policy programmes and its on-the-ground changemaking work, as well as its growing network of global Aspen Institutes, which have more than doubled in his tenure and are now on all continents. On the home front, Jessica continues her medical and public health work, they have ten grandchildren, in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Mexico, and when not travelling for Aspen or at home in Washington, DC, escape when they can to their retreats in the Colorado mountains and on the Sea of Cortez.



Hon. E. Grant Gibbons (Bermuda & Queen's 1974) After returning to Bermuda in 1987 following completion of his Harvard PhD in Organic Chemistry and working for an international pharmaceutical company, he was elected a Member of the Bermuda Parliament. During his 25 years in Parliament, he served in a number of positions, including Opposition Leader, Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Development. In 1996 he co-chaired the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting. More recently he led the team that successfully bid to host the 35th America's Cup Race in Bermuda. He was awarded an OBE in 2019. Grant is currently chairman of the Bermuda-based Coralisle Group which provides insurance services throughout the Caribbean. He is married to Kathryn and they have two sons.



Alan Hobkirk (British Columbia & Jesus 1974) After going down, Alan captained the Canadian field hockey team at the 1976 Olympics and 1978 World Cup. There followed a 40-year career as litigation counsel at Miller Thomson LLP and several directorships at non-profits. More recently, Alan coached the Canadian Masters hockey team. Alan and his wife, Susan, are retired in Vancouver, enjoying their children and grandchildren.

Malcolm 'Mac' Hunter (Maine & St Catherine's 1974) is an emeritus professor at the University of Maine where his work has covered a wide range of organisms and ecosystems, especially forest birds and amphibians, and included seven books, mainly on conservation biology and managing forests for biodiversity. He has worked in over 30 countries and been active with many conservation organisations, most notably serving as President of the Society for Conservation Biology. He and his wife, Aram Calhoun, live on a blueberry farm surrounded by 60,000 acres of conservation land, and spend their free time exploring and protecting more land. They travel widely in their quest to see representatives of all the world's families of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fishes.

Walter Isaacson (Louisiana & Pembroke 1974) and Cathy are living in New Orleans, a few blocks from where Walter was born. He is still teaching at Tulane and still writing books, the most recent a biography of Elon Musk.



Brian McHale DPhil (Rhode Island & Merton 1974) was Arts and Humanities Distinguished Professor of English at the Ohio State University until his retirement in 2022. He previously held positions at Tel Aviv University and West Virginia University, and has taught and lectured widely. He is author of four books about postmodern literature and culture, including *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987) and *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism* (2015), as well as co-editor of five other volumes. Since its inception he was an editor and later editor-in-chief of the academic journal *Poetics Today*. Co-founder of Ohio State's Project Narrative, he is a past president of the International Society for the Study of Narrative (ISSN) and founding member and past president of the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP).



C. Thomas McMillen (Maryland & University 1974)

After playing professional basketball for 12 years (1975-1986) and serving in Congress for 6 years (1987-1993), McMillen continued his career serving as a presidential appointee under President Clinton (1993-1997) as co-chair of the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, and Nutrition, serving on many boards – including the Humane Society of the US, the University of Maryland System and various public company boards, and pursuing his investment work. McMillen is now the CEO of the LEAD1 Association that represents the athletics directors and programmes of the 133 member universities of the Football Bowl Association, working on the major issues of college sports. McMillen and his wife Judy spend their time in the Washington area with their many pets.

Michael Oristaglio (Pennsylvania & University 1974)

Since 2009, Mike has been senior research scientist and lecturer in energy geoscience in the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences at Yale, where he is co-founder and director of the Energy Studies program and a research affiliate of the Carbon Containment Lab. Before returning to Yale in 2009, he spent 25+ years as a scientist and research manager in the energy industry with Schlumberger (now, slb). Mike and his wife Colleen have lived in Newtown, Connecticut, for the last 34 years, after residing in Univ's Stavertonia, Washington, DC, Salt Lake City, New Haven, New Fairfield, Paris and Austin.



Claus-Joerg Ruetsch (Germany & University 1974)

After retiring from the international role of General Counsel of Roche Diagnostics, Claus is using his experience to support start-ups and young entrepreneurs. Together with his wife, Clare, he enjoys an active life

near Heidelberg, Germany or in Clare's hometown, Oxford, England.



Sandy Shandro (Québec & Balliol 1974) practised law for a dozen years in Vancouver before returning to the UK with his wife Clare (they met at Oxford) and their three children in the late '80s. Based in London, as Global Head of Insolvency and Restructuring in international law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Sandy worked on many cross-border cases. Since retiring from Freshfields, Sandy has pursued his interest in law reform as Senior Consultant to the World Bank. He has worked with local lawyers, economists, government ministers and judges in over 40 different countries to improve and reform their bankruptcy and restructuring regimes. He maintains a lively interest in sports, including motorsports on two wheels as well as four.



Muhammad Athar Tahir (Pakistan & Oriel 1974)

joined the Civil Service, rising to the highest position: Secretary to the Government of Pakistan. He pursued a parallel career as a poet, literary and art critic, translator, calligraph-artist and educationist. He founded Chenab College, Jhang;

International Centre for Pakistani Writing in English, Kinnaird College, Lahore; and Pakistan Calligraph-artists' Guild, to promote traditional creative skills. His books have won 11 international and national awards. He was a Rotary International Scholar, a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow and received the William and Flora Hewlett Award. He is an Elected Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, a Life Fellow of the Pakistan Academy of Letters and the recipient of Pakistan's state honours: Tamgha-i Imtiaz and Sitara-i Imtiaz.

Boris Tyzuk KC (Manitoba & Hertford 1974) After leaving Oxford, Boris moved to Vancouver to practise law, as his wife to be, Tess (St Hugh's, 1975), did not appreciate Winnipeg winters. Boris spent most of his career with the BC Attorney General's ministry and worked in many areas including the liquor monopoly, horse racing discipline issues, civil disobedience enforcement and natural resource development. However, the majority of his practice focused on Indigenous law and treaty negotiations. He was lead counsel on the Nisga'a Treaty negotiations, BC's first modern treaty. The various negotiations provided an opportunity to appreciate the beauty of northern BC. In retirement, walking with Tess in Europe, golf and curling take up most of his time along with looking after their grandchildren.

1984

Dominic Barton (British Columbia & Brasenose 1984)

spent over 30 years at McKinsey & Company, including nine years as Global Managing Partner and various roles which took him across Asia for 12 years. Most recently, he was Canadian Ambassador to China. His keen interest in supporting a sustainable economy led him to co-found Focusing Capital on the Long Term and chair the International Integrated Reporting Council. Dom is passionate about helping deliver a Just Transition globally and to do so, he currently serves as Chair of Rio Tinto and LeapFrog Investments, a pioneer in impact investing. This year will also mark his final term as Chancellor of the University of Waterloo. A proud member of the Rhodes Trust Circle, Dom keenly follows updates about the Scholarship. He lives near London, UK.



Donald J. Bobiash (Prairies & Balliol 1984) After serving as Canada's Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC from 2019 to 2022, Don became the Canadian Executive Director at the Asian Development Bank in Manila. His position provided opportunities to explore fascinating countries such as Turkmenistan, the North Korea of Central Asia. During 2023 he visited Jordan and briefly Israel, as well as Sarajevo, where the assassination that started the First World War occurred. (Note to file: peace – good, war – bad). He also visited Iceland to learn more about its geo-thermal technologies. Iceland is also the home of Leif Erikson, the first European to reach North America. While visiting the UK, Don had a great meeting with Dr Francis Stewart, the brilliant development economist who was his Oxford doctoral thesis supervisor. A family highlight was the marriage of his daughter Catherine, who now lives in Iqaluit in the Canadian arctic territory of Nunavut.



Penelope Brook (New Zealand & Nuffield 1984) After graduation, Penelope immersed herself in public policy work, first in New Zealand and later at the World Bank (including stints managing the Bank's relationship with Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, and as Bank Group Ombudsman). She returned to Oxford in 2017 as inaugural Executive Director of the Atlantic Institute. In 2020, she took a pause to think about 'where next'. One part of the answer was the Royal College of Art, where she graduated with an MA in 2023. Still based in Oxford, Penelope works full-time as an artist. Her practice, focused on the less prepossessing beauties of nature (lichens, fungi...), reflects on the link between attention and care, and on the joy of being stilled by beauty.

Mariette Geldenhuys (South Africa-at-Large & New College 1984) continues to practise law as a peace-making profession in Ithaca, NY, with a focus on mediation and collaborative law. She presents collaborative law training to interdisciplinary teams of professionals. When not at work, Mariette facilitates meditation groups, enjoys open-water swimming events (including an annual cross-lake swim to raise funds for the local hospice) and continues to travel the world whenever possible.



David Goddard (New Zealand & University 1984) After some 30 years as a barrister and law reform adviser, David is currently serving as a judge of the New Zealand Court of Appeal and co-leading a major project introducing new digital technologies for the New Zealand courts. David's book *Making Laws that Work – how laws fail and how we can do better* was published in 2023, and since then he has been kept busy speaking and teaching in Australasia and further afield about user-focused legislative design. David lives in Wellington with his wife Liesle Theron and their family. In his spare time he enjoys hiking in the New Zealand mountains, walking half-marathons and cooking for family and friends.



Bee Chen Goh (Malaysia & Lincoln 1984) is Emeritus Professor at Southern Cross University, Australia. She is a Fellow and Director of the Australian Academy of Law and currently the Academy's Treasurer. Beyond the law, Bee Chen and her playwright husband, Chamkaur, have recently co-founded the 'Literary Club' for the local community which meets fortnightly for poetry and play reading. She hopes to produce one of Chamkaur's plays entitled *It's Time* inspired by true events dealing with the damaging impact of PTSD on war veterans. Their literary passion is shared by their daughter, Mindy, who is an Australian award-winning poet currently completing her PhD in poetry.

Michael E. Hasselmo (Minnesota & Corpus Christi 1984) As Director of the Center for Systems Neuroscience at Boston University, Michael leads research efforts to understand mechanisms for spatial navigation and planning based on the activity of neural circuits in the entorhinal and retrosplenial cortex. Over the past years, he enjoyed participating as a viva examiner for two different DPhil theses at Oxford, enjoying high table at Corpus Christi and at Brasenose (the latter with his wife and fellow Oxford DPhil Professor Chantal Stern who is Chair of the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Boston University).



G. R. William (Bill) Lahey (Maritimes & Exeter 1984) After completing his education at the University of Toronto, clerking at the Supreme Court of Canada and earning his living for a decade in practising law and in managing public sector collective bargaining (1992-2001) in Nova

Scotia, Bill became a faculty member at Dalhousie Law School (2001-2021), minus a leave (2004-2007) to lead Nova Scotia's departments of labour and environment. He is President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of King's College and board chair for a very cool energy efficiency organisation he co-founded in 2010. He and Kathryn live joyously with their daughters (and their son nearby) in the President's Lodge at King's, surrounded by students, much like the Rector did in his days at Exeter.

Raymond Lim (Singapore & Balliol 1984) A former cabinet minister in the Singapore government, Raymond served for more than a decade in various ministerial positions including Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry, Finance and Transport. Prior to this, he was CEO of DBS Securities and later Managing Director of Temasek Holdings. He was also adjunct professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore and Nanyang Centre for Public Administration, Nanyang Technological University. He is the author of *Straight Talk: Reflections on Singapore politics, economy and society*. Raymond is currently chairman of APS Asset Management and senior advisor to John Swire & Sons. In 2020, Raymond was awarded the George Parkin Service Award for his contributions to the Singapore Rhodes community.



Cheryl Misak (Alberta & Balliol 1984) After a long run in academic administration at the University of Toronto, culminating as Vice-President and Provost, Cheryl has happily returned to being University Professor and Professor of Philosophy. She has an honorary fellowship at Balliol and now spends considerable time in Oxford, writing as well as seeing old and new friends. She has also been a visiting fellow at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, the Free University in Berlin, and Trinity and St John's colleges, Cambridge. She recently stepped away from straight-up philosophy to write a biography of Frank Ramsey, the great Cambridge economist, mathematician and philosopher who died in 1930 at the age of 26.



David Noever (Oklahoma & Magdalen 1984) As Chief Scientist for a 600-person start-up, David enjoys publishing on Artificial Intelligence topics ranging from vulnerabilities in large language models like ChatGPT to novel high-frequency 'dolphin'

attacks on voice-activated systems like the eight billion smartphones, home automation devices and voice-enabled cars. His invited keynote address at the US Space and Rocket Center recently highlighted how AI might play the movie role of director, actor, writer and editor in a video production entirely generated without human intervention. His talk's title was, 'How to make AI work for you... so you and I don't have to work for AI'.

Dietrich F.R. Pohl (Germany & Brasenose 1984) Since 2019 German Ambassador to Mali, overseeing German cooperation with the Malian transition and German responses to the complex Sahel crisis. Accidentally, Dietrich has been well-prepared for the additional challenges of competing partnerships by his prior spree as General Consul to Moscow. Before that, he had a rather diverse array of postings with accents placed on Africa and conflict solution: Ambassador to Burkina Faso, Dean of Faculty at Andrássy University Budapest, Advisor to the Federal Security Academy, Tehran, Addis Ababa, Skopje, Cairo. Bamako is the first posting for Dietrich and Gerda without their children accompanying. Looming on the horizon is retirement from active duty in 2025.

Hugh P. Possingham (Australia-at-Large & St John's 1984) After returning to Australia in 1990 Hugh took Chairs at The University of Adelaide (1995-2000) and The University of Queensland (2000-present). On the side he has been Chief Scientist of the state of Queensland, Chief Scientist of The Nature Conservancy and Chief Scientist of Accounting for Nature. His group's software, Marxan <https://marxansolutions.org/>, designs most of the protected area systems in the world. Using maths and economics he has co-authored 750 peer-reviewed papers on decision science for biodiversity conservation and raised \$150 million in research grants and centres. In 2005 he was elected to the Australian Academy of Science and in 2016 he was elected to the US National Academy of Sciences as a Foreign Associate en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Possingham. But mainly, as VP of BirdLife Australia, he likes to watch birds.

1994



Katherine R. Richards (Montana & Lady Margaret Hall 1984) Katie started out in non-profit communications. She earned an MA in journalism at the University of Maryland, becoming a newspaper reporter for the Baltimore Sun. She later found a second joyous career as a parent. In 2020, she completed a three-year atelier program in oil painting, and is now a visual artist, working primarily in oil and pastel. Katie has been fighting cancer for several years, but is still managing to travel the world, to volunteer with Moms Demand Action and to enjoy dear friendships. Happily, she is still in touch with numerous Oxford friends worldwide. She has been married to John Roome (South African College School, Newlands & Lady Margaret Hall 1983) since 1987.



Nanda Rane Rodrigues (India & Trinity 1984) After 22 years of working for the Medical Research Council in the UK, she finished her job as Chief Operating Officer at the MRC Harwell Institute in May 2023. She continued to apply her knowledge and expertise on Research Governance, Research

Integrity and Research Culture at the Rosalind Franklin Institute at Harwell. She is currently looking to expand her horizons while enjoying some downtime, travelling and catching up with friends and family. Oxford still remains the city she calls home and where the heart is!

Graham Steele (Prairies & St Edmund Hall 1984) has had a varied career, which is a nice way of saying he has trouble keeping a job. After practising law in the public and private sector, he spent 15 years in Nova Scotia provincial politics. He was elected four times (never defeated!) and served as Nova Scotia's Finance Minister from 2009 to 2012. He then taught business law at Dalhousie University and was a weekly commentator on Nova Scotia politics for CBC radio and television. He has written three books about politics and politicians, at least one of which is quite good. He is currently the Information and Privacy Commissioner in Nunavut, Canada's far-northern territory.

John Vlahoplus (South Carolina & Trinity 1984) After completing his DPhil and law degree, John began a long career in finance and law. He has developed business lines financing federally supported low-income housing and green energy, and managed the sale of property that created the largest public park in New York in 50 years, protecting a watershed that provides drinking water to 25% of New Jersey residents. His academic work has been cited to the US Supreme Court in constitutional litigation over birthright citizenship, presidential electors, and the insurrection clause and was cited by the Colorado Supreme Court to support its decision that the clause bars former President Trump from again holding the office of the President. John is a member of the board of ISSUE Project Room, a pioneering Brooklyn-based performance non-profit that facilitates the commission and premiere of innovative new works of music, dance, literature and film. He and his wife Uma Muthu enjoy frequent trips back to England for reunions and to visit family and friends.

Richard A. Wells (Newfoundland & Magdalen 1984/1985*) Richard pursued training in medicine and haematology at Yale, the University of Toronto and Harvard before joining the University of Toronto to run a clinical and research programme in bone marrow disorders. In April 2020 he transitioned to a position as Regional Coroner for Toronto, where he supervises some 2000 death investigations annually.

**Elected 1984, went up 1985*



Ulrich Zachau (Germany & Nuffield 1984) After stints as a consultant (McKinsey) and postdoc (University of Bonn), he worked with the World Bank in 60+ countries on six continents from 1988 until 2022, in the last two decades as Strategy/Operations Director for Europe-Central Asia and East Asia-Pacific and country/regional director for Turkey, Southeast Asia, the Pacific, Brazil and Colombia-Venezuela. Now based in Vienna, teaching development economics courses at the University of Munich and Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Married, two grown-up children. Active in LGBT+ advocacy. Continues his struggles learning Thai. Plays the piano. Loves time with family and friends, music, travelling, walking-hiking and blueberries.



Peter Martin Bance (Maritimes & University 1994) Peter has stayed in the UK, marrying a fellow Oxford DPhil physicist Mary New (Univ & Wolfson). Following an early career in technology consulting, he became CEO of an electrochemistry business and successfully floated it on the London Stock Exchange. After a mini career break to 'recharge his batteries' (pun intended!) he founded a software start-up in renewable energy. Peter has kept himself physically active: rowing, cycling and cross-country skiing whenever he's not wearing his hats as Dad, Husband or CEO... culminating in recently completing an epic skiing expedition to the South Pole (now fully recovered from the damage to his fingers, sleep and emotional exhaustion).



R. Sonia Batra (California & Magdalen 1994) is the founder of a dermatology practice in Santa Monica, CA and a co-host of CBS' former long-running syndicated television talk show, *The Doctors*. Her husband, Sameer, is a urologist, and they are grateful to have navigated the challenges of managing their respective medical practices and seeing patients through the pandemic. Sonia is thrilled to be travelling again with their two teenaged children and especially enjoyed visiting Oxford in July 2023 for the Rhodes Trust 120th Anniversary Reunion.



Chaya Bhuvaneshwar (Connecticut & Balliol 1994) After finishing med school at Stanford where she volunteered in women's mental health non-profits and did trauma research, Chaya completed residency at Mass General and then fulfilled a variety of psychiatry leadership roles, ranging from research and teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, University of Massachusetts and Harvard Medical School/Cambridge Health Alliance, to non-profit community health director of North Suffolk Mental Health serving over 1000 chronically and severely mentally ill consumers, while having her two kids and finally getting used to New England (it's not New York City, she still says) with her husband Muhamet Yildiz. In 2018 Chaya published her debut short story collection, *White Dancing Elephants*, a 2019 PEN/American finalist in fiction, and highlighted in the *LA Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Elle*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Entertainment Weekly*, etc. and since then has published regularly. She is now in private practice in Boston and welcomes anyone from her class passing through.



Attila Brungs (New South Wales & New College 1994) returned to his alma mater, University of New South Wales, in 2022 as the Vice-Chancellor and President, after eight years as Vice-Chancellor and President of University of Technology Sydney. Prior to that he held senior roles with CSIRO (Australia's national research agency) and McKinsey & Company globally. Attila's fundamental belief that universities exist as a public good for the benefit of all drives his passion for higher education and research. He is committed to supporting the vast talents and creativity of students, staff and alumni, and partnering with government, industry and other academic institutions to drive positive societal impact for Australia and communities around the world. Attila lives in Sydney with his wife Kate, an accomplished artist, and two children.

María Eizaguirre (Spain & Linacre 1994) After completing her DPhil at Oxford, María spent several years in the private sector, focusing on marketing and innovation. In 2018, she returned to the education sector, reigniting her academic career. María now serves as Professor and Researcher, and as the Director of International Programs at ESIC University in Spain, where she is dedicated to advancing academic excellence and global collaboration. María and her two children, Diego and Bruno, share their home with their beloved dogs, highlighting her passion for family and animals alike. María returns to Oxford frequently and is also involved in the selection process for the Global Rhodes Scholarships.

Shanti Gamper-Rabindran (Malaysia & St Antony's 1994) is a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, in public policy, law and economics. Her book *America's Energy Gamble: People, Economy and Planet* (Cambridge University Press, 2022) documents how the Trump administration's actions, with the acquiescence of Congress, swung far in support of the fossil fuel industry. These actions opposed traditional bipartisan values of financial prudence, rule of law and environmental stewardship and often failed to prioritise fossil fuel workers and communities. Her edited volume *The Shale Dilemma: A Global Perspective* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017) examined how some countries pursued shale development, without enacting adequate policies to protect local communities. She hopes to connect with Scholars working on clean energy deployment and workforce development.



Brett House (Ontario & University 1994) Brett joined Columbia Business School in January 2023 as Professor of Professional Practice in Economics with a focus on macroeconomics and international finance. He splits his time between New York and Toronto, where he remains engaged on Canadian issues as a Fellow with the University of Toronto's Munk School and Massey College, as well as the Public Policy Forum. He serves on several boards, including The 519, Canada's largest LGBTQIA+ community centre, and the Canadian Association of Business Economics (CABE). During the pandemic winters, he returned to professional ski instructing and backcountry touring; in summers he continues to ride his bike to raise funds for Crohn's and cancer research.



Dr Kakoli Ghosh (India & Queen's 1994) Since the pandemic, countries are redoubling their focus on food security, health and gender empowerment for socially balanced and sustainable economic development. Saudi Arabia launched its first Sustainable Rural Agricultural Development Programme (called REEF Saudia) with the technical assistance from Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. Kakoli was appointed as the Chief Technical Adviser of this large, multi-component project in 2020. One of the most enriching aspects has been the opportunity to engage with women farmers, livestock owners and small scale agripreneurs across the country, sharing their success and frustrations and developing new pathways for economic inclusion. Her experience is proving that even if change takes time, the impact is greater, deeper and longer lasting when women are involved directly in the process. Building on her experience Kakoli is planning to develop a shared platform along these lines in the coming years. Kakoli will be supported by her team and colleagues in this endeavour. She is based in Riyadh and her family spread across India, Thailand and USA are happy about that too.

Matthew Lobb (Australia-at-Large & Balliol 1994)

Apart from two stints as a ministerial advisor in the NSW and Australian governments, Matthew has worked in the telecommunications industry, grappling with the public policy and business development challenges of technology transformation. Matthew lives in Sydney with his medical practitioner wife Clair, somewhat successfully guiding three children through the COVID-19 era. During these now many decades Matthew has had regular reunions with four of his Rhodes Scholar friends, discussing politics and philosophy near the great landmarks of South Africa, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US.

Jasmine Nahhas di Florio (Prairies & University 1994)

After enjoying legal practice in government and an international law firm in the United States and Spain, Jasmine began working with philanthropists on global issues including youth and women's education and economic inclusion. She is now Executive Director of the Bruder Family Foundation, supporting youth employment and peace-building efforts. Jasmine and her husband Carlo are trying to keep up with their two teenagers and cherish being in contact with Jasmine's Rhodes classmates worldwide.



Dalton Odendaal (Paul Roos Gymnasium, Stellenbosch & Keble 1994) After first practising as a tax lawyer at Freshfields in London, he moved into sports law and was a partner at Harbottle & Lewis, before joining the London Olympics in 2007 as the Head of Legal. Post the successful delivery of the Olympics, he established his own sports marketing consultancy and he has done a combination of legal and commercial work in the sports and entertainment area. He was the General Counsel for the first Invictus Games in 2014 and his company has continued to source sponsors for the Invictus Games from outset to date. He is based in London and is currently working as the Chief Commercial Officer for World Athletics and continues to consult for Harbottle & Lewis in a legal capacity.

Eduardo Peñalver (Washington & Oriel 1994) After returning to Cornell as a law faculty member in 2006 (and a brief stint at the University of Chicago Law School from 2012 to 2014), he became the dean of Cornell Law School in 2014. In 2021, he finally made it back to Seattle and his beloved Mariners to become the 22nd president at Seattle University. As the first non-Jesuit president of a Jesuit university, he has become accustomed to occasionally being confused for a Catholic priest, although his wife (Sital Kalantry, who is also a Professor of Law at Seattle University) and two sons would seem to offer evidence to the contrary. One of his easiest decisions as university president was welcoming the Rhodes Scholarship selection interviews to the Seattle University campus.



Síofra Pierse (Ireland & Trinity 1994) After a decade of double-jobbing as mom's taxi, Siofra took up her position as Head of School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics at University College Dublin in 2021. Ireland's bilingual status (Irish/English) means that her discipline of Modern Languages enjoys relative protection from the decimation of the humanities happening elsewhere: she has set up a new Portuguese Studies degree and a new MA in Language/Image Studies. Her heart remains in 18th-century French and she was recently awarded the French honorary title Chevalier. Her beloved Paul commutes between Magdalen College, Oxford and Dublin so their son's main aim in life is to be old enough to be a guest at high table. She loves tennis and catching up with her Rhodes classmates.



Randal Pinkett (New Jersey & Keble 1994) Randal released his 4th book, *Black Faces in High Places: 10 Strategic Actions for Black Professionals to Reach the Top and Stay There* (2022), and his 5th book, *Data-Driven DEI: The Tools and Metrics You Need to Measure, Analyze, and Improve Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* (2023). The company he co-founded, BCT Partners, has been recognised by *Forbes* as one of America's Best Management Consulting Firms, *EY Entrepreneur of the Year*, *Manage HR Magazine* as a Top 10 Diversity & Inclusion Firm, *Black Enterprise* BE100s list of the nation's largest African American-owned businesses and Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies in America. BCT completed its second acquisition of Maryland-based Community Science, an equity-centred research and development firm.



Munro Richardson (Missouri & Hertford 1994) is Executive Director of Read Charlotte, an early literacy initiative in Charlotte, North Carolina. This community-based intermediary that he leads facilitates collective action across funders, businesses, non-profits, community organisations and the 16th largest public school district in the US to improve early literacy outcomes from birth through third grade. Munro has served in this role for nine years after moving to North Carolina from his native Kansas City where he worked in the philanthropic sector for almost 20 years. He lives in the Tar Heel State with his wife of 28 years, Teresa, and his three daughters. He roots for both the Kansas City Chiefs and the Carolina Panthers.



Argyrios Stasinakis (Greece & Wolfson 1994) recently exited MarineTraffic, a software/data as a service business and the global leader in tracking all ships and deriving analytics for stakeholders in the maritime, supply chain, trade, finance and port sectors. He loves supporting tech start-up businesses through mentoring and investing and is now joining like-minded startupsience.io. He has lived in Oxford for the past ten years with his family: Dr Eleni Zimi (Somerville, 1991), a professor in archaeology; and daughters Martha and Vicky, now adults and studying sciences. He loves to row and volunteers at Oxford Amateur Rowing Club, now fundraising for the next boathouse on the Isis. Argyris and family often travel to Greece (their birthplace) for work and fun – and are keen for the Rhodes brand to grow there once more!

Terri Willard (Illinois & Wolfson 1994) continues to enjoy teaching high school at the Seven Oaks Met School, a Big Picture Learning School in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. It's a good life.

2004



Lara B. Anderson (Utah & Magdalen 2004) is a researcher in high energy particle physics and string theory. After returning to the US post PhD, Lara held research positions at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University. She and her husband James Gray (also a physicist) were happy to find a permanent academic home together at Virginia Tech, where they both teach and lead research groups as professors. At the moment they are excited to be spending the semester visiting the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics at UC Santa Barbara. They have two small boys (Gabriel (six) and Benjamin (one)) who show them other wild and wonderful aspects of the world. Lara serves as Rhodes class secretary and remains grateful for all her Oxford friendships.



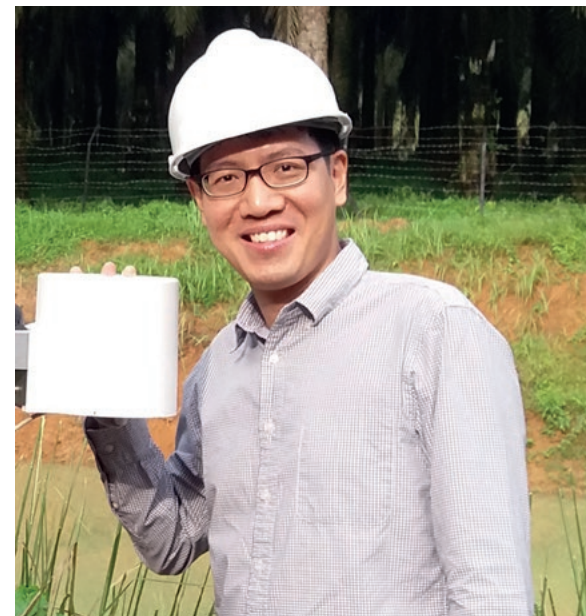
Cristina A. Bejan (North Carolina & Wadham 2004) In 2023 Cristina A. Bejan travelled to Romania twice. She launched her poetry and history books in Romanian translation on a national tour and was the keynote speaker at an international conference at the Romanian-American University in Bucharest, where she also taught a course on the memory of the Holocaust and Crimes of Communism. On these trips she arranged the caretaker for her disabled aunt who lives on the country's southeastern border with Ukraine – the caretaker is also responsible for the upkeep of the family cemetery plot. Other highs included hosting the Romanian Ambassador to the US on his official Colorado visit, publishing five of her plays, seeing many Rhodes friends at the national Romanian festival in DC and adopting an adorable rescue pug.

Thomas Brennan (Diocesan College, Rondebosch & Keble 2004) After completing the DPhil in Engineering Science, he accepted a Wellcome Trust Postdoctoral Fellowship at Oxford's Institute of Biomedical Engineering, followed by a post as a Research Scientist at MIT, before returning to South Africa in 2015. He worked briefly in corporate before founding Franc.app, an investment platform that makes investing easy & accessible for first time investors. Thomas and his wife, Nina Dreyer, live in Johannesburg and have recently celebrated the birth of their second daughter, Ava, on 12 February 2024. Their oldest daughter, Elia, turns two in March 2024. In between parenting and running a start-up, Thomas is a keen trail runner and successfully completed the 100km CCC race at UTMB in France five months after Elia's birth.



Tess Bridgeman (California & University 2004) joined the Obama administration in the State Department's Office of the Legal Adviser after a degree from NYU Law and an appellate clerkship. She then served in the White House as Special Assistant to the President, Associate White House Counsel and Deputy Legal Adviser to the National Security Council. In 2017, she and her wife Beth drove west and now reside in San Francisco with their son Elio who just turned four – they love making music, playing capoeira and learning to surf together. Tess is Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Just Security*, a senior fellow at NYU Law, lectures at Berkeley Law and is involved in organisations promoting her passions from public international law to gender justice to non-proliferation.

Matthew Carpenter-Arévalo (New Brunswick & Wolfson 2004) returned to Ecuador to found a marketing technology consultancy firm after stints with Google, Twitter and the World Economic Forum. In 2022, his firm was acquired by US-based Uhuru Network. Since then, Matthew has focused his efforts on enabling decarbonisation through high-integrity carbon credits powered by technology like remote sensing. Matthew resides in Quito with his wife, Michelle, and twin sons.



Chee Hoong Chung (Malaysia & Lady Margaret Hall 2004) Chee Hoong became a public and private sector transformation expert after Oxford. He joined the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company and worked on top-of-mind issues for CEOs and Government Ministers across Asia. Chee Hoong then transitioned into the corporate sector, leading strategy, digitalisation and operations transformation for some of Southeast Asia's largest telcos and agribusinesses, before returning to McKinsey, first as a Senior Advisor, then as Director of its Southeast Asian operations and thereafter as Director of its Transformation Practice. Chee Hoong's other passion is in transforming lives through sharing God's love – with this in mind, he facilitates spiritual development courses for his church, participates in refugee uplifting and mentors students and social enterprises, pro bono. He currently resides in Melbourne, Australia.

Alexandra Conliffe (Québec & Hertford 2004) Alex has spent the last five years with the McCall MacBain Foundation. She stepped into the CEO role at the beginning of 2024. In addition to advancing the foundation's work in education & scholarships and youth mental health, she has spent significant time over the last years deepening its climate and environment strategy. She welcomes any opportunity to engage at length on short-lived climate pollutants and resilient landscapes. Alex moved to Toronto a decade ago and has started to get comfortable with the idea that this is 'home'. Her kids are four and six years old, truly gorgeous ages that bring great joy.



Left: outside Trinity College, September 2004. From left to right: Kenneth Townsend (Mississippi & Trinity 2004), Michael Lamb (Tennessee & Trinity 2004) and Andreas Coutsoudis (KwaZulu-Natal & Trinity 2004). Right: Kenneth, Michael and Andreas almost two decades later, hiking in Pilot State Mountain Park, North Carolina, October 2023

Andreas Coutsoudis (KwaZulu-Natal & Trinity 2004) lives in Durban with his wife Paulette and two children, Katie (ten) and Alexander (seven). He practices as an advocate, with a particular focus on constitutional law, regulatory law and international law. Recent highlights include acting for the official opposition party to successfully obtain a court order requiring the government to comply with its domestic and international law obligations to arrest President Putin, should he come to South Africa ejiltalk.org/the-putin-south-africa-arrest-warrant-saga-a-tale-of-the-shrinking-world-of-an-accused-war-criminal/. He also keeps a toe in academia, as an Honorary Research Fellow at UKZN Law School, a part-time PhD candidate at Leiden and publishing in journals and textbooks. In 2023 he retired from the KZN Rhodes Scholarship Committee after 17 years (12 as the KZN Secretary).



Florian Heinemann (Germany & Hertford 2004)

After completing his PhD in particle physics, Florian worked for five years at McKinsey & Company in several countries, including one year in China. He then started dedicating his time to support the fight against climate change. He has been working in the wind industry in various operational and transformational management roles with the goal to improve the delivery of clean energy to societies around the globe. Florian lives with his wife, Julia, and his three children in Hamburg. For many years he has been active in the Oxbridge Society of Hamburg to keep the good memories of Oxford alive and to connect with many interesting people from all over the world.

Shakirah Hudani (Kenya & Magdalen 2004) After working with the World Bank Group in Nairobi for a few years, Shakirah completed her PhD at UC Berkeley in 2020 and is currently Assistant Professor of African Studies and City Planning at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her first book is out in April 2024, focused on urban transformation in post-genocide Rwanda. She sends good wishes to old friends and members of the larger Rhodes community.



Tarun Khaitan (India & Exeter 2004) Having refused to leave the place for 19 years, Tarun finally managed to tear himself away from Oxford's charms. In 2023, he became the Professor (Chair) in Public Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science and is enjoying life in the big city. His final stint in Oxford as the Head of Research of the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights was especially rewarding, and he continues to have a collaborative relationship with the Institute as well as with colleagues in the Law Faculty.

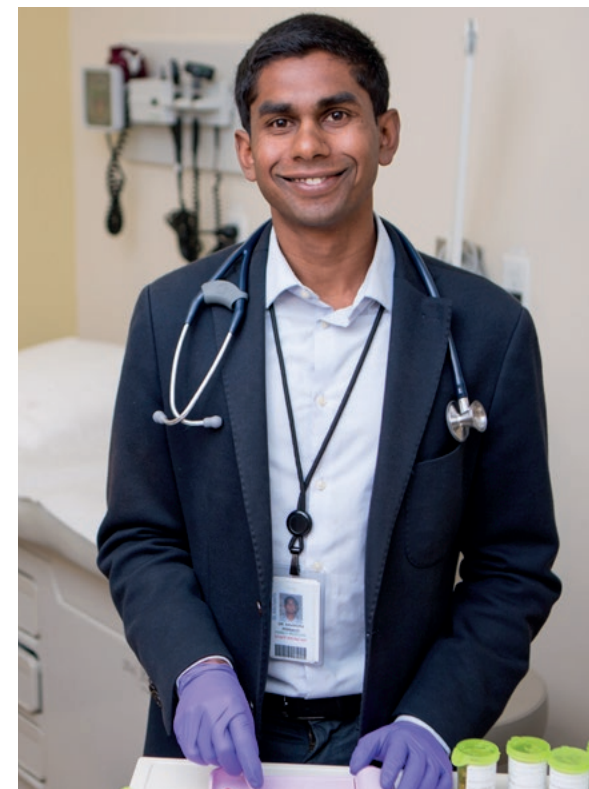
Michael Lamb (Tennessee & Trinity 2004) After finishing a PhD in politics at Princeton University (2007-2014) and leading political campaigns in Tennessee (2009-2010), Michael helped to launch the Oxford Character Project and served as Dean of Leadership, Service and Character Development for the Rhodes Trust, where he helped to design the Character, Service and Leadership Programme. He later founded the Program for Leadership and Character at Wake Forest University, where he is the program's Executive Director, F. M. Kirby Foundation Chair of Leadership and Character and Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Humanities. Currently, he is leading a \$30 million grant with Kenneth Townsend (Mississippi & Trinity 2004) to support character education in US colleges and universities.



Heather Long (Pennsylvania & Balliol 2004) is a *Washington Post* columnist and editorial board member. After many years in London, New York and Harrisburg, PA, she is now based in Washington, DC where she chronicles the highs and lows of the US economy. She's also a regular contributor on MSNBC and Marketplace Radio, among others. It's been fun interviewing many classmates for WaPo. Heather is also a 'single mom by choice' and happy to discuss that path with anyone pondering it.

Shazrene Mohamed (Zimbabwe & Wolfson 2004) After two years at the Argelander Institute for Astronomy in Bonn (Germany), Shazrene continued her research in computational stellar astrophysics at the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) in Cape Town, eventually taking up a joint position as an associate professor at the University of Cape Town (2012-2022). She then moved to the US – first to the University of Miami (Florida) and then the University of Virginia (Charlottesville) where as an associate professor in the astronomy department she joined the faculty alongside her sister, Naseemah Mohamed Ogunnaike (Zimbabwe & St Edmund Hall 2013). Shazrene, her husband, Ross Pinto, and their son, Nicholas, are thrilled to have 'grandparents, uncles, aunties and cousins' nearby, as well as dear Oxford classmates in DC.

Shu Nyatta (Kenya & Linacre 2004) has been on a winding journey of discovery since leaving Oxford – to New York, Dubai, San Francisco and now Miami, where he's lived with his wife and two girls (seven and five) since 2021. He has found durable purpose investing in young founders of technology companies, especially outside the US, and recently launched his own firm, Bicycle Capital, to do that work in Latin America. Shu also serves on the global board of Endeavor, a mentorship organisation for entrepreneurs all over the world.



Nav Persaud (Ontario & University 2004) After returning to the University of Toronto and starting his academic medical practice, Nav slowly caught on to lies being spread by pharmaceutical companies. This led to current work comparing medicine use between countries to inform better medicine selection and access as the Canada Research Chair in Health Justice. Nav was delighted to show his sons old haunts while on sabbatical at Oxford. Nav loves to hear from classmates and is happy to host those who get disoriented and end up in this part of Turtle Island.

Wen Shi (Michigan & Magdalen 2004) has been applying his DPhil in Medical Oncology to the world of health care investing. He leads biotech investing globally at Wellington Management, an asset manager based in Boston. Wen resides in Wellesley, MA with his wife Weina, son Evan (11), and daughter Emma (eight).



Kenneth Townsend (Mississippi & Trinity 2004) After returning to Mississippi to work in various roles at his undergraduate alma mater Millsaps College, Kenneth and his wife Ann moved with their children to Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 2019 to join fellow Rhodie Michael Lamb in developing the Program for Leadership and Character at Wake Forest University. Kenneth is currently Executive Director of Leadership and Character in the Professional Schools and Teaching Professor in the School of Law where he writes and teaches about leadership, ethics, professional identity formation and (occasionally) religious freedom. Most of his free time is spent coaching various youth sports.

Rachael Wagner (Virginia & Balliol 2004) Nearly 18 years after graduating from Oxford, Rachael is still living in New York City with her husband Sam Abrams, who is a professor at Sarah Lawrence College. Having now given birth to three children (currently ages five, two and six months) whose passports state New York City as their place of birth, she is almost ready to consider herself a 'real' New Yorker. Rachael is a partner at Atairos, a long-term investment fund, where she leads the leisure and sports investment vertical, as well as the firm's ESG strategy.

2014

Ben Abraham (New Zealand & St Catherine's 2014) Since returning to Aotearoa New Zealand in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ben has focused on spending time with family, in the outdoors, and continuing his career in climate change policy. He currently works in Wellington at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade advising on New Zealand's international climate finance and negotiating in United Nations climate change forums. Ben is also actively involved with advocacy efforts within the public sector to ensure the Government upholds its treaty obligations to Māori.



Jessica Ariel-Wamala (New Hampshire & Balliol 2014) After remaining abroad to work in Morocco in community and gender development and publish work on diversity in international affairs until 2017, Jess shifted to making her impact at the nexus of financial inclusion and technology as a product and operations expert, scaling applications, systems and processes to increase access to affordable remittance platforms, debt relief and financial assistance programmes. She married the love of her life, Amani, last fall surrounded by Rhodes classmates and their one-and-a-half-year-old, Nyah Phoenix, has already proven she is a seasoned traveller like her moms, greatly enjoying gallivants from Brooklyn, NY (where they call home) to Mexico, India, the Maldives and of course their beloved annual road trip to cousins in North Carolina.



Helen Baxendale (Australia-at-Large & Hertford 2014) Helen lives in Phoenix, Arizona with husband Henry, a political scientist at Arizona State University, and two young sons. She is Chief of Staff and Vice President of Strategy at Great Hearts Academies, a rapidly expanding network of classical liberal arts charter schools educating nearly 30,000 students to the highest standards across Arizona, Texas, Louisiana and Florida.

Isabel Beshar (New York & St Catherine's 2014) is a resident in Obstetrics/Gynaecology at Stanford Hospital, California, and continues her interests in family planning and safe abortion care. She is writing on topics of medical training, reproductive politics and evolving trends in contraception, and was recently published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, which was surreal. Perhaps most important, she celebrated one year of marriage to her husband, Michael Glover, who is an oncologist, also at Stanford Hospital. They are excited to continue their (over-priced) lives in California, where the mountain lakes and rocky beaches give them so much joy.



Subhashish Bhadra (India & Magdalen 2014) Upon graduating from Oxford, Subhashish returned to India, where he spent half a decade at Omidyar Network to set up its grants and investments program on digital rights. He has been writing frequently about public institutions in India and recently authored a book on the colonial inheritance of the Indian government, titled *Caged Tiger: How Too Much Government is Holding Indians Back* (Bloomsbury, 2023). He currently manages credit funds that provide flexible capital to hitherto underbanked SMEs in India and UAE. He resides in Bangalore with his partner and their dog.



Dylan Collins

(British Columbia & Christ Church 2014)

After completing his DPhil in Primary Care Health Sciences, he moved to Vancouver where he earned his MD at the University of British Columbia, while working part time for WHO Europe on primary care system development in Central Asia. He is now a Resident Emergency Physician at Vancouver General Hospital and integrates his clinical work with a programme of research focused on the development and optimisation of emergency care systems. He is an active volunteer and mentor for the McCall MacBain Scholarships at McGill University, and a keen contributor to the Rhodes community in British Columbia.

Alexander J. Diaz

(New Jersey & New College 2014)

After returning to the US in 2016, Alex spent time as the Chief of Staff to the head of public policy at YouTube before moving in 2019 to Google.org, the company's philanthropic arm. Alex currently leads the AI for Social Good team where he manages Google's philanthropic efforts to empower non-profits to develop and deploy high-impact AI applications that address critical global challenges and ensure the benefits of AI reach marginalised populations. In 2020, Alex moved back to his home state of New Jersey, married the love of his life Alexandra, bought a home, and they are now parents to a baby boy Zander who loves playing with his four-pawed brother, Kona.



Alyssa Fitzpatrick

(South Australia & Magdalen 2013*)

Since leaving Oxford, Alyssa has completed training in Infectious Diseases medicine, and has recently returned to Adelaide from Darwin, Australia. She is currently working at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide in Perinatal Infectious Diseases. Last year, she decided to return to Oxford to commence her DPhil in Population Health through the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, and is grateful for the opportunity to complete this part-time alongside her clinical practice in Australia. Alyssa lives with her husband Nick, who works as an Emergency Physician, and 18-month-old son Benjamin, who keeps them both on their toes.

*Class note deferred from 2023 submission

Suzanna Fritzberg

(Washington & St John's 2014)

After leaving Oxford, Suzanna started her public service career working for Pete Buttigieg (Indiana & Pembroke 2005) in South Bend, Indiana, followed by stints in non-profit leadership, philanthropy and national politics. Since 2021, she has been a Biden-Harris appointee at the US Treasury Department. In her current role as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consumer Policy, she continues her work on economic mobility by leading a team working to advance financial inclusion, consumer protection and access to credit and capital, with a particular focus on closing racial and gender disparities. While she misses the ocean and mountains of the pacific northwest, she enjoys spending time at the Kennedy Center, in Shenandoah and with the many members of the Rhodes community also living in 'the other Washington'.



Aravind Ganesh (Prairies & St John's 2014) After completing his specialisation in neurology, Aravind is now a vascular and cognitive neurologist and an Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary's Departments of Clinical Neurosciences and Community Health Sciences. His clinical research is focused on the imaging, natural history, prevention and treatment of stroke and dementia, including the development and testing of devices and automated software to improve patient care. He also leads Let's Get Proof, a platform for crowdfunding, international collaboration and public engagement in medical research. Nevertheless, with his wife Malavika being in the midst of her internal medicine training, he is the least busy person in his family, and continues to hone his repository of dad jokes that are now slightly better justified by the presence of their toddler son.



Robert Hortle (Australia-at-Large & St John's 2014) Since completing his MPhil and DPhil in International Development, Rob has worked in health, education and international development consultancy across London and Canberra. He has recently returned home to Australia's southernmost state as Deputy Director of the Tasmanian Policy Exchange, a new research institute at the University of Tasmania. Rob is always keen to host wandering Rhodies in the beautiful city of Hobart, where he can often be found entertaining the masses at local pubs by bashing guitar chords and 'singing'.

Clarke Knight (Nevada & Wolfson 2014) After completing her PhD at UC Berkeley in 2021, Clarke became a Research Scientist at the US Geological Survey in the NASA Ames Research Park, Mountain View, California. Alongside a group of brilliant colleagues, she conducts research on environmental change and natural hazards, specifically extreme events like atmospheric rivers and wildfire. Clarke and her fiancé Ian Thomas, a software engineer at the start-up The Marriage Pact, are thrilled to put down roots in the heart of Silicon Valley. With friends and local family, they enjoy hiking, bird watching and wildflower spotting in the Bay Area's extensive regional park system.



Lindsay Lee (Tennessee & Wadham 2014) Since leaving Oxford, Lindsay has explored the healthcare field from different sides, first at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland in the Disability Programme, then at a healthcare data start-up in Nashville and now at the non-profit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as a lead data analyst. Her slightly random educational choices while at Oxford have worked out for the best, as she has gotten to combine her love of data science, policy, language and design into a mélange of a career that's increasingly meaningful every day. She thinks of the years at Oxford and the beautiful friends she made there constantly.



Tobias Lutzi (Germany & Somerville 2014) After passing the German bar exam, Tobias joined the University of Cologne as a postdoctoral researcher before moving on to the University of Augsburg, where he now holds a junior professorship for private law. He lives together with his wife and daughter, who – in perfect Oxford tradition – is yet to miss her first Law Faculty Ball.



Erin Mauldin (New Mexico & Linacre 2014) is still in the Army and currently teaches history at the US Military Academy. After departing Oxford, Erin changed her branch to infantry and served in the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. Highlights include deploying to Afghanistan in 2019, supporting the evacuation of Afghan allies in 2021 at Fort Barfoot, VA and deploying to Europe to deter Russian aggression and assure NATO Allies in 2022-2023 (resulting in her finally getting to experience eastern Europe – which she had somehow missed while studying at Oxford). Erin still explores mountains, to include roping her brother into adventures in the Bugaboos, volunteering at the Grand Teton Climbers’ Ranch, making a failed attempt to climb Half Dome with her dad and mountaineering in Albania.



Simon Mendelsohn (South Africa-at-Large & Worcester 2014) Simon holds the distinction as the first Rhodes Scholar to land up in a Malawian prison directly after going down from Oxford, albeit with Médecins Sans Frontières setting up HIV and tuberculosis programmes. Following his release, he joined the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative in Cape Town where he is currently a senior researcher developing novel diagnostics. When he is not in the lab or clinic, Simon enjoys playing peek-a-boo with Ada and climbing mountains with Inge (both pictured).



Suzanne Newing (Québec & St Antony's 2014) After spending five years in Cape Town leading the design and development of a digital coaching platform for young entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East with Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT), Suzanne returned to Canada to complete her Bachelor of Civil Law/Juris Doctor at McGill University. Suzanne plans to article in refugee law this year, with the goal of pursuing a career in immigration, refugee and international human rights law. She and her husband, Bruce, welcomed their son, Kamy, in February 2023 and have spent the past year revelling in the adventure that is parenthood. They live in Montreal, Québec and have plans to take Kamy on his first visit to Oxford in the near future.

Jim O'Connell (Florida & St Peter's, 2014) After seven years leading Vinik Family Office, Jim recently co-founded an investment firm with a special focus on the energy transition. He lives in New York City with his wife, Karli, who is a teacher at Brooklyn International High School. Outside of work, he spends most of his time reading, travelling and working on creative writing projects.

Jonathan Pedde (Prairies & Merton 2014) Following five years of driving operational efficiency improvements as part of McKinsey’s insurance practice, Jonathan is now a product manager at Stripe, helping grow the GDP of the internet by creating risk-management solutions for platforms. He and his wife, Bethan, recently moved to Washington, DC, where Bethan works in national security policy.

Paolo Singer (New York & Balliol 2014) moved to Nepal last year to pursue full-time study in Buddhist philosophy and languages at Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling Monastery’s Rangjung Yeshe Institute. Previously he served for 35 months at the Oregon Department of Education, most recently as a programme coordinator.



Charlie Tyson (North Carolina & Balliol 2014) Charlie is a Junior Fellow in the Harvard Society of Fellows. He completed his PhD in English literature at Harvard in fall 2023. He is currently writing a book for Pantheon, tentatively titled *The Mind at Play*. The book anatomises defects in the Anglo-American work ethic and presents a new case for the spiritual importance of leisure, linking the pursuit of ‘idleness’ to major human goods, including beauty, sexuality, intellectual discovery and peace. He married George Knaysi, an emergency medicine resident at NY-Presbyterian, during COVID-19. They plan to live together in Cambridge, MA after George finishes his residency in summer 2024. Alongside his academic work, Charlie regularly contributes reviews and essays to *The Atlantic*, the *New Yorker* and other publications.



Alice Wang (New Zealand & St Catherine's 2014) After four years as a strategy consultant at BCG, Alice went on to work for New Zealand's university sector and is currently a Strategy Director at a kiwi-founded tech company called Xero. She has enjoyed keeping in touch with Oxford and the Rhodes community (despite living on the other side of the world!) including serving as Deputy National Secretary for the China constituency. Alice married high school sweetheart Lance in 2023 and has been following him around the globe while he completes his fellowship in urology. They are based in Brisbane, Australia this year and very excited to welcome a daughter in May.

Meredith Wheeler (Colorado & Magdalen 2014) After two and a half years working as a trial public defender back home in Colorado, Meredith will be moving to Portland this summer to clerk for Judge Jennifer Sung. This will be her fifth move in the last ten years since leaving Oxford, but her Rhodes classmates have been a constant over that time: as roommates, colleagues and cherished friends. Visitors in Portland welcome!



Courtney T. Wittekind (Ohio & St Antony's 2014) is currently a Postdoctoral Associate at Yale University, where she has been based for the past two years since completing her PhD in Anthropology at Harvard University in 2022. Courtney's research addresses three global transformations: uneven urban development, the growth of speculative investment and the rapid expansion of digital and networked technologies. Her first book analyses the unanticipated effects of the New Yangon City project, a 20,000-acre urban expansion at the margins of Yangon, Myanmar (Burma). This summer, Courtney and her partner, Andrew, will move to Indiana, where they will both join Purdue University's faculty as assistant professors. They'll be joined by their rescue dog, Otto, and cat, Piccadilly.

Thom Woodroffe (Australia-at-Large & St Antony's 2014) was recently appointed to the Australian foreign service as the Principal Adviser to former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in his capacity as Ambassador to the United States, having served as his Chief of Staff during his recent tenure as President of the Asia Society. During his time at the Asia Society from 2020 to 2023, Thom was also the Senior Fellow and Founding Director of the Asia Society Policy Institute's China Climate Hub, where he worked on US-China climate cooperation and China's climate diplomacy. Now living in Washington, DC, he and his wife Dina recently celebrated the second birthday of their daughter Eléa! They hope to move to Australia in the coming years if the right opportunity presents itself.



Yan Yu (Prairies & St John's 2014) is currently a family physician providing primary care to a panel of 1600+ patients in Calgary, Canada. Using tools learned from his Oxford MPP and MBA, he serves as a Director on the board of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, helping to shape family medicine education and to strengthen the perceived value of family medicine in Canada. He also lectures on personal finance and professional development for junior physicians throughout the country. In his spare time, Yan continues to lead The Calgary Guide to Understanding Disease, an online medical education resource used in 180+ countries by over 5000 users per day. He also runs a YouTube Channel designed to counter misinformation and explain commonly asked questions: www.youtube.com/c/DrYanYu

Young Scholars Leave their Legacy: An Invitation to Join a Growing Global Community

As we come to the end of our first term as the Co-Chairs of the Rhodes Society, our greatest joy has been watching it grow, especially among younger Rhodes Scholars.
Ann Colbourne (Newfoundland & Corpus Christi 1980)
Kameel Premhid (KwaZulu-Natal & Lady Margaret Hall 2013)

Over the past year our membership has grown to over 100 Scholars and Friends of the Trust; including members elected from 1948 through to 2016. All our members are united by their selfless decision to include a gift to the Trust in their Wills and Estate Plans. They, as hopefully you will, recognise that as we journey through life, our needs and priorities change. Leaving a legacy to help future generations of Scholars fight the world's fight is one way to have lasting impact on our collective future.

Younger Scholars who give in this way deserve special praise. Although they are at the beginning of their life journey after Oxford, their commitment speaks volumes.

By choosing to give back, they reflect the value of their Rhodes and Oxford experiences, the impact it has had on them and their investment and hope in those who follow. We remain inspired by our member community, as it brings together Scholars and Friends across generations. We extend a warm welcome to our youngest members, and with gratitude acknowledge all Scholars and Friends who have joined us as part of the Rhodes Society. And we encourage those of you who might be thinking about what your own Rhodes legacy may be to reach out to us. We would love to hear your thoughts and are always happy to talk with you about our own personal philanthropy and the impact we hope to pay forward.

We invite you to join us.

For more information, contact:
development@rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk



“The Rhodes Scholarship has been an extraordinary gift and privilege in my life. I have often reflected on ways I can give back to the Trust and pay it forward for future generations. This desire to contribute has taken different forms over time—such as volunteering time, making annual contributions, and striving to live out the Rhodes qualities and make an impact through my everyday life. When I recently went through the process of preparing my will and estate plan, it felt so clear that a legacy gift could be another way to meaningfully support the Trust. It brings me great joy and purpose to know that what I build over the course of my life will eventually flow to causes and communities I care about, including the Rhodes Trust.”
Saumya Krishna (Ontario & Somerville 2014)

“My Rhodes and Oxford experience were transformative, and I am excited to be able to contribute to the future of the Trust and Scholars’ experiences to come. Much of our giving, and its impacts, will happen in a future I can only imagine and I have loved being part of a community that wants to be as thoughtful as possible about planning to maximise that impact.”
Anonymous, Rhodes Class of 2016



Images by John Cairns



'Cowley Road'

By **Aliyyah Ahad** (Bermuda & St Hilda's 2014)

Keep dreaming
Of your dreaming spires –
I don't want them.
Just leave me Cowley Road.

Oxford is fine,
But Cowley is fire, real, restless.
A main course
Disguised as a side dish
And I'm hungry
For the sights, smells, and tastes
I once feasted on.

So take your long lanes
And high streets –
I don't want them.
Just leave me Cowley Road.

And let me retrace
The dotted line
That led from novelty to nostalgia.
That turned strangers
Into acquaintances
Into either friends
Or memories.

Old buildings filled with new faces.
Old menus heaped onto new plates.
Old wine in new bottles.

Where little has changed,
And yet –
Everything is different. Please,
Just leave me Cowley Road.

