A COLLECTION OF CHARACTERS
Alumni and faculty working as film and television writers share their creative secrets.

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Pierre-Richard Prosper discusses his role as U.S. ambassador and his current role as partner at Arent Fox.

A LANDMARK EXPERIENCE
Seaver College students gain real-world experience in the Washington, D.C. Internship Program.
The priorities for the Campaign for Pepperdine exemplify one single promise—to transform Pepperdine graduates from exceptional students to servant-minded leaders, ready to change the world.

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THE GOD PARTICLE (?)
Pepperdine professors take on the science, faith, and mystery of the Higgs boson.

A LANDMARK EXPERIENCE
Seaver College students gain real-world experience in the Washington, D.C. Internship Program.
A very tiny thing made very big news this summer.

Scientists at CERN discovered evidence of the Higgs boson, a particle believed to give others mass. The elusive particle, controversially dubbed the “God Particle” by Nobel Prize-winner Leon Lederman, has puzzled scientists for decades as the missing piece of the Standard Model of particle physics.

It has also raised fundamental questions about the nature of our existence and other complex ideas at the intersection of science and faith. These topics are particularly welcome at Pepperdine University, where the pursuit of knowledge exists hand-in-hand with spiritual inquiry and the probing of life’s deepest questions.

The dialogue extends to the pages of Pepperdine Magazine as well. In this issue, we ask Seaver College professors of science, religion, and philosophy to offer their unique perspectives on the Higgs boson and what it means to all of us. We also take a closer look at several core ideas valued by the Pepperdine community—creativity, leadership, commitment to service, innovation—generously lived out by students, faculty, and alumni.

In this spirit of open discussion, we invite you to join in, share your thoughts, and hear what others have to say at magazine.pepperdine.edu.

Megan Huard Boyle
editor
Meet the Olympians

I am Saudi and very proud of Sarah and Wojdan :).

—Ibrahim

Ed. Note: As the summer issue of Pepperdine Magazine went to press, we learned that Sarah Attar would be one of the first two women ever to compete for Saudi Arabia at the Olympics. Now home from London and back in Pepperdine classrooms, Attar shares her Olympic experience:

magazine.pepperdine.edu/attar

Around the World in 18 Games

Where or how can I buy the book? Didn’t find it at Amazon.

—Hugo Van Haecke

Ed. Note: Many readers expressed interest in Harry Nelson’s memoir Following the Flame. Copies are available for purchase.

Please contact magazine@pepperdine.edu to learn more.

Between the Fellowship Hall and the Auditorium

I have met Dan and so was interested when friends Enoch and Jeannine Thweatt (who have worked with Chinese both in Taiwan and in the U.S. for over 30 years) told me that an article Dan had written addresses some of the concerns I expressed regarding trying to plan ways to work with Chinese here. I will share his experience and insights! Thank you and Dan Rodriguez for sharing this!

—Bev McGee

Woman of Valor

This is truly phenomenal work. And it seems so pleasurable and natural to her. Kudos Mrs. Boro!! I’m so proud of you!!

—Lloyd A. Bell

Inspirational.

—Kimberly Seymour

Awesome job (great article), I’m super proud of you!!

—Lafayette Wiley

I’m so proud of you Mrs. Boro!! Keep up the great work!!

—Noah Boro

We have such inspiring alumni!

—Annalee Shelton

PEPPERDINE

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Abbreviations—GPC: George Pepperdine College; SC: Seaver College; SoL: School of Law; SPP: School of Public Policy; GSBM: Graziadio School of Business and Management; GSEP: Graduate School of Education and Psychology.

Pepperdine is affiliated with Churches of Christ, of which the University’s founder, George Pepperdine, was a lifelong member.
Technology plays an important role at Pepperdine University and in education worldwide. It transforms how we conduct business and serves as a great enabler in teaching and learning. It will do so more noticeably in years in come, and continue to automate and streamline our business processes. At the end of the day, however, technology is simply a tool and nothing more.

Across the globe in higher education, there is a noticeable pace—a slow one—in the adoption of technology in teaching and learning. We are experiencing this pace at Pepperdine as well. As many know, the Information Technology (IT) Division at Pepperdine conducts an annual technology assessment known as TechQual+. Each year since 2009, IT surveys a random group of students, faculty, and staff members on their satisfaction with technology services offered by the University. One question in the survey asks students to rate faculty use of technology in instruction. Responses indicate that they want more. This should not come as a surprise. Students of higher education, particularly those college-aged, have multiple technological devices at their disposal, and they are expecting to use these tools in their academic life.

Our slow pace of technology adoption in teaching and learning is not due to a shortage of tools at Pepperdine. In fact, faculty and students have access to a wide suite of instructional technologies both on campus and online. Nor is it because of faculty unwillingness to integrate technology in curriculum. Those with whom I have the pleasure of interacting express interest in doing just that.

Instead, two primary explanations have emerged through our conversations with faculty. First, some of our faculty members simply do not know about the tools that Pepperdine offers, while others do not know how to best integrate them with a learner-centric focus. Secondly, IT can introduce all of the greatest and latest tools in the world, but I consider this a poor use of University resources IF we do not first engage with our faculty to learn what tools best fit their teaching styles and personalities. With this information at hand, IT began building a strategic partnership with faculty that is based on faculty leadership, development, collaboration, and facilitation.

Through our consultation with faculty, IT discovered that they learn best from each other. With a faculty-teach-faculty model in place, IT hosted the inaugural Technology and Learning Faculty Conference in September 2011. Several faculty presenters showcased various tools and demonstrated how they embedded them in pedagogy. The approach
proved to be a success; we received overwhelmingly positive feedback and post-conference inquiries from faculty.

To complement the faculty-teach-faculty approach, IT introduced another strategic approach that highlights the importance of faculty leadership. In January 2012, IT formed a 12-member faculty steering committee to lead and set Pepperdine’s direction for technology and learning. For technology to be a great enabler and have its place in teaching and learning, its adoption and use must be led and championed by faculty, not by IT. In this strategic partnership, faculty-led communities of practice and IT-facilitated implementation go hand-in-hand in the institution’s overall efforts in advancing student learning.

These approaches are great but they are not enough to effect positive change in our adoption of technology in teaching and learning. That’s why IT’s philosophy is: Pedagogy First, Technology Second. What this means is that IT must first focus on working with faculty on course (re)design that centers on student learning activities with technology as an enabling tool. For the past two years, IT has sponsored small groups of faculty to participate in teaching and learning conferences offered by EDUCAUSE and the Sakai Foundation. At these conferences, faculty (again) learned from their higher education peers on course designs, effective student engagements using or not using technology, and other ways of advancing student learning.

Funding for these faculty professional development opportunities is made possible not because of IT, but rather because of faculty engagement and leadership in the cost-savings transition to our Sakai learning management system. With these savings, in July 2012 Pepperdine’s Technology and Learning team rolled out a formal Faculty Professional Development Program, a two-week, learner-centric course with emphasis on course design. Eleven faculty members from the Graziadio School of Business and Management, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, and Seaver College participated in and benefited from the program.

Much work remains. We (as in faculty and IT) are barely scratching the surface. IT’s strategic partnership with faculty continues to innovate new ways in teaching and learning that prepares our students to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In his August 6, 2012 commentary in The Chronicle of Higher Education, provost Darryl Tippens writes about the value of personal instruction and engagement in education, and appropriately titled his piece “Technology Has Its Place: Behind a Caring Teacher.” Indeed so because at the end of the day, technology is simply a tool and nothing more. Together, we can decide how it fits into teaching and learning.
The School of Law community welcomed alumnus André Birotte to the Mendenhall Courtroom in September for a candid discussion of Birotte’s career. A 1991 graduate of the School of Law, Birotte’s rise to the U.S. Attorney’s office has inspired law students throughout the state, and most notably at his alma mater. “I am at home here and among family,” Birotte noted. “I owe a lot to Pepperdine for giving me a shot at success.”

A New Jersey native and graduate of Tufts University in 1987, Birotte’s focus as a student at Pepperdine was primarily on becoming a public defender. His reasoning, Birotte says, is that he simply wanted to give back. “I am a believer in doing right by your community,” he said.

After graduation, Birotte began a stint as a deputy public defender in Los Angeles, eventually working his way up to becoming an assistant U.S. attorney. In 2009 he was sworn in as the U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California, one of the largest districts in the nation, representing seven counties and close to 19 million people. His meeting with President Obama upon being sworn in became one of the most memorable moments of Birotte’s life.

He recalled, “The president congratulated us and said ‘you don’t work for me, you work for the people in your district. Your job is to do right by those you represent.’”

Birotte closed by encouraging interested students to apply for externships with his office and to utilize the resources in the School of Law faculty. He also promoted the idea of choosing a legal career that focuses on serving others. “In my own life, in my own small way, I’ve tried to give back to the country that has done so much for me.”

Rick Cupp, vice dean of the School of Law, applauded Birotte’s work and his service as a role model. “Mr. Birotte is an ideal role model, not only in his career success but also in his concern for guiding our students toward their own success,” he said. “He did an outstanding job of motivating students to act purposefully and with confidence, to take control of their careers, and to give back to the community and the profession.”

Pepperdine Law addressed the Law of Climate Change at the Sixth Annual William French Smith Memorial Lecture

Pepperdine Law hosted the sixth annual William French Smith Memorial Lecture in October, featuring a scholarly presentation on the legal issues of climate change. John C. Nagle, the John N. Matthews Professor of Law, University of Notre Dame Law School, and Lisa E. Heinzler, professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center, both spoke on the topic. An introduction and remarks were made by Deanell Reese Tacha, Duane and Kelly Roberts Dean of the School of Law and circuit judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit (ret.).

The event also featured a mock oral argument on the climate change legal case Native Village of Kivalina v. ExxonMobil Corp. Judges for the mock trial included the Honorable David B. Sentelle, chief judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit; the Honorable Timothy M. Tymkovich, circuit judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit; and Kenneth W. Starr, president, Baylor University.

William French Smith (1917-1990) served as the 74th attorney general of the United States (1981-1985). The School of Law, where Smith served on the Board of Visitors, is honored to pay tribute to his memory and service through this annual lecture series. Supreme Court justices Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas, Sandra Day O’Connor (ret.), and Anthony Kennedy are among the featured conversationalists of previous lectures.

Learn more and watch video footage of the event: law.pepperdine.edu/wfs

The book provides a nonpartisan introduction to questions of marijuana legalization, including the risks and benefits of its use and describing the current laws regulating the drug in the U.S. and abroad. Hawken and her coauthors discuss the likely costs and benefits of legalization at the state and national levels and explore policy options between prohibition and commercialized production, in addition to how marijuana legalization could personally impact parents, heavy users, medical users, drug traffickers, and employers.

Thomas Schelling, Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, observed, “Here is a book by four leading experts who collaborate in answering questions about marijuana and its possible legalization . . . a remarkable collaboration, and a pioneering format worth emulating.”

Hawken teaches classes in applied research methods, statistics, crime, and social policy, and her research interests focus on drugs, crime, and corruption. She has delivered testimonies to many state legislatures and to the U.S. Congress on issues related to U.S. drug policy.
Pepperdine GreenTeam Plants Organic Community Garden

Tucked away at the north end of the Malibu campus is an enclosed area where a handful of Seaver College students saw a need for a community garden that promotes sustainability and Christian stewardship.

Their mission was to educate the community that “there is a healthy way of eating, growing your own food, and not having to rely on grocery stores and pesticides,” says Seaver senior Juan Godinez, one of the current copresidents of the GreenTeam, the campus group that founded the Organic Community Garden and is focused on finding innovative ways for the Pepperdine community to implement sustainable, holistic practices into everyday life. “The goal is appreciating nature, the beauty of the earth, and God’s work in everything. It’s an educational, spiritual appreciation,” Godinez enthuses.

In 2011 the GreenTeam partnered with the University’s Center for Sustainability, which helped them focus their plans for a community garden to something that would be approved and manageable for community use. “Everyone was really supportive of the idea; there wasn’t any resistance to it,” says Peter Duby, coordinator of the Center for Sustainability, who praises the garden as a platform for students, faculty, and staff to unite as a community.

Open to students, faculty, and staff, the garden currently houses 12 raised redwood boxes available for use by the Pepperdine community to plant and grow edible produce every fall and spring semester. Everyone who commits to a plot is required to attend an informational session at the beginning of each semester discussing the rules of the garden and basic tools to help beginners become fluent in the practices and policies.

Godinez describes the GreenTeam as “a group of people interested in nature and sustainability.” But beyond a common interest in the environment, the group thrives on promoting ecological awareness and sustainable practices. Throughout the year they sponsor activities such as tree plantings for Arbor Day, cooking classes, field trips to food festivals, and beach cleanups.

The future of the Organic Community Garden includes the potential to connect with the Natural Science Division and encourage professors to bring students to the plot to educate them about organic gardening.

Learn more about the Organic Community Garden: pepperdinegreenteam.blogspot.com

Pepperdine Olympians Coach Waves Water Polo

Water polo icon Terry Schroeder (‘82) will return to Pepperdine as its head men’s water polo coach in the 2013 season. Schroeder, who was previously in charge of the program for 20 years and led the Waves to the 1997 NCAA championship, served as head coach of the USA men’s water polo team at the 2012 London Olympics. Schroeder will serve in a volunteer coaching capacity at Pepperdine this fall and will officially begin his duties as head coach on January 1, 2013.

In addition, Merrill Moses (‘99), a two-time Olympian and former All-American water polo player at Pepperdine, has joined the Waves’ staff as the interim co-head coach. Moses, a goalkeeper who helped lead Pepperdine to the 1997 NCAA championship and the United States to a Silver Medal at the 2008 Olympics, has been playing both professionally and with the U.S. squad for more than a decade before now turning his attention to coaching.

“Arresting part about this is coming back to my alma mater, and to be a part of trying to bring another national championship to Pepperdine,” Moses said.

William Rodriguez, another alumnus who rejoined the staff this season, will be the other interim co-head coach for the rest of the 2012 season.

“Our water polo program will be in excellent hands for a long time with the coaching staff we have assembled,” says Steve Potts, director of athletics. “These are men who love Pepperdine and believe in its mission, and who helped the water polo program to achieve so much of its success in past years.”

pepperdinesports.com
Meet the New Faculty of 2012-2013

From studio art to business strategy to teacher education, the new faculty at Seaver College and the Graziadio School of Business and Management come from a wide range of academic practices and backgrounds. Meet the new tenure-track professors and learn about new visiting and adjunct faculty: magazine.pepperdine.edu/new-faculty-2012

GSEP Dean’s Distinguished Lecture Series Addresses Diversity and Racism

Tim Wise, one of the most prominent anti-racist writers and educators in the United States, presented "Beyond Diversity: Challenging Racism in an Age of Backlash" on October 25 as part of the Dean’s Distinguished Lecture Series at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology. Wise delineated the difference between individual prejudice and institutional bias and how stereotypes impact daily decision-making.

The lecture and Q&A aimed to heighten awareness of the harmful effects of racism and privilege.

Named one of “25 Visionaries Who are Changing Your World” by Utne Reader in 2010, Wise has spoken in all 50 states, on more than 800 college and high school campuses, and to community groups across the nation. He has also lectured internationally in Canada and Bermuda on issues of comparative racism, race and education, racism and religion, and racism in the labor market. He is the author of six books, including Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority and White Like Me (updated and rereleased).

Sponsored by Susan and Don Rice, the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series brings leading agents of change to GSEP to discuss the challenges and opportunities in servant-leadership in communities across the world.
The Graziadio School of Business and Management is now offering new master of business administration programs for working professionals. The online Fully Employed MBA, scheduled to start in January 2013, will be an option alongside the school’s existing portfolio of traditional on-campus part-time evening and weekend MBA program offerings.

“Online students will receive a MBA at a fully accredited, internationally recognized business school with more than 40 years of experience delivering education focused on responsible business practice that is values-centered, global in orientation, and entrepreneurial in spirit,” said Linda Livingstone, dean of the Graziadio School.

“The curriculum directly mirrors our existing on-campus program and will be taught by the same faculty,” adds David Smith, associate dean of academic affairs, who is overseeing the initiative. “Students will be able to complete the online option in six semesters, the same as on-the-ground students, and they will be able to pursue a 12-unit concentration in finance, marketing, or leadership.”

Also new is the Saturday MBA, offering working professionals the option to earn Pepperdine’s MBA degree in general management by meeting once a week on Saturdays at either the West Los Angeles or Irvine campuses. “The Graziadio School recognizes that the work, travel, and life circumstances of Southern California professionals have changed.

They seek a business school that still provides a superior learning experience in a manageable period of time, but also one that minimizes the impact on work and home life schedules,” says Gary Mangiofico, associate dean of fully employed and executive programs.

In addition, the Graziadio School is now offering its Fully Employed MBA program in Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley.

Learn more about the curriculum and requirements of these programs: mbaonline.pepperdine.edu • bschool.pepperdine.edu/saturdayMBA • bschool.pepperdine.edu/programs/mba
School of Public Policy and Council of American Ambassadors Address the State of the Korean Peninsula

The School of Public Policy and the Council of American Ambassadors partnered to present a conference on the Korean peninsula on October 9. The conference brought together former U.S. ambassadors, their guests, and Pepperdine students and faculty.

Dean James R. Wilburn and former U.S. ambassador to Singapore Timothy A. Chorba opened the program, which featured remarks and panel discussions on the political, economic, and social conditions in the two Koreas; the North Korea nuclear question; and China’s posture towards the Korean peninsula.

Participants included: Dan Caldwell, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Seaver College; Robert Kaufman, professor of public policy at the School of Public Policy; Blaine Harden, journalist and author of *Escape from Camp 14*, the story of Shin Dong-hyuk, the only person to have been born and raised in a North Korean prison camp—and to have escaped to the West; David Kang, professor of international relations and professor of business, USC; Spencer H. Kim, former U.S. representative to APEC’s (National Center for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Business Advisory Council; and Xiao-huang Yin, chair and professor, American Studies Department, Occidental College.

In addition, assistant U.S. trade representative Wendy Cutler discussed the recently-concluded U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement and the ongoing Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations. Former ambassador C. Donald Johnson, director of the Dean Rusk Center at the University of Georgia School of Law and formerly the U.S. congressman for the 10th District of Georgia and the chief textile negotiator in the office of U.S. Trade Representative, moderated Cutler’s presentation.

Glen A. Holden, former U.S. ambassador to Jamaica, Pepperdine regent, and cochair of the Campaign for Pepperdine, offered concluding remarks.

Watch video footage of the conference: publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu
Dolores Returns!

On September 19, Founder’s Day 2012, Dolores, the beloved mascot and guardian angel-cherub of the original George Pepperdine College campus in South Los Angeles, was unveiled in a special ceremony in Adamson Plaza on the Malibu campus, restored to the full glory of her 1941 debut. Set upon a quatrefoil pedestal, she makes a welcome and beautifully scenic return to the center of Pepperdine campus life, as the University concludes its historic 75th anniversary year.

ON THE WEB  Learn the story of Pepperdine's legendary Dolores: magazine.pepperdine.edu/dolores
See that family over there—on the other side of the restaurant? What’s their story? The woman looks thoughtful. The man looks happy. What are they talking about?

If you are in a restaurant, or any other public space, and notice someone glancing your way a little too often, don’t be alarmed. It might just be adjunct professor of film and television writing Sheryl Anderson, or another screenwriter imagining your life story to get character ideas.

“My parents played this game with us whenever we’d go out as a family to eat—you pick someone and tell their story from afar. So many of my ideas come from imagining people. I find my inspiration in eavesdropping,” jokes Anderson, a veteran writer of shows such as *Charmed* and *Flash Gordon*.

The films and television shows that truly transport us out of our lives for a short time feature characters that are finely drawn, carefully crafted by writers who are infinitely curious about people in both strange and mundane circumstances.

“The best inspiration comes from observing,” agrees recent graduate Jeff Loveness (‘11), a writer for *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* “It may occasionally make you annoying to hang out with, but always be observing. Find something stupid in the world, something that shouldn’t be the way it is, and form opinions, even absurd ones—it’ll give you something to write about.”
Loveness defied the odds to find a steady writing gig right out of college. At *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* he has written popular comedy sketches that take character observations and turn them upside down, such as pitting Harrison Ford and fictional furry friend Chewbacca against each other as longtime rivals, and having Jimmy Kimmel and Ellen DeGeneres duke it out in a “Nice Off” to be crowned the “nicest host.” Loveness was offered the job based on his work as a contributing writer for comedy web series, *The Onion News Network*, and after a number of his self-made comedy sketches went viral on YouTube.

“Higher-ups may not have time to read your 90-page screenplay, but they might have time to see your three-minute short film. For once we have a direct outlet to show the world our work; so in general, I say write, but go further than that. Create,” Loveness advises.

He is a prime example of what can happen when raw talent combines with the drive to create and the skills to make the right connections. With its location so near to the heart of filmmaking, Pepperdine is able to draw industry pros to teach creative writing undergraduates and students of the master of fine arts in screen and television writing (MFA) program, many of whom have built careers in the industry.

“I like Pepperdine’s MFA model, which has a faculty of working professionals who give up a night or two each week and the rest of the week they’re out there pitching and writing their own stuff,” says recent graduate Josiah Nelson (MFA ’11).

Because, Nelson adds, besides crafting compelling characters there are two vitally important parts of being a writer. The first is to simply to keep writing. “Be patient, go to your job to support yourself, interact with people, but just write a little bit every day,” he advises.

Nelson’s second piece of advice to fledgling writers is to make sure people see their work. For Loveness, that forum was YouTube; for Nelson, it meant getting an internship with a film company where his boss read his completed action-adventure screenplay.

“She liked it, passed it along to a producer friend, who passed it to another producer, who decided to option it. Starting out in this business, you need someone championing your work and willing to pass it along,” Nelson asserts.

“I was devastated when I discovered that about 50 percent of my *Jeffersons* draft has been rewritten by staff,” Guerdat recalls. “Later, when I was the guy doing the rewriting, I learned that 50 percent is a very high percentage for a freelancer to achieve, especially for his first time in the big leagues.”

Rewrites are an unfortunate and unavoidable part of the screenwriting.
world, but most writers learn over time what will work and what won’t. “If it doesn’t play, it doesn’t matter how pretty your words look on the page,” Guerdot explains. “You have to make the script work for the actors, who have to make it work for the audience. So if it isn’t working, change it. Fast.”

Nelson asserts that one of the most effective ways to learn your craft intimately is to stick with one genre. “When I first came out I wanted to try my hand at everything, but I’ve learned that if you’re a great romantic comedy writer and just pretty good at action, you should stick to romantic comedy,” says Nelson, who has had his first script optioned. “What I’m good at is writing action adventure, so I’m focused on that now.”

Besides, “being ‘typecast’ is one of the best ways to get regular work,” agrees Tom Provost, a writer/actor/director who joined the MFA faculty this fall. He gravitates naturally towards writing and/or directing thrillers and horrors, such as Under Suspicion, The Presence, and the upcoming Mr. Clark, a dark reimagining of It’s a Wonderful Life.

“Don’t fight the typecasting; embrace it,” Provost says, offering advice that can be applied to most any career. “And hope for the time in your career when you can complain about being typecast and getting a lot of work in only one genre.”

TOM PROVOST with Mira Sorvino on the set of The Presence.

“Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth”
—Lou Gehrig, The Pride of the Yankees (1942)

Ultimately, being “typecast” and successful in a career that is highly competitive, a lot of hard work, and creatively rewarding is a good
STILES WHITE (’91) discusses his film Knowing with the director of Pepperdine’s Center for Entertainment, Media, and Culture, Craig Detweiler.

problem to have. Provost maintains that “how you disclose information to keep the audience leaning forward” is the most important element of good storytelling—and likewise, screenwriters should be as engaged with their creative passions.

Guerdat grew up writing short stories but fell in love with the movies in what he calls Hollywood’s “golden era” of the late 1960s and early 1970s. “Without ever having taken a screenwriting course or having read a screenplay, I imagined the opening sequence of a movie I eventually wrote called Fourth Story. That sequence never changed from that first conception through dozens of drafts, all the way to the final production.”

“If you have a passion to tell a story or you feel called to do so,” adds Anderson, “then hang on to that feeling. The rest of it you can learn.”

For more established writers who have mastered the art of characterization, pushed through the hard times of writing and rewriting and typecasting, and have come out on the other side with actual credits to their name, the real fun begins when they can see the final product of their work, share it with audiences, and look back on their efforts with pride.

For example, alumnus Stiles White (’91) paid a visit in December 2009 to Pepperdine’s Center for Entertainment, Media, and Culture, to screen and discuss his blockbuster film, Knowing. He and Juliet Snowden, his wife and writing partner, have written a number of films, including Boogeyman from 2005 and the recently released horror film, The Possession. Even with all of his success, he still remembers the impact of attending screenings and Q&As with filmmakers in his student days.

“Getting to ask questions, hearing the behind-the-scenes details of the process and how movies are put together—those are motivating experiences for aspiring writers and artists,” White notes. “It was a thrill to come back to Pepperdine—I’m looking forward to seeing what talent comes out of future graduating classes.”

As the lead characters of their own life stories, film and television writers make the journey from movie fans to story creators. And if the day comes that they can no longer imagine a story for the family in the next booth over, they’ll always have the joy of having lived out their dream.

“I often wonder why I’m doing this,” reflects Loveness, of all the late nights and painful rewrites involved in following his passion. “But then you see the final product . . . If my career ends up imploding upon itself, then I can at least take comfort in the fact that I made Harrison Ford angrily throw Chewbacca out of a dressing room.”

“Wait a minute—you ain’t heard nothin’ yet!”
—Jakie Rabinowitz/Jake Robin, The Jazz Singer (1927)

WEB EXCLUSIVE:
Read expanded Q&As with these alumni and faculty writers, plus an exclusive conversation with David Weiss (’81), screenwriter of The Smurfs, Shrek 2, and All Dogs Go to Heaven.
magazine.pepperdine.edu/filmandtv
This summer approximately 45,000 college students from around the country flocked to Washington, D.C., to land an internship on Capitol Hill. The race to secure a coveted internship has become so competitive that 10,000 of these applicants were college graduates.

Twenty years ago the single-semester offering was launched as a summer program for political science students. Today, the program has expanded to provide internships year-round to students of all majors, with three groups traveling to Washington, D.C., per term to discover and further their professional objectives.

“The mere act of having worked full-time in a real-life situation is considered a positive skill by most employers,” says Jahshan. “That, along with the networking that we encourage the students to do while they are here has led to increasingly more Pepperdine students heading to D.C. after graduation to locate jobs.”

Thanks to generous contributions by donors such as Russell Ray, Jr., and Denny Lewis, each semester bursts with eager undergraduates who hope to work and live in the nation’s capital. Four years ago, Pepperdine acquired and revamped eight floors of a structure mere blocks from the White House, where students reside and fulfill the academic component of the program—evening courses.

In this issue of Pepperdine Magazine, students speak out about their personal Washington, D.C. experiences.

The Youth Activist

“So many people have tried to make a change in our educational system, but it’s just not working,” thought Seaver College junior Demisse Habteselasie. Troubled by the inconsistent leadership he witnessed at his high school in Beltsville, Maryland, he took charge as student government president his senior year and implemented changes to improve the processes and procedures that he thought could use some help. “The motivation was just change,” he says, recalling the frustration he felt knowing that neighboring counties were offered more resources and opportunities. “My high school was deteriorating academically.”

As a high school student, Habteselasie suggested a program that enlisted the help of local companies such as Best Buy and Target to set up a rewards system for community schools, a partnership in which retailers donated a percentage of proceeds towards books and resources for local students. At Seaver, the Posse Foundation scholarship recipient revisited this drive for community participation two semesters in a row through the Washington, D.C. Internship Program.
most recently this past spring, where he took part in the Leadership Program at the White House in the Office of Presidential Correspondence’s Volunteer Leaders Program.

After interning at the White House for one semester last year, Habteselsie was invited back to the internship program this spring to oversee volunteers in the Office of Presidential Correspondence and interned this summer at Kirkland & Ellis, a D.C.-based international commercial law firm, doing casework and research for various departments. “There’s only so much you can do without a JD,” he says, citing the case assistance he provided for a pro bono immigration case that was granted a motion in favor of the client mere days before the Supreme Court ruled on immigration laws in Arizona.

Ultimately, Habteselsie’s passion lies in trial law, which he plans to pursue as an attorney in the future. “Politics is a career that sort of happens along the way. I definitely want to get involved in it and hopefully education is one of the topics that I tackle.”

Driven by previous internship experiences overseas—including one with Pepperdine’s London Summer Internship Program—and a bit of wanderlust, Gibson applied to the program as an intern at Amnesty International in the Country Specialist Program.

“I don’t necessarily have political hopes or ambitions, but D.C. is the center for a lot of international activity,” Gibson explains. She found the ideal fit at the nongovernmental organization where she helps approximately 130 volunteers who work to monitor human rights activities and abuses around the globe.

Gibson also found opportunities to be exposed to human rights international law attending luncheons and lectures for interns at the capital. “I have been able to hear things from NGOs and the governmental side of human rights. Working at Amnesty, I’ve learned a lot about how NGOs and nonprofits work, but these series helped me connect how governments deal with human rights and some of the political implications of why they will support one thing and not another.”

Her exposure to these opportunities has reinforced and invigorated her goal of working in some form of diplomacy. “I’ve always been told you should pursue what you enjoy and what you’re good at,” she says. “Working overseas is something that takes a lot of work, but it’s something I enjoy and if working in diplomacy is a way I can influence events for the better, I’d like to do that. And I get to travel!”

Witte’s responsibilities fell into the former category. The business administration major nurtured his longtime fascination with museums and applied to the Smithsonian for the overall experience. “Museums have always been interesting to me,” he admits. “I’m the guy who can go to a museum for the day and really enjoy it.”

One of the most memorable experiences for the museum buff was when the interns were given the opportunity to visit the “Pods,” five numbered buildings in Maryland in which the Smithsonian keeps most of its collections not displayed in museums. “The museums hold about 10 percent of acquisitions,” he explains. “We were able to see how restorations for textiles, paintings, and woodwork were done.”

Witte’s team was in charge of acquiring new purchases for Smithsonian museums and developing and greenlighting the use of an e-learning software platform called Moodle. Witte’s division created online training courses for new employees with purchasing capabilities, which launched shortly after the end of his internship. “We finished and were on our last round of testing when we were contacted by other Smithsonian offices asking about using it,” he says. The software is now
Starting in the fall of 2013 the Washington, D.C. Internship Program will transition into the Washington World program, the newest phase of Pepperdine’s International Programs offerings. Modeled after current international programs, which, since 1963, have prepared students for lives of transformative experiences in an international context, the Washington World program will open students up to the regional opportunities of the global city and incorporate two-week international study tours during the fall and spring semesters, as well as the opportunity to participate in part-time internships.

Given the options of a Middle Eastern experience in the fall (Dubai) or Latin American experience in the spring (Cuba or Haiti), students will spend four days immersed in the local cultures and integrate with local university students to socialize and participate in symposia, cultural exchanges, and stimulating conversations relevant to each of the cultures and countries.

The summer semester, which will remain internship-based, will provide Seaver College students with the same robust program that has afforded them the opportunities to investigate their professional goals in our nation’s capital and prepare them for a career in the global marketplace.

being considered as a pilot, which will be fine-tuned for Smithsonian-wide use.

The impact of the internship carried on even after Witte left D.C. “A lot of the things that I made are being circulated right now and will continue to be used for the next five to 10 years,” enthuses Witte. “I’m not saying I worked on the most important projects or things that needed to get done today, but I got to work on things that will continue to be used. I feel a lot of pride in my work.”

The Adrenaline Junkie

Tanner Sanchez likes a good adrenaline rush. So when he was presented with the opportunity to intern at the United States Marshals Service, he knew that it would satisfy his interest in a job that was demanding of both his physical and mental energy. “I was like any other little kid playing cops and robbers growing up. It just turned into a passion for me,” he says.

At the Marshals Service, Sanchez interned for the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force, where he worked on censorship of sensitive information before dissemination to the public. But that’s just one exciting task out of the several he had the chance to experience in Washington, D.C. Among doing background investigations for wanted fugitives, Sanchez coordinated with field officers, providing them with necessary support at their locations. He also practiced building-entry and room-clearing and wore a bulletproof vest as he accompanied officers performing surveillance on a fugitive.

“The trainings were really eye-opening and exciting,” recalls Sanchez. “They were adrenaline-filled, and it was fun to acquire and develop new skills. Those were definitely memorable. It was also great just gleaning information from the officers and deputies and getting their take on their experiences.”

In one heart-pumping exercise, Sanchez traveled to the Drug Enforcement Agency Academy in Quantico, Virginia, where he was given a “simunition” gun—a weapon that fires dummy rounds—and sent through a “kill house,” a warehouse with moveable walls that can be arranged to create different floor plans. “That was an amazing experience!” he recalls.

With plans to focus on a federal law enforcement career, Sanchez is confident that the Washington, D.C. Internship Program has been a valuable component of his future job search. “It’s interesting to see what matters to employers,” he remarks, referring to the ways in which employers prioritize different qualities in applicants. Sanchez knows that the pairing of his academic successes in Malibu and real-world work experience in D.C. are essential to his future in the federal service, “even though I’m not really thinking about school as I break in a door,” he laughs.
Pierre-Richard Prosper’s (JD ’89) role as U.S. ambassador thrust him into the public eye, but it’s his current role as partner at Arent Fox that has allowed him to tackle high-profile cases with diplomatic connections on a private level.

By Jannette Jauregui
When Pierre-Richard Prosper was given the choice to serve as a deputy district attorney in either Torrance or Compton, it was then head deputy of Torrance Gil Garcetti who advised Prosper to “go to Compton.” It was 1989. Gang violence had hit an all-time high in the city. Even Prosper, who was hungry for a challenging legal environment, couldn’t have imagined what the next three years would bring.

There was 1991, for example. After just two years on the job, Prosper found his caseload to include some of the more than 100,000 known active gang members living in Los Angeles, and nearly 800 of the gang-related homicides that they had been a part of.

Then came April 29, 1992, the day the Rodney King verdict was announced. Riots broke out and chaos ensued. And in the middle of it all was Prosper and the district attorney’s office.

“The violence was everywhere,” Prosper said. “We even had to evacuate the courthouse.”

The riots lasted six days, but the cases carried on for years. When Prosper left his role with the DA in 1994, he had 22 cases as part of his workload. All murder, double murder, and triple murder.

“This was major crime we were dealing with,” Prosper noted. “Recovering from those riots was no easy task.”

Prosper’s career beyond the DA’s office, though more complex, mirrors the same dedication to service that he held as a young prosecutor on Garcetti’s team. His titles have changed (most now address him as Ambassador Prosper), and his client base has broadened, but at the end of the day his sights remain set on the hunt for justice.

It is a hunt that has most recently led Prosper to fight for two American citizens imprisoned by the Iranian government. With one verdict in favor of his client, and another still pending, Prosper is acutely aware that the weight of each man’s freedom is on his shoulders. He welcomes the challenge with humility, and with clientele that know if anyone can do it, it’s Prosper.

Prosper’s efforts in Compton hadn’t gone unnoticed, and he left the district attorney’s office for an offer to join the United States Attorney’s Drug Enforcement Task Force working, in part, on a case involving drug cartels from Colombia and Mexico. Prosper put his name in for a position with the United Nations after hearing former assistant U.S. attorney Stephen Mansfield speak about a mission from which he had recently returned. The topic of the discussion was the Rwandan genocide. It caught Prosper’s attention. Then came the phone call from U.S. attorney general Janet Reno, who encouraged Prosper to join a developing United Nations tribunal designed to serve, and essentially intervene, in the 1994 genocide.

“I remember thinking to myself, ‘Is there a genocide going on?,’” Prosper noted. “I had no idea until Steve [Mansfield] gave the presentation. One million people killed in 100 days. I thought to myself this was it. This was my next calling.”

Prosper had developed an interest in working for the United Nations early into his legal education. The opportunity couldn’t have been more meaningful, or more fitting. They needed someone who spoke French. The Haitian native was fluent. And they needed someone who was willing...
This year’s headlines involving U.S. marine Amir Mirzaei Hekmati mark a striking resemblance to those of the Taghavi case. At just 28, Hekmati is facing death in Iran after having been convicted of serving as a spy for the CIA. As dreary as the prospects look for Hekmati, Prosper isn’t about to give up. He speaks almost daily with Iranian government officials, constantly negotiating and delaying execution.

“I draw on every skill I’ve learned,” Prosper said. “Law is an evolving and ever-changing landscape, and you have to be willing to take risks to seek justice.”

His work with Hekmati is just one of the many international cases that Prosper currently has on his plate. He often travels to Zimbabwe and the Congo, advising officials on a variety of legal matters. The 400,000 air miles he logged in 2011, and the three times he has circumnavigated the globe so far in 2012, provide only an abbreviated account of the current climate of his career. Still, he often finds himself seeking guidance from the experiences he had early on.

“I go back to the days of the L.A. riots and the successes of some of those cases, I still believe that first impressions carry so much weight. No amount of success can replace that.”

A Matter of Life and Death

Prosper left Rwanda having made an impression in Washington, D.C., and specifically the White House. The next call came from then U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright. The request? To join her team as a White House advisor to war crimes under the Clinton Administration.

At the request of Albright’s successor Colin Powell, Prosper stayed on through the Bush Administration. Immediately following the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, he began chairing meetings on policies involving Al Qaeda. As the second appointed U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, Prosper was among the first to set foot on Afghan soil, as well as in Iraq where he worked on policies involving Saddam Hussein.

“It was really a matter of fighting discrimination, of finding justice,” Prosper said. “As a diplomat I was able to do that on a much larger scale and take cases that were literally a matter of life and death.”

In his most recent role as partner with Arent Fox in the firm’s Los Angeles office, Prosper has found the balance of utilizing his diplomatic connections with his now more private life.

In 2010 Prosper secured the release of Reza Taghavi from a jail cell in Iran. The California businessman was charged with providing financial support to terrorist groups that threatened the Islamic Republic. The story made headlines, as did Prosper’s diligence in seeking justice and bringing Taghavi home.

“This is really a matter of discrimination, of finding justice. As a diplomat I was able to do that on a much larger scale and take cases that were literally a matter of life and death.”

Prosper did without hesitation. “As intimidating as it was, I knew I would regret it if I didn’t go,” Prosper said. It was a one-year commitment. The tribunal was the first of its kind developed since the Nuremburg trials that prosecuted the Nazi war crimes of World War II.

“There was total devastation,” Prosper said. “They needed everything. We created a system from scratch. We took doors off hinges to make desks. We had to prioritize letters and memos because there was a limited amount of paper and pens being shipped in. We’d walk around, talk to the ministers, the farmers, and ask what happened. We did it everyday until we could put the pieces together.”

The original trial team of five people in 1997, which eventually led to a solo mission by Prosper in 1998, became the first case of its kind, ending in a guilty verdict against Rwandan mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu.

“We were making history,” Prosper noted. “It was incredible to be given that kind of responsibility.”

In 2010 Prosper secured the release of Reza Taghavi from a jail cell in Iran. The California businessman was charged with providing financial support to terrorist groups that threatened the Islamic Republic. The story made headlines, as did Prosper’s diligence in seeking justice and bringing Taghavi home.
On July 4, 2012, teams working at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland announced a discovery that brought this question to life in headlines and conversation around the world.

Scientists detected the first evidence of the Higgs boson, a particle that explains the origin of mass of all things and was famously dubbed the “God Particle” in 1993. The breakthrough ended a decades-long search towards completing an understanding of sub-atomic particles known in physics as the Standard Model.

Could this discovery explain key concepts of our existence?

What does it mean to our understanding of matter and the universe?

As the subject continues to make news and fuel dialogue, Pepperdine Magazine asks Seaver College professors of physics, religion, and philosophy for their take on the Higgs boson, its controversial nickname, and what it all means from a Christian perspective.
The Higgs boson, named after Peter Higgs, the man who is generally credited with predicting its existence (credit is also due to physicists Robert Brout and Francois Englert), was called the “God Particle” by Leon Lederman in a book bearing the same title in 1993. The Higgs boson is associated with the Higgs field, which is thought to be the mechanism that gives mass to particles that inhabit our universe, including the ones that make up the structure of humans. Its recent discovery completes the table of particles of the Standard Model of Physics.

The way that this mechanism works is that particles interact with the Higgs field via the Higgs boson. The greater the interaction of the particle with the Higgs field the greater the mass of the particle. You can visualize this mechanism by considering two large swimming pools, one filled with water and the other tar. You would find walking or exercising in the pool filled with water easier than the pool filled with tar. The less resistance you encounter the easier it is to move. Trying to move in the pool with tar would require an extreme amount of effort; consider the animals trapped in the La Brea tar pits in Los Angeles. The same holds for a particle moving through the Higgs field; the greater the resistance it encounters moving through the field the greater the mass of the particle. Particles like photons do not interact with the Higgs field and therefore due not have mass.

Even though the Higgs mechanism appears to know how much interference to exert on the different types of particles, this does not imply that the Higgs particle is omniscient. The Higgs particle comes up a little short in the all-knowing category. To be “the God Particle” it must play a bigger role in the evolution of our universe. Maybe it would be a good spokesparticle for Weight Watchers but not “the God Particle.”

The July 4 announcement at CERN revealing experimental evidence of the Higgs boson particle was a breathtaking historical moment in the sciences. This 48-year quest began with mathematical predictions regarding components of the Standard Model of particle physics. The importance of the discovery is clear, advancing our understanding of the subatomic particles that compose the known universe, and the forces that hold these particles together (and push them apart). However, celebration of the discovery has been muddled by a popular reference to the Higgs boson as the “God Particle.” Though this discovery clearly improves our understanding of the physical universe; there is nothing about the Standard Model that addresses questions regarding God’s existence. God will not be proven or dismissed by scientific revelation.

Discoveries in the fields of particle physics or cosmology unravel a universe with seemingly unlimited surprises, though big questions remain. What is the nature of time? What was the beginning of the universe like? I struggle to understand a universe that sprang into existence ex nihilo (from absolute void); something must have existed beforehand to provide the fuel for the universe-creating explosion. If so, where did that fuel originate? There are popular books available currently that offer a “something from nothing” explanation of the origin of the universe, an explanation that is typically offered...
along with some religion bashing. However, the nothing described in these books is actually something, which in my mind offers no real explanation at all. Time and origins are truly challenging characteristics of the universe that are mysterious, but not outside the realm of scientific investigation.

As a biologist and a Christian, I am accustomed to the insertion of new research discoveries into the faith and science conversation. The insertion seems out of place, as scientists experimentally test and describe the physical universe, and most resist any extension of their work into larger theological questions. However, there is a wonderful complex mystery to life itself, forcing us to consider its origin, and the likelihood of precursor molecules assembling into replicating cells.

For the believer, faith comes through a study of the word of God, through the spirit of God working within us, and through our daily experiences as we engage the majesty of the world around us. Scripture tells us that the heavens declare the glory of God each and every day (Psalms 19), and that God’s divine nature is made clear to us through what has been made (Romans 1:20). Paul, referencing the place of Christ in creation wrote, “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17, NIV). For the believer in Christian scripture, God is eternal, outside of time, and is both the beginning and the end of all things. Ultimately we must ask ourselves which explanation makes the most sense: a purposed universe authored by God himself, or a meaningless universe that has sprung up by chance via a specific set of natural laws.

Garrett Pendergraft
assistant professor of philosophy

When I first heard the term “God Particle,” it didn’t make much sense to me. Was it supposed to be some sort of evidence that God exists? (Probably not.) Was it supposed to explain the things God is typically invoked to explain? (That didn’t seem right either.) So I looked up where the term came from. Here’s what Lederman says (p. 22): “This boson is so central to the state of physics today, so crucial to our final understanding of the structure of matter, yet so elusive, that I have given it a nickname: the God Particle.”

So it seems that Lederman is drawing an analogy: he is saying that the Higgs boson is to physics as God is to (theistic) religion. And this analogy suggests a presupposition about the relation between science and religion—or, more precisely, a presupposition that science and religion are unrelated. They are, as Stephen Jay Gould would say, non-overlapping magisteria; neither one can say anything about the other. But I think this is an incorrect model of the relation between science and religion (or science and theology). I prefer a convergence model, according to which science and theology will eventually converge on a unified and truthful description of reality. (I owe this description of the convergence model to Garry DeWeese.)

Science and theology often tell us different kinds of things, but ultimately they’re talking about the same thing. When conflict occurs, it will be due to an incorrect theory in science or an incorrect doctrine in theology (or perhaps both). As we (haltingly) approach an accurate description of reality, science may correct theology or theology may correct science. Both disciplines are part of the broader search for God’s truth that we are committed to as Christians.
Touting the Higgs boson as the “God Particle” seems to me incongruous. It suggests that God was found hiding in a particle accelerator or that the boson’s discovery is the conclusion of all scientific and religious endeavors. In any case, before we disentangle this mash-up of religious and scientific terms, we ought to identify what we mean by “religion” and “science.” To oversimplify, religion constitutes our understanding of purpose in the context of our relationships with the divine and with each other. Science, on the other hand, is a method by which we refine our models of physical processes by comparing the predictions of falsifiable theories with the outcome of experimentation. Where the purview of religion is purpose, the terrain of science is mechanism. Karl Popper, a notable 20th-century philosopher, might have explained this distinction with a fictional example: a student happens upon a scientist and a scholar of religion watching a whistling kettle and asks, “Why is the water boiling?” The former responds, “We’ve added heat to the system.” The latter, however, answers, “We’d like to brew tea.”

Suppose we ask the above scientist a question that has puzzled physicists for at least several decades: “Why do some particles (for example, the electron) have mass?” She might respond, “In more simple formulations of particle physics, it is not clear that particles should have mass at all despite that seemingly obvious observational conclusion. A more complete theory, however, suggests that some particles become massive via the Higgs mechanism.” In short, the Higgs mechanism postulates a new kind of interaction which imbibes the property we call mass to many of the known particles. As a consequence, the mechanism mandates the existence of a previously unobserved particle called the Higgs boson. By seeking out experimental signatures of this boson, scientists aim to corroborate the Higgs mechanism and thereby shed light on the origin of mass in our universe. Does the Higgs boson somehow indicate meaning instead of mechanism? Have we found purpose where we expected particles? Has our scientist friend answered on behalf of the scholar of religion? Certainly not. In this sense, the Higgs boson is no more the “God Particle” than Einstein’s Relativity is a fifth gospel to follow John’s.

How then did the Higgs boson gain its dubious distinction? For Lederman, the boson is godlike not because it evidences the divine but because it acts as the ultimate answer to physical inquiry, science’s Tower of Babel or Holy Grail. If the history of science has taught us anything, it is that each new answer leads to new and more fascinating questions. In overstating the boson’s finality, Lederman diminishes the essence of science. Certainly discovering the Higgs boson is a monumental achievement, but it is neither a singular answer nor an end to inquiry.

As we continue to explore new and exciting frontiers in science, may we attend to the interplay between reason and faith, the “how” and the “why” the transfer of heat and the making of tea... all hopefully with a rounded spoonful of humility.
I’m a Wave and My Life Has Been Changed!

STANDING ON THESE BLUFFS ABOVE THE MALIBU COASTLINE, I can hardly fathom the vision and courage it took George Pepperdine to endow this institution of higher learning in the midst of a deep depression. Today, with more than 92,000 alumni all over the world, we stand for lives of purpose, service, and leadership like no other institution of higher learning in this great nation.

On the historic 75th anniversary of the founding of Pepperdine University—Founder’s Day 2012—I humbly assumed my new role as the fourth president of the Alumni Leadership Council (ALC). I am proud to be called to serve in such an important capacity in helping our alumni connect to their alma mater and find meaningful ways to give back.

I have served on the Alumni Leadership Council since 2008 as a member representing the Graziadio School of Business and Management, then as a committee chair, and most recently as president-elect. I have come to appreciate the enormous compassion and pride that our alumni exhibit.

Waves are providing internships that help prepare current students to find their first jobs. Waves are serving in their local communities and around the world. Waves are mentoring and teaching other students and alumni. Waves are stepping up their engagement and giving back of their time and talents. I have developed a strong appreciation for the value of the Pepperdine community and how important our alumni are to Pepperdine.

We stand on the shoulders of many leaders who were the cornerstones of this great institution as we boldly go forward. For those of you who are already involved, we thank you and ask that you “keep on keeping on.” For those who haven’t yet found your way to connect, please reach out and join us! We have more than 30 chapters and regional programs with hundreds of events planned for the coming year. You can always keep up by visiting WWW.PEPPERDINE.EDU/ALUMNI.

Go Waves!
PEPPERDINE KNOWS HOW TO PARTY…

WAVES STYLE!

Thank you Waves for honoring Pepperdine’s 75th anniversary. We concluded our commemorative year with over 60 celebrations across the globe. From Hollywood galas to Texas BBQs and London socials, alumni, students, family, and friends around the world demonstrated their pride for the orange and blue. The Alumni Association would like to express our deepest gratitude for making this an exceptional year of support for Pepperdine. Go Waves!

JOIN A CHAPTER OR REGIONAL PROGRAM NEAR YOU!

Join your local Pepperdine Waves chapter to network, volunteer, share experiences, and connect with other alumni, parents, students, and friends in your local community. There are many Waves chapters spanning across the globe!

Don’t see a chapter near you? E-mail us at alumni@pepperdine.edu to find out how to start one.

PEPPERDINE MARKETPLACE

This fall Pepperdine University Alumni Association will be launching a new community marketplace. Our goal is to provide an online resource for the Pepperdine community to find alumni-owned businesses and services. Coming online soon!

alumni.pepperdine.edu
Graziadio School alumnus Jack Schlafer applies his global business background to developing culturally intelligent business practices.

By Gareen Darakjian

“Real leaders have a connection—the X Factor—that is always an important element of leadership,” explains Schlafer, principal program and change manager for the Quality Assurance Division of Microsoft Corporation.

As a student at the Graziadio School of Business and Management, Schlafer first became aware of an emerging organizational concept essential to “being” a successful leader: cultural intelligence (CQ). He describes it as the “adaptability capability”: the capability to be adaptive across multiple cultures. “Cultural intelligence is a repertoire of skills that allows you to be effective regardless of the culture—be it domestic or international—but it also may apply to organization or team cultures. CQ makes you evaluate those and be much more effective.”

Schlafer began his career as an IT professional serving industries ranging from aerospace (Boeing) to consulting and petrochemicals, where he spent five years in Texaco’s west coast IT department. Shortly after joining Microsoft in 1996, Schlafer was called on to lead their U.K.-based program to rationalize IT infrastructure and processes worldwide. “Then I sort of bumped up to another level completely, he says. “I was playing at a global level.” He began stumbling through cross-cultural challenges and needed to adapt in order to resolve them.

THE DOING

TO JACK SCHLAFER (MS ’12), LEADERSHIP COMPRISÉS TWO FACTORS: THE DOING AND THE BEING.

The former refers to the things all great leaders execute well: a compelling vision, putting together the right team to implement that vision, and bringing the entire organization along for the journey. The latter is a complex blend of attributes that is less clearly defined.
“I was woefully unprepared for the cultural challenges. I just didn’t understand the tensions between certain countries and the nuances you have to have to negotiate the change from a Scandinavian country to a European one. Those are widely different cultural experiences.”

In Japan, for example, he learned business card etiquette the hard way. “What you’re not supposed to do is take the card with one hand, look at it halfway, and put it in your back pocket,” he advises, recalling a particularly awkward exchange with Japanese senior businessmen, who were left wondering about Schlafer’s professionalism. “I’ve just made enough international faux pas to appreciate the sensitivities of cultures,” he admits.

It was these cross-cultural encounters that recently led Schlafer to begin thinking about the culture-specific attributes that teams can use to become more successful. They also inspired him to reevaluate his career and examine his contributions to the global business environment—so much so, that when he decided to return to school in 2010, this time for his second master’s degree, he sought the perfect fit in the Graziadio School of Business and Management’s organizational development program (MSOD). He particularly valued the international component and ability to conduct client intervention work in foreign countries as part of the curriculum.

Schlafer’s interest and MSOD thesis concentration in CQ have led him to think about globalization and the way leaders who have the “adaptability capability” can set up teams to capitalize on the attributes of cultural intelligence—made up of one’s motivation, their actions, strategy, and cognitive preparation—to become more successful at cross-cultural engagements.

“The reason why that’s interesting is because it allows me to have a lens from which to engage more effectively in cross-cultural situations,” says Schlafer, who delivered the student speech at the Graziadio School’s August 2012 commencement ceremony. “Now I’m thinking about what opportunities allow me to fully apply it.”

Currently Schlafer is driving change management for Microsoft while applying CQ to land an important global program. He also leads CQ workshops at the Graziadio School’s MSOD program and the Hudson Institute for Coaching, which provides training in personal and executive coaching.

“Moving forward, I am evaluating all the possibilities of leveraging my background and education to positively impact a cause in some part of the world. My view is that cultural intelligence is not well-known today, but in 15 to 20 years it will be a ubiquitous leadership development offering. In essence it will become a required skill for leaders to be effective in a global marketplace.”
Kimberly Greene (MA '93, EdD '99) integrates media, technology, and education to create meaningful experiences for diverse audiences.

By Gareen Darakjian

As an intern at Late Night with David Letterman, Kimberly Greene got to know the writers at Saturday Night Live and became fascinated by the discussions they would have about “Weekend Update,” the show’s satirical newscast. When conversations turned from pop culture to politics, Greene noticed a marked shift from light banter to biting snark. “I started recognizing how everybody’s different educational backgrounds sometimes allowed us to see things through such different perspectives when talking about current events,” recalls Greene, then a student of fine arts at NYU. She also noted a disparity between east- and west-coast thinking and the midwestern sensibilities she embraced growing up in Iowa. “We could joke about the same pop culture references—the one thing we shared in common—but when we were talking about, particularly, the news, the differences in education shocked me.”

She thought that if the public could harness the power of pop culture and media, they could do more to help people better understand what’s going on in the world. “Why does it have to be so snarky?” she asked herself. “Why can’t it be used for good?”

In her educational technology doctoral program at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, Greene found the tools to bridge the gap between media and education and to ensure that the messaging being delivered to the public was utilizing technology in a more empowering and relevant fashion—a concept and skill set that was, at the time, not yet recognized.

Upon learning about Pepperdine’s educational technology doctorate, “I just saw so much potential and power and loved the play aspect of it all,” says Greene, who also earned her master of arts in education at Pepperdine in 1993. “I saw the potential to do new things that nobody else was doing at the time.”

In 1998 Greene founded the consulting firm EdTech21, where she advises, improves, creates, and implements diverse programs and projects that encourage the appropriate use of technology for learning and training purposes, and the applicability of media materials for audiences of all ages.

One of her most prolific endeavors at EdTech21 has been the Afghan Family Health Book, a collaboration with LeapFrog Enterprises in 2004 designed to provide Afghan women with basic health and nutrition information.
“Right after September 11, a panel of professionals was called together in Washington, D.C., to figure out how the U.S. was going to rekindle some of the magic from the Marshall Plan after WWII for the next generation of Afghanistan,” recalls Greene. “The country was facing the highest rate of women dying in childbirth, because the Taliban was kicking out the midwives and no longer allowing the women to see doctors. They couldn’t get health care information to these women, because half of them couldn’t read and were in the middle of nowhere in these villages.”

Applying her knowledge of different technologies, Greene suggested an interactive “talking book,” a tool that LeapFrog was experimenting with at the time. “There was no electricity in these villages and the small watch batteries it used would not be able to be repurposed for anything that existed in Afghanistan at the time,” she says, explaining that the men would confiscate anything with useable parts from the women.

“We need to work within the reality of the world today,” Greene says. “I don’t think we can completely dismantle the educational system as it is, but it can be reformed.” One way, she explains, is to change the conversation. “The best way to do that is to change the media—the messaging of the media—and encourage businesses and entities to think about education and how to present it to people.”

Greene encountered this concept prior to her doctoral studies while teaching on television and movie sets, as well as in traditional elementary school settings, where she was faced with students who didn’t take education seriously. “It was right around the time that reality TV was taking off and they thought they didn’t need it,” she recalls. “They thought they could become famous on shows like Survivor or Big Brother. That’s when I started to think about harnessing this power that media has to get kids to think about what they like and who their heroes are.”

Her motivation came after noticing that what the media presented as kid-appropriate was not so. “The humor, the snarky edge, the way they communicate—it’s not really kid media. Just because it’s in a middle school setting doesn’t mean it’s appropriate for kids,” Greene argues. “The humor is at a college level and we are finding more kids emulating that and it’s bleeding over into the education at the schools.”

The enthusiastic educator, who also boasts an extensive stage performance background, took matters into her own hands and, in 2006, published My Sister’s a Popstar, a young adult fictional tale about the little sister of a singing sensation. “I can’t tell a kid what to think, because I’m a grown-up and old and boring. But if I can create a situation where another kid is thinking what they’re thinking, it’s a way to show them, through the eyes of somebody they could relate to, that the truth in a reality show is really baloney.”

While she continues consulting with EdTech21 and working on writing projects, Greene also serves as director of the Center for Instructional Innovation at Brandman University, looking into different ways to use technology to extend the learning process for adult learners. “I’m a realistic optimist. I know we can do better and I’m always searching for ways to make things more authentic and experiential,” Greene enthuses.

“I believe in change, I believe in progress, but I recognize that too much at one time is unsustainable. I want my work to have a positive impact, so it can’t be something that’s so outside the box that people won’t give it a try. But when you can explain it in simple terms and show how it works, suddenly everybody can relate to it. Suddenly, it doesn’t sound like such a far-out idea.”

Following the success of My Sister’s a Popstar, the one-off book turned into a series of three titles and a forthcoming TV pilot with the premise of encouraging kids to think for themselves, appreciate the presence of family and history, and recognize the power of their choices and their consequences.
School of Public Policy professor Michael Shires helps revolutionize the polling process.

By Gareen Darakjian

Public opinion polling has been the preferred method for predicting election outcomes since Andrew Jackson beat John Quincy Adams in the 1824 presidential race. That’s when results of these informal surveys began matching those of the popular vote, and thanks to their accuracy, became a regular part of the election cycle.

As technology advanced, so did the polling process. Today most political campaigns conduct and release results of their own internal polling done through random-digit telephone surveying. But in an effort to modernize the practice and inform the voting public, the School of Public Policy and the California Business Roundtable have developed an innovative biweekly online opinion polling series.
“When you take something as complicated as some of these tax initiatives or the referendum on the California State Senate districts, it’s very difficult to read the language to a voter and ask them to make a reasoned decision about it,” explains Michael Shires, associate professor of public policy at the School of Public Policy and coordinator of the series. Especially when, he says, phone calls may be placed at inopportune times for those being polled. “They’re usually cooking dinner, having dinner, or have kids running around. We wanted a reflective response to the answers instead of a hurried telephone approach.”

What Shires and his team have done this summer is develop a web-based ballot that resembles those that voters will mark on election day. It reflects how strongly they feel about each of the initiatives and how they would vote in the November election. Contrary to the common practice of randomly dialing phone numbers, a sample of voters randomly selected from large marketing research panels are gathered by M4 Strategies and prompted to complete the online ballots. Each ballot includes a guide explaining all of the initiatives on which the public will vote come Election Day, allowing them to reference the actual language of the issues and research the specific initiative to make an educated decision. “Our goal in doing this is really to inform the policy debate and to stimulate a conversation about some of these issues,” Shires explains.

Designed by M4 Strategies, the innovative ballot-mirroring approach “closely simulates the voters’ actual experience when they vote by mail or at a polling place,” he says. “The advantage of our approach is that it allows voters to actually see what they’re voting on that’s consistent with how they’re going to be voting.”

Results will not only forecast public opinion of the upcoming election, but also help the School of Public Policy and the California Business Roundtable map how that public opinion changes over time. For example, following the tragic movie theatre shooting in Aurora, Colorado, polling showed that voters had quickly lost support for Proposition 34, the initiative to repeal the death penalty.

“Voters have thought, ‘I’m not sure that life in prison is a severe enough penalty for someone who does something like that,’” Shires notes. “As more information becomes available to the public, more people will change their votes.”

In order to ensure transparency, the team reports full demographic details and other subcategories. Results, which appear twice a month on both the School of Public Policy and California Business Roundtable websites, are released by political party, ethnic association, “and even whether you believe California’s on the right or wrong track,” Shires explains.

The poll itself may have more influence on the public than a simple forecasting mechanism for the public policy crowd. “Voters will have a sense of what’s going on in the debate that’s before them,” says Shires. “If nothing else, it has allowed several thousand voters to actually read these initiatives and to reflect on them before they raise the public profile.”

It also allows people to engage in an active dialogue about what’s actually before them and the choices that they would have to make at election time. “As our polling numbers raise awareness about the ballot initiatives and the details in them, it will help lead to more informed choices.”

With biweekly polling and results release, the team will be able to track how public opinion shifts over the course of the upcoming campaigns.

“We at the School of Public Policy are excited to be part of this because we see this as an opportunity to improve the quality of outcomes in a process that is very complicated and confusing for the voters and participants,” says Shires. “We are confident these surveys will allow us to accurately depict Californians’ attitudes toward the initiatives and candidates on the fall ballot.”

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**As more information becomes available to the public, more people will change their votes.**

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**ON THE WEB**

Learn more about and view up-to-date results of the polling series:

[www.magazine.pepperdine.edu/polling-series](http://www.magazine.pepperdine.edu/polling-series)

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**MICHAEL SHIERES** is associate professor of public policy at Pepperdine. He previously was a Research Fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California and a Doctoral Fellow at RAND’s Graduate School of Policy Studies, concentrating on domestic education policy, California fiscal policy, and international trade policy.
It had been six years since Jessie Johnston (JD ’11) last prayed.

The then 22-year-old was in her senior year at Arizona State University and found the deadline to apply to law school quickly approaching.

She mailed a total of 10 applications. Her first choice was Arizona State. If she stayed there, she thought, she could continue her work with the Arizona Supreme Court—work that stemmed from a rare internship she secured as an undergrad. On a whim Johnston incorporated an application to the Pepperdine School of Law in the mix, but had little interest in moving west. At the time, Malibu was simply an option.

“I was notified that I was on the waiting list at Arizona,” she said. “I did everything I could think of to get in. Called my bosses at the supreme court, built up my resume. Nothing was working. I started praying for a different answer. For guidance.”

Prayer was something she had turned her back on years before. The San Antonio, Texas native was raised in a moderately religious family. At 16, however, a rift caused Johnston to move out of her home. By the time she graduated from high school she had lost nearly all faith in God.

At 18, she enrolled in Spanish and psychology courses at Arizona State University, knowing all along that she wanted to work in a field that allowed her to assist others who had been estranged from their families and from society as a whole. Whatever the reason, she thought, they were people she could relate to. Her approach was strategic. The Spanish skills would allow her to broaden her outreach. The psychology courses would strengthen her knowledge base of helping others emotionally.

Then came her interest in law. The first court hearing she sat in on as an intern for the Arizona Supreme Court involved a death penalty case for a man accused of breaking into a home, murdering a mother and her children, and destroying almost all of the children’s stuffed animals. What would make most young college students cringe, instead made Johnston think.
“We heard the defense explain how their client had been raped as a child and burned with cigarettes,” Johnston said. “It certainly wasn’t an excuse, but it made me realize that there’s always a defense to be had. Criminals don’t always make themselves.”

That day in court inspired Johnston to pursue criminal defense, and she continued praying for admission to Arizona’s law school. Then came the letter from Pepperdine.

“Pepperdine was my first acceptance letter for law school,” Johnston recalled. “And I remember reading the letter and it saying that the admissions office had been praying over the decision to accept me, and had decided affirmatively. I’d never seen that from a school and knew it was pretty special.”

That letter made all the difference. She packed her bags and began her first year of law school on the Malibu campus. She became involved with the University’s Student Bar Association, the Christian Legal Society, and moot court competitions, and served as a student mentor. In her time at Pepperdine, Johnston also interned with the Los Angeles Public Defender’s Office and the Ventura County Public Defender’s Office—all crucial steps toward making her dream of criminal defense a reality.

It was during her first summer as a law student that Johnston found herself faced with a life-changing decision. The only job opportunity was in Houston, Texas. The only affordable housing was with her parents.

“I could have never imagined what Pepperdine would do for me,” Johnston said. “Just being on the campus, but also getting involved in the Christian Legal Society, brought the Lord back into my life. I found myself more at peace with what happened with my family. I was ready to take that next step toward healing.”

That summer, Johnston did just that. She returned to Pepperdine with a repaired relationship with her parents and twin brother George. She also became involved with a newly established Bible study program organized by classmate Peter Depew. The program brought Johnston to nearby Camp Kilpatrick where she taught, and eventually led, Bible study courses with juvenile boys who were detained at the facility.

“My thought was that Pepperdine brought me back to my faith,” Johnston said. “So maybe I could help bring these kids to the Lord. Help them find their way.”

In January 2012 Johnston learned of a speaking event that featured Patricia Oliver, the executive director of Christian Legal Aid (CLA) of Los Angeles. Johnston had finished her job recruiting for the School of Law during the fall of 2011, and was a newly licensed attorney seeking a job. She reached out to Oliver, meeting her for the first time at Homegirl Cafe, a division of Homeboy Industries that strives to rehabilitate former gang members in the Los Angeles area.

“We hit it off right away,” Johnston said. “And it just so happened that the CLA clinic director had just given his two-week notice that day. Patricia called it divine providence. It was just that.”

Since then, Johnston has been working for CLA, assisting clients who cannot afford legal representation. She also works at CLA’s weekend legal clinics at area churches that bring in close to 60 clients a day. Thirty to 40 percent of those clients, Johnston noted, are seeking assistance with criminal defense. And because CLA’s resources are limited as a nonprofit organization, the staff often brings in interns, many of whom are Pepperdine law students. Additionally, CLA works with volunteer attorneys who donate their time and legal services. This summer, CLA welcomed six student interns from Pepperdine, and 13 School of Law alumni as volunteer attorneys.

“It has been extremely rewarding,” Johnston said of her time with CLA. “There’s something to be said about having daily contact with these clients. There are some people who choose a legal career for the money—for the big law firms. Sometimes they don’t even see one client in a day. It becomes impersonal. We are hands-on, the way I think it should be.”

Johnston also continues serving as a Bible study leader at Camp Kilpatrick. Her hope for the future, she says, is to own a ranch that houses a rehabilitation center for juvenile offenders. Part of the rehabilitation, she says, would include Bible study courses and church services.

“The Bible holds us responsible for our actions,” Johnston said. “But I believe it also offers redemption.”
In 1988 two Seaver College students recognized the need for volunteers in the local community and wanted to share their passion for service with their peers. Their goal: to encourage others to “step forward” at the start of the school year in order to set the tone for the rest of their days on campus and beyond.

Now spanning 11 states and a growing number of countries worldwide, this year’s 24th annual Step Forward Day, which took place September 8, continued the Pepperdine tradition of living out a commitment to service.

A record-high 1,400 participants gathered in Malibu to serve the local community at over 50 organizations ranging from elementary schools and hospitals to children’s museums and local parks. Across the nation and around the world, nearly 350 volunteers served over 20 local organizations in the spirit of furthering the Pepperdine mission and calling.

Here are some of the ways that the University community joined together in acts of service for this year’s Step Forward Day.

Japan: Nami Davin Sasaki, Genzo Fujinawa, and Mao Yamada serving Second Harvest Japan in Tokyo.
Residents of Seaport 17 Rehab Center in Santa Monica with students from first-year seminar “Preparing for a Life of Purpose, Service, and Leadership” taught by Seaver College dean of students Mark Davis.

Seaver students clean up the playground at Webster Elementary School in Malibu.

WEB EXCLUSIVE:
Watch as students Jennifer Abohosh and Lucy Ryan talk about the Step Forward Day tradition and mission.
Home is more than just where the heart is. It’s where you feel most yourself, where you are most confident. For alumna and lawyer Nona Lee (’81), home is in the family atmosphere, competition, and hard work that comprise her favorite thing: sports.

“I relate to the world through sports and always have—it’s where I feel safe and empowered and, frankly, joyful,” affirms Lee, a four-year women’s basketball star for the Waves and now senior vice president and general counsel for the Arizona Diamondbacks baseball team.

The story of Lee’s life is tightly bound with her journey through the world of sports. That journey began as a child in southwest Los Angeles, where she grew up under the shadow of L.A.’s once-premier sporting arena, the Forum, then home to the L.A. Lakers, and the L.A. Kings. Naturally competitive, she discovered as a child the thrill of pushing herself harder and faster than her opponents when she really began succeeding in swimming and water polo in middle school, where she became the youngest player on the women’s national water polo team.

“I was only 14 when I joined the team, so the older girls had to pick me up from my house,” she remembers fondly. “The thing about participation in sports is that it gives us the ability to develop life skills that we wouldn’t otherwise come to in life. Competing is how I learned about teamwork, discipline, confidence, and, ultimately, self-esteem. I have always been happiest in the pool or on the basketball court.”

By high school she had preferred basketball, and at Pepperdine she began her first season as a walk-on Wave in the 1977–1978 season, and remembers her playing years as being “entirely phenomenal.”

“I remember vividly the last game I played at Pepperdine,” Lee says. “We had made it to the regionals and we drew USC in the first round, and they were very, very good. We were handily beaten, but I remember the whole experience of my last game—of knowing that we were giving it our all, and the memory of the last basket I ever made for the Waves.”

For a natural-born competitor like Lee, doing the best you can possibly do is not a platitude but the endgame in itself, as she has always enjoyed the struggle of competition and the joy of pushing herself harder and further. “The best part of getting to a victory is...
There is no way I would be where I am today, including both my career and my personal life, without my sporting background and all of the lessons and skills it taught me.

—Nona Lee

also the most important part: you have to give 110 percent. You can’t always count on winning, but you can always count on doing your absolute best.”

Over the years since she graduated in 1981, that attitude has nourished her and guided her towards finding her calling outside of Pepperdine. She became the graduate assistant coach to the women’s basketball team under former head coach Patty Meyers, with whom she remains good friends, while working on a master’s degree in broadcast management. After a year, however, she decided to start working on the business side of entertainment, and after 10 years became a paralegal to see if her future was in the law. In 1995 she graduated summa cum laude from Oklahoma City University School of Law and became a litigator before signing on as associate general counsel for the Phoenix Suns in 2000.

She was finally “at home” again, in the world of sports. “It’s hard to explain, but it’s been the most natural thing in the world. As a litigator I felt like a fish out of water, but from the moment I walked into the Phoenix Suns legal office, I felt completely at home. It’s a business, of course, but there’s that shared connection and passion for the team and the sport. I’ve been at home now for over 12 years,” she says.

Lee transferred in 2005 from basketball with the Suns to baseball with the Diamondbacks, where she faces “a variety of issues” from compliance with baseball regulations, risk management, and negotiating the building and use of the Diamondbacks’ state of the art spring training facility, Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, which was the first of its kind to be built by a Native American community on tribal land.

Once Lee found her way back home, she immediately began practicing the art of being a good neighbor. In 2001 she founded the Phoenix Women’s Sports Association nonprofit, providing education, resources, sponsorship, and activities that encourage girls and young women to improve their lives through sports and fitness.

“I’ve been so blessed to work in professional sports, and I have a mission now to help women find their power through sports,” she says, recalling her youth as she developed her confidence in the pool and on the court. “Even if a girl we support isn’t interested in playing sports at a professional or elite level, there is still a better chance that she’ll be able to get a college scholarship from her skills. If she plays pro after that, then great, but it’s more about helping give her a foundation to succeed at whatever she wants to do.”

She stepped down as president of the small organization a few years ago to give someone else a chance to share their vision. But Lee remains active on the board, overseeing her “labor of love” and encouraging girls like her to be the best they can be and to give 110 percent, whether it’s on the court, in the classroom, or in an office building.

“I often say this and believe it to be totally true: that there is no way I would be where I am today, including both my career and my personal life, without my sporting background and all of the lessons and skills it taught me,” she reflects. “I cannot even envision my life without that background.”
When the Pepperdine men’s basketball team traveled to Arizona this past season to play two games away from home, the presence of two longtime, loyal supporters made it feel like they had taken a little bit of home with them. As Lou and Kathy Colombano watched from stands hundreds of miles from the team’s home turf in Firestone Fieldhouse, Malibu, they provided unspoken support to the team in Arizona.

“I told them they are our good luck charms, because we won both of those games!” laughs Marty Wilson (‘89), head coach of men’s basketball.

Over the years as he progressed from student player to assistant coach under Tom Asbury, and now head coach as of September 2010, Wilson has witnessed the Colombanos grow into the role of unofficial surrogate parents to the Waves, attending as many games as they possibly can, both home and away. Their presence at away games in particular can be a real boost to the team.

“As a former player, I appreciated knowing that through the good and the bad times, there were people there who believed in us,” he remembers.


The Colombanos have believed in Pepperdine throughout both very good and very bad times. Their connection to the University goes way back to 1985, when their son Mark enrolled as an undergraduate. “He loved the ocean and he loved the academic standards of the school,” Kathy explains.

The family had spent five years living in Rome for Lou’s job with aerospace company Northrop Grumman, a time Lou calls “the greatest thing for our family,” and had just recently returned to America before Mark went off to college. He seamlessly assimilated into his school, working hard, making friends easily, joining Sig Eps, and playing lacrosse, before he tragically passed away his sophomore year in a traffic accident, along with his friend Kimm Hubert.

His family, which includes younger sister Lisa (‘91, JD ‘94) who was then in her senior year of high school, was forever changed. But they were also determined to honor Mark’s memory at Pepperdine and make new, happier memories. Lisa earned her bachelor’s degree and JD from Seaver College and the School of Law, respectively. Lou and Kathy moved back to Los Angeles from Kansas City, Missouri, where they had been living at the time of the accident. And over the years the Colombanos have come to represent the epitome of the “Pepperdine family.”

“Initially we got involved to stay close to Mark, that’s how it all started, but now we just enjoy the environment here, and enjoy the young atmosphere,” says Lou.
“We find it very invigorating being on campus,” agrees Kathy. “To be around young people just starting out in their careers—they’re so enthusiastic and eager to learn. It’s refreshing!”

To most of the student body and fellow Waves fans, the Colombanos are known around campus for their fiercely loyal support of the athletics teams, men’s basketball in particular. That support stretched thousands of miles in spring 2010 when the pair traveled to Italy on a 10-day, four-game tour of the country with the team, head coach Asbury, and then-assistant coach Wilson. The couple did everything with the team, from sightseeing, meals, and providing a little tour-guiding using their knowledge from the five years spent living in Rome.

“It was incredible to get to know the players better and find out what wonderful gentlemen they are,” Lou says. He remembers one day in the famous Piazza San Marco, Venice, when one player was swarmed by Italian school children, believing him to be Los Angeles Lakers star Dwight Howard. “He was overwhelmed and so gracious to the children.”

Moments like that are part of the reason the Colombanos feel passionately about the Waves family. “We really enjoy seeing the players progress during their four years at Pepperdine, not only as players, but as young men becoming well-rounded individuals,” Kathy explains. “Pepperdine has done a wonderful job of selecting head coaches, all of whom want winning records of course, but who also prioritize turning out well-rounded people who will be positive additions to society when their playing days are over.”

She and Lou watched with pride as Wilson progressed from player to assistant head coach in 2008, before he eventually took over the head coach position when their dear friend Asbury retired in 2010. Any fears that their support at games would dwindle when Asbury left proved unfounded.

“They are the epitome of loyal fans,” Asbury notes. “And players are smart—they know the fans that are only there when they’re winning, and the ones that aren’t there when they’re losing, but the Colombanos are there come rain or shine. I told my players that they could learn a lot from them.”

Though noted for their love of men’s basketball, Lou and Kathy’s involvement with the University actually goes much further. Lou sits on the Seaver College Board of Visitors, the Athletics Campaign Committee, and the Crest Advisory Board, the latter for which he lent support to the Coastal Commission hearings about the building of Drescher Graduate Campus in 2005. Meanwhile Kathy has been a longtime member of the Center for the Arts Guild and is the primary program manager of the Mark Colombano Memorial Scholarship.

For Lou, the reason they stay so committed to their Pepperdine family, is summed up by one evening in Italy with their team. In Sienna, near Florence, the men’s basketball team warmed up to play their local opponents. “They had no idea that Pepperdine students in the Florence Program had arrived in the country for their year abroad just the day before,” Lou remembers. “Jet-lagged, those students came to see the game and support them, and of course a lot of them were real friends. The boys were overwhelmed. And afterwards, we all went to program director Elizabeth Whatley’s home in the hills and had a big barbecue together as a family. It was a perfect evening.”

The Mark Colombano Memorial Scholarship Fund

Since 1987, Louis and Kathy Colombano have honored the memory of their son Mark with a Seaver College scholarship fund in his name, supporting one student every year with a love of learning, leadership potential, and enthusiasm for extracurricular activities at the University.

“We want to help the students who are most like our son. Mark was a good student but he had to work hard for his grades. I look for well-rounded students with interests in on-campus activities,” says Kathy, who, with her husband, has remained close friends with Mark’s fraternity brothers from Sig Eps. Scholarship recipients have included enthusiastic club participants and organizers, and activity leaders.

“Receiving my scholarship from the Colombanos gave me the opportunity to graduate from my dream school,” says scholarship recipient and current Seaver junior Lindsey Jeu De Vine. “The Colombanos are a true reflection of the big hearts that build up Pepperdine University. I am forever thankful for them and their generosity.”.

ON THE WEB

Learn more about endowed scholarships at Seaver College:
seaver.pepperdine.edu/financialassistance
SITTING QUIETLY BACKSTAGE, ANNA TULLIS GAZED INQUISITIVELY AT HER CAST-MATES AND WONDERED TO HERSELF HOW THEIR GROUP WOULD FARE—playing to an underwhelming audience of just three people. It was August 2, 2012, and she and her fellow Pepperdine actors were finally performing a groundbreaking new play, Why Do You Stand There in the Rain?, at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The pivotal moment followed months of rehearsal and collaboration with the Scottish playwright Peter Arnott.

“We were all excited to tell the story,” the Seaver College junior remembers of that evening, the third performance of 11 at the international theatre event. “So we started . . . and performed with so much energy and life. I was so proud of how we rallied together to tell this story.”

It turned out that one of those three audience members was a well-known and much-respected critic in the Scottish theatre community. “She gave us a rave review. By our last performance on August 11, the house was almost entirely sold out,” says Tullis. She remembers sitting backstage before that final show, the earlier nerves replaced with gumption and gratitude. “I knew we were going to perform to the best of our ability for a full house, like we had just eight days before to an almost empty house.”

At the end of the festival, the Rain production won a prestigious Scotsman Fringe First award for “innovation and outstanding new writing,” and was a finalist for three more honors, including Amnesty International’s Freedom of Expression Award.

The journey marks a triumphant new beginning for the Pepperdine Theatre Edinburgh Summer Program. Every other year since 1985, the program has taken two American plays to the festival. But this year marked the first attempt at a cross-cultural exchange between Pepperdine, American theatre, and Scottish theatre, with the program featuring both the U.K. debut of an American play—Anon(ymous), by renowned playwright Naomi Iizuka—as well as Arnott’s Rain, which was specially commissioned by the Pepperdine Edinburgh Summer Program.

“I thought we needed to lift up the program to a higher level,” says theatre professor and program director Cathy Thomas-Grant, who took over from founder George Neilson in 2000.

Thomas-Grant wanted to strengthen ties between the Scottish theatre community and Pepperdine, and to deeply personalize the performance experience for the students. She partnered with theatre alumnus Alex Fthenakis ('08), who participated in the 2008 program and loved the British theatre experience so much that when the rest of his group prepared to board the plane back to Los Angeles, he chose to stay behind. Four years and a master’s degree from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama later, Fthenakis remains deeply involved in Scottish theatre. “I stay because of
the way the artist community works together in Scotland, which is just as competitive [as America] but in a far more collaborative way. There’s far more opportunity for me to create things,” Fthenakis emphasizes.

He became Thomas-Grant’s “man on the ground” in Scotland, scoping out education-friendly playwrights for commission. When the two met with Arnott, they found his unique vision of a story impossible to resist. A “documentary with songs,” 

Rain uses documented dialogue and testimonies, and places cast members in multiple roles to tell the story of the Bonus Army—an assembly of over 17,000 World War I veterans who protested in Washington, D.C., in 1932 for early release of a promised compensation package.

“This is a show that I’ve been trying to do for 30 years and this is the first time I’ve found the right people to do it,” Arnott notes, remembering that he first heard of the Bonus Army as a student in 1981. “I thought it was a great story. And these students . . . they are young, enthusiastic, and just precisely the right people to do it.”

With that in mind, Arnott and the play’s composer, Scottish musician and actor John Kielty, visited the Malibu campus for two weeks in the spring to build the script, the music, and the feel of the piece, in partnership with Thomas-Grant and the cast. This was the students’ first experience collaborating with a professional playwright, an opportunity graduating senior Kevin Shipp (’12) calls “vastly different from any other acting experience.”

“The two plays—both well-reviewed and, Rain, award-winning—herald a new era of prominence at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe for the Pepperdine Edinburgh Summer Program, as well as deeper roots planted in the heart of Scottish theatre.

“This trip has opened our young artists’ eyes to the world around them and further developed a passion—for not only telling the stories of the oppressed, but lifting and pulling each other up along the way also,” Grant reflects. “I hope their lives have been changed.”
Choral music has traditionally shined in times of commemoration and community, such as weddings, funerals, worship, and ceremonies of significance. Listening to a band of singers harmonize poetry unites the listener in a moment of musical beauty, as he or she becomes lost in emotions and memories. It also unites those singing in the choir. “There is nothing like singing beautiful music with your best friends, who also happen to be serious and well-trained musicians,” states alumnus Tyler Kimmel (‘11), a tenor who graduated last year with a degree in music composition and education. There may be the occasional solos in a performance, but ultimately, he says, “being in a choir is about making music together.”

The three branches of Pepperdine’s choral music program—the concert choir of men and women, the smaller chamber ensemble for women, and the selective Collegium Musicum—are, naturally, present at some of the most important University gatherings. Their voices mark the beginning of a new year at the annual Founder’s Day, enrich sacred music for worshippers in Stauffer Chapel, lift up Christmas songs for celebrating students, and entertain fans and audiences at concerts throughout the year.

As assistant professor and director of choral activities Ryan Board emphasizes that, beyond positive feelings of belonging that camaraderie brings to the choral singers, the togetherness Kimmel celebrates actually serves two higher callings. The first is artistic, and demands a deeper understanding of the material that goes beyond aural appreciation. “There’s no other art form that I think quite completely allows a community of people to express the widest, deepest, most profound expressions of all facets of the human condition,” Board explains, adding that Pepperdine is unique in allowing this experience to both majors and non-majors who pass the audition process.

As an example, he points to the concert choir’s final performance of 2011-2012 in which they performed an early Baroque piece by Johann Hermann Schein, titled “Die mit Tränen Säen.” The piece had such a rich historical context that it transcended entertainment. “Schein’s setting of the piece is based on many generations of composers that came before him and his composition affected many of the generations of composers that came later. So it functions as a hub of music history that I can point out to my students and it becomes no longer just about the performance. It has significance,” says Board.
Current student and mezzo-soprano Savannah Garrett says contextualizing the work elevates the words and music to something higher. “Dr. Board reminds us all the time of what the music is about and what the importance of it is. And he has great support for us as individuals rather than as simply parts of a working machine.”

Board’s attention to the needs of his singers helped the choral program adjust to dramatic changes at the beginning of the fall semester of 2010, when Board replaced Milton Pullen after he retired from a 15-year post as the highly regarded director of the program. Kimmel says that Board’s methods helped the singers keep their sense of unity during the transition. “Both choir directors were very inspiring to me and helped solidify my desire to be a conductor and composer of choral music,” notes Kimmel, who has composed scores for Pepperdine student films and plays and who has conducted the premier of an opera, El Canguro, by German composer Peter Michael von der Nahmer in the fall of 2011. Kimmel is currently working towards graduate school for a master’s degree in composing or conducting.

The second calling of the choral program’s “togetherness” is something quite unique to Pepperdine among university choirs across the country: though student singers aren’t required to be practicing Christians, the music selected is heavily geared towards compositions of worship and praise. The choirs are literally ambassadors for the University’s Christian mission.

Appropriately, Board first got his taste of choral music when he began singing in the church choir at the age of 3, and it remained an important part of his education and worship experience throughout his school years. After getting his bachelor’s degree in vocal performance from the secular University of Northern Colorado and then earning his master’s in conducting from Westminster Choir College—which included stints with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra—he is pleased to fly the flag of Pepperdine’s mission through the choral program.

“A choral program can be a catalyst for those things an institution holds to be important, and that’s where I think we’re making some great inroads through our program,” he says, adding that concerts have doubled as fundraising events for various causes, including support for U.S. military veterans.

This past spring, Board took nine students to historic Carnegie Hall in New York City to sing in the world premier of a large choral orchestral work titled, “Flowers over the Graves of War,” by James Eakin. In the summer of 2011, a dozen students traveled with Board to Prague, Czech Republic, taking part in the triannual Prague International Choral Festival. The 12 singers formed a small chamber choir to perform for the international choruses, before joining other choirs from around the world to perform Mozart’s Requiem and Berstein’s Chichester Psalms with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra in one of Europe’s great halls.

“It was the most beautifully intimate music I’ve ever sung, in this fabulously old church,” remembers English major Garrett, who was one of the few non-music majors on the trip. “It was so cool to sing music in a church that was there during the time the music was written.”

For Garrett and her peers it was a total immersion experience of the artistry, camaraderie, and Christian heritage of Pepperdine’s choral music program—experiences that Board and the rest of the program’s faculty try to emulate every day on campus with the three choir “families.” “There’s something amazing about so many people having this one talent,” Garrett continues. “And it doesn’t matter where they’re from—when they’re together and they make this beautiful sound, it is art. When I’m singing, I feel as though I’m a part of living art. And it’s very fulfilling.”
You asked and he answered.

President Benton takes questions from *Pepperdine Magazine* readers.

Last year I was a member of the Pepperdine Cheer Squad and was sadly informed that it would cease to exist this year. However, the cheerleaders were not given a legitimate answer as to why this was happening and we were reassured that a “Pom Squad” would be created that has cheerleading aspects. Looking at the tryout information for the pom squad there are no cheering aspects to this new team at all. Why was the cheer squad cut, why are there no cheer aspects to the pom squad, and why can there not be both teams at Pepperdine (which a lot of Universities have)?

— Allison Hubbard  
Seaver College Class of 2015

What is the best advice you can give to be able to see God’s plan and find our passion for the future?

— Christopher Chong  
Seaver College Class of 2015

For me the critical element is listening in silence. I am an early-morning person and I use that time to prepare for the day and its challenges. A period of prayer, before the sun rises each day, is followed by time for contemplation and listening. In that experience I often find answers, even those I don’t want to hear sometimes.

Do you have to be Christian to become a student here?

— Lauryn Davis

No, but a sincere belief in something greater than yourself is important. If, in your view, life revolves around you and service to others and the needs of a hurting world don’t move you, then this might not be the best school for you. Christianity—a belief that one should go into the world and tell the good news of Christ—has always been an important part of Pepperdine, and it always will be.
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