PEACE IN MINDS

More than 100 people gathered on the McKeldin Library steps in the early days of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine to call for peace. Students and staff from Ukraine, Russia, the U.S. and other countries around the world, as well as UMD President Darryll J. Pines (left), listened as Ukrainian Terps described in quiet, anguished voices the sufferings of their loved ones as refugees or hiding in bomb shelters. Since then, the campus has united to support the embattled nation, including collecting medical supplies, donating UMD police body armor and forming a Ukrainian student organization.

PHOTO BY JOHN T. CONSOLI
Flag Suit Guy’s Colorful Story
A young alum styles in state colors at Terps games.

A DIY Solution for Cleaner Air
Led by a top researcher, students make air filters from cardboard, duct tape, a box fan and HVAC filter—and they’re surprisingly effective.

Racing Brain, Meet Wearable Wellness
The Counseling Center offers new biofeedback headbands to students.

The Godmother of Title IX
Fifty years after the law’s passage, the legacy of Bernice Sandler Ed.D. ’69 endures through the millions of girls and women whose lives she’s changed.

How We Picture Greatness
College Park is hopping and humming with new businesses, housing and other perks. Compare our historic and current photos to see for yourself.

Growing Justice From Grassroots Science
Trash and toxic substances are often dumped where poor people and communities of color live. One UMD researcher is empowering them to fight for cleaner, safer conditions.

ON THE MALL
NEWS
6 Campus Plaza Honors Lt. Richard W. Collins III
6 Sounding the “Factory” Whistle

CAMPUS LIFE
5 En Garde for Accessibility
9 TerrapinSTRONG From the Start
9 La Plata Beach’s Cool Transformation
10 A Decade of Do-Good Times
12 A Puppet by Any Other Name
13 A Footpath for Refugees
13 Ph.D. Research: Why Goths Age Happily
14 Dual Threat
15 Sports Briefs

EXPLORATIONS
16 Telescopes Terps
17 Lockdown Breakdown
18 No Appetite for Racism
19 Stereotypes
19 From Mills to the QTC
20 Safer Flights
21 The Big Question

POST GRAD
44 Alumni Association
44 A Tail of Success
46 Class Notes
46 Brothers’ Truebill Pays Off, Trudy
47 Creating Style To Augment Substance
48 From the Archives

FEATURES
22 How We Picture Greatness
22 College Park is hopping and humming with new businesses, housing and other perks. Compare our historic and current photos to see for yourself.
BY ANNE KRANGMER

30 Growing Justice From Grassroots Science
30 Trash and toxic substances are often dumped where poor people and communities of color live. One UMD researcher is empowering them to fight for cleaner, safer conditions.
BY LIAM FARRELL

36 The Godmother of Title IX
36 Fifty years after the law’s passage, the legacy of Bernice Sandler Ed.D. ’69 endures through the millions of girls and women whose lives she’s changed.
BY KAREN SHIH ’09

ONLINE
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Get the latest on the UMD community by visiting TODAY.UMD.EDU.
I’ve been here long enough to remember the old Maryland Book Exchange, the long-shuttered Little Tavern and the blocky, beat-up Knox Boxes. The current crop of Terps, though, sees a high-rise apartment building anchored by a Target Express; a sleek new City Hall; and the Terrapin Row neighborhood with its swanky pool and fitness center.

They’re all part of a dramatic, ongoing makeover of the community now called Greater College Park. The transformation might shock those of you who haven’t been to campus in a few years.

That was the thinking behind our cover story in this issue: to show just how much the Baltimore Avenue corridor has changed. Our office’s photo archivist, Gail Rupert M.L.S. ’10, led the effort to scrounge digital collections of the Library of Congress, National Archives, Maryland State Archives and University Libraries and to sort through old photos shared by the city of College Park. She found amazing images: a 1930s cornfield where the luxury Hotel now stands, a 1940s Howard Johnson’s (later Plato’s Diner) on what’s turning into a high-end apartment community, and a 1960s strip club where new student housing opens this fall.

We hope you also gape and gawk at these before-and-after photos as we share the latest updates on Greater College Park.

We’ll also introduce you to a little-known hero in our nation’s civil rights history: Bernice “Bunny” Sandler Ed.D. ’69, the force behind the landmark federal legislation known as Title IX, which became law 50 years ago this summer. If your or your daughter’s education included playing organized sports, seeking justice against sexual misconduct, or earning an advanced degree in a STEM field, you can probably credit the late Bunny Sandler. Writer Karen Shih ’09 tells the story of how much she was missing her and remembers the people on whose land we are built. I worked for the Indian Health Service for 16 years and know how important this recognition can be. Makes me proud to be a Terp.

Embracing Our Bias

I was absolutely appalled with the (caption). In 1986, I had just completed my graduate program in higher education administration. I was very aware of the incident involving Len Bias’ drug use and subsequent death. It was a sad time for the campus community as well as the Bias family. However, to glorify it 35 years later is absolutely ludicrous. I cannot believe he was permitted to be inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame.

As a student affairs administrator and faculty member, I can’t even begin to justify why the University of Maryland feels compelled to honor his legacy, when today we struggle so much with substance abuse on campuses. While this magazine as well as all MD as a whole, I think the image of a cat-custer sits and contemplates, and to compel further activism. Would like to visit these gardens.

Wow. Exceptional. Thank you so much for sharing Ms. Drakeford’s story. There’s so much here to learn, to praise, to sit and ponder, and to compel further activism. Would like to visit these gardens.

—Carola Rojas ’24 (BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES)
Sounding the “Factory” Whistle

New Engineering Building Expands Students’ and Researchers’ Opportunities to Innovate

From an underground quantum lab to spaces to test business ideas—not to mention advanced robots—the striking new E.A. Fernandez IDEA Factory is a place where students and researchers can push the limits of 21st-century innovation and entrepreneurship.

The 60,000-square-foot building, located next to the Joong H. Kim Engineering Building, houses high-tech teaching and research labs, collaborative workspaces and meeting rooms. Officially open since May, it’s named for A. James Clark School of Engineering alum Emilio Fernandez ’69, an entrepreneur and inventor who developed e-reader technology and pioneered innovations in the rail industry, and who is philanthropically supporting the building’s construction.

Fernandez hopes that here, science, journalism, the arts and other areas can jointly “come up with solutions to the problems that we have these days, which are complex problems that require interdisciplinary solutions.”

Take a tour through some of the highlights of the IDEA Factory—SL

**A.C.L.E. Garage** On the first floor, the A.C.L.E. Garage is an area for student competition teams like Terrapin Rockets and RoboticsMaryland. It also houses a rapid prototyping lab with 3D printers and scanners.

**TDF Foundation Quantum Technology Laboratory** A joint venture between the Clark School, the Department of Physics and the Army Research Lab, this home to the Quantum Technology Center is where students and researchers focus on translating quantum physics into real-world technologies. It’s below grade level with a 3.5-foot-thick concrete floor to isolate delicate experiments from environmental interference.

**Clearpath Robotics** On the first floor, the Robotics and Autonomy Laboratory is home to the A.A. Askin Center for Engineering Innovation, a place where students and researchers can work with Spot, a mobile robot from Boston Dynamics, and an unmanned ground vehicle called Husky

**Terp Shop** In this third-floor lab for advancing robotics systems, students can work with Spot, a mobile robot from Boston Dynamics, and an unmanned ground vehicle called Husky.
En Garde for Accessibility

New Equipment Allows Students Who Use Wheelchairs to Participate in Fencing Club

They imitated "Star Wars" and "The Lord of the Rings" characters. He wanted to try fencing, but he could find accommodations only through historical fencing, which focuses more on the activity's medieval and Renaissance origins rather than the sport-style fencing seen in the Olympics.

In high school, after connecting with various clubs, he found a fencing coach at the Tri-Weapon Fencing Club in Catonsville, Md., Hanssen pulled up a four-legged chair to fence Hanssen shot up the ranks, training in Colorado Springs with the USA team and winning the national championship in saber.

For now, Hanssen uses his fencing competition chair on one end while another of the club’s 50 members sits in his everyday chair on the other. The setup has been beneficial for injured fencers too, and remaining seated makes all club members focus more on their blade work.

If it’s a significant improvement over what they’d been doing before: having members pull up a four-legged chair to fence Hanssen while seated, or even just fencing him while standing. The group hopes to eventually get another competition wheelchair and is exploring hosting "walk 'n' roll" tournaments, which allow both fencers and parafencers to compete.

"It’s a great sport, and we do have the accessibility now," says Social Chair Catt Gagnon M.A.A. ‘23. "We want to make sure there was staff in place for me."

The frame, purchased with support from University Recreation and Wellness, adds to its accessible activities, like adaptive equipment at the Climbing Wall, wheelchair lifts and ramps in pools, and intramural goal ball, a seated version of soccer for visually impaired participants.

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"It’s a great sport, and we do have the accessibility now," says Social Chair Catt Gagnon M.A.A. ‘23. "Why not bring it to our campus?"
A Decade of Do Good Times

Student Competition Changed the Lives of Its Veterans—and Transformed Their Ventures

THE RUNAWAY SUCCESS of the university’s Do Good Challenge for the past 10 years has zero degrees of separation from Kevin Bacon.

It goes back to when Karen ’76 and husband Bruce ‘76 Levenson called Robert Grimm, then director of the School of Public Policy’s philanthropic and nonprofit program, to say their nephew was working with the actor—and he’d be happy to host a campus event. Grimm just needed one thing.

He, students and other faculty members, inspired by Bacon’s SueDees2 nonprofit, connecting people and good causes, developed a competition encouraging Terp teams to create, engage as nonprofit managers and one-shots, in one week.

But it was the Do Good Challenge’s first year—2012—that made Grimm think: Maybe this idea could change the world.

“We were worried no one would show up,” Grimm recalls. “We thought it would be the only one we put on.”

Instead, 100 teams participated in this social impact-focused mashup of “American Idol” and “Shark Tank.” Nearly 700 viewing students turned out to watch the finals, $5,000 was awarded to expand the fledgling Food Recovery Network’s efforts, and 10 years later, the event is a center of a suite of efforts encouraging students to make a difference.

Mini-grants, courses, “accelerator” fellowships, a graduate certificate program in nonprofit management, paid internships and coaching have built a pipeline—now based in the Do Good Institute—to support students’ projects and ventures. “These aren’t future leaders,” Grimm says. “They are leaders now, changing the world today.”

The foundation’s 10-year anniversary, he says, has served more than 50,000 people, and Grimm is developing a for-profit fundraising effort for Microjusticia.

“Winning the challenge enabled us to get international recognition,” he says. That helped professionalize the organization and secure more donations, including a $180,000 grant from the United Nations’ Democracy Fund a few years later.

Microjusticia has since expanded to four provinces, and Bellocq has stepped away.

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A Puppet by Any Other Name

Exhibit Highlights the Art Form’s Variety

"PUNCH, JUDY AND BABY", a classic puppet character, rooted in the 16th century Italian theatrical tradition of commedia dell’arte, which featured stock characters included in the comically synergistic Mr. Punch. He and his wife, Judy, became wildly popular in England in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are icons of "found puppets," everyday objects that are infused with lifelike qualities. Using just a scrap of fabric and a skill of a performer, the Powells turned an ordinary brick into a tightrope walker. Barker notes that his 5-year-old son “did laugh and smile as soon as he saw it,” because he understood immediately that in this case, a brick is not just a brick. “He knew from the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta.”

"A Brick Wearing a Tiny Tutu" is a tiny tutu might seem to the average person like a head-scratching oddity, or maybe a performer, the Powells turned an ordinary brick into a tightrope walker. It’s just the childlike imagination, our willing suspension of disbelief” that transforms an object into a character with a life force, says Barker. UMD’s performing arts librarian and curator of the exhibit.

UMD students and faculty have long been proponents of this particular artistry, starting with M.A. ’16 and her Ph.D. research: why goths age happily.

"I want more of the same thing." —SL

When Leah Bush M.A. ’16 and her bandmates arrived at Alexandria, Va., gin on Dec. 31, 2015, they expected to be playing a standard New Year’s Eve party. Instead, they walked into a funeral—for the newly 40-year-old host’s youth, complete with a handmade coffin and eulogies. "It’s just the childlike imagination, our willing suspension of disbelief” that transforms an object into a character with a life force, says Barker. UMD’s performing arts librarian and curator of the exhibit.

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HEN JARED BERNHARDT ’21 graduated from Maryland, he had already finished a storied college lacrosse career as a 2017 national champion, the Terps’ record holder in career points and goals, and winner of the Tewaaraton Award, given to the most outstanding men’s and women’s NCAA players in the sport.

But he wasn’t finished. In one of the rarest achievements in recent college competition, Bernhardt added a second national title to the Terps’ record holder in career goals and points, and winner of the Tewaaraton Award, given to the most outstanding men’s and women’s NCAA players in the sport.

“You can’t just be smart. You don’t get there by being smart,” Bernhardt says. “There are so many things you can control and using that as an advantage.”

Bernhardt spent the spring in Florida training for the NFL and had multiple conversations with Chris Hogan, a former Penn State lacrosse player who went on to become an NFL wide receiver and two-time Super Bowl champion with the New England Patriots, about how best to turn his college achievements into a professional roster spot.

Following the NFL draft, Bernhardt signed a free agent contract with the Atlanta Falcons, not as a quarterback but as a wide receiver/kick returner.

“I’m really open to anything. Any team I’ve been on I want to go and win,” he says. —LF
ON THE MALL

**Telescope Terps**

Hubble’s Giant Successor Has Plenty of Connections to UMD

One of the first astronomers who’ll use it, UMD’s Yogesh Joshi and Andres Musalem of the University of Chile reported in research published in Scientific Reports by Nature.

The pair analyzed data collected by Google from mobile device users in 93 countries who opted to share their location history, including where they went and for how long. They compared data from users during the first five weeks of 2020—before the pandemic ramped up and lockdowns were imposed—with data from when they were put into effect, taking into consideration how restrictive they were and their length.

Mobility immediately plummeted 36% after lockdowns went into effect, then fell another 18% in the next two weeks. But then it started to creep back up; within a month of the relapse’s start, a third of the few recluses among us, the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 were hard—and hard to heed. New marketing research quantifies just how much the world balked under them. Lockdowns lost 30% of their effectiveness in reducing mobility in one month, UMD’s Yogesh Joshi and Andres Musalem of the University of Chile reported in research published in Scientific Reports by Nature.

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No Appetite for Racist Stereotypes
In New Book, Professor Chews Over the Consequences of Food Shaming

FOR BLACK AMERICANS, the simple act of eating can be fraught. Gathering for a barbecue in a public park can lead to run-ins with the police. Dining on traditional dishes, developed through ingenuity and necessity out of generations of slavery and poverty, can lead to racist ridicule. In her latest book, “Eating While Black: Food Shaming and Race in America,” available this summer, American studies professor Psyche Williams-Forson breaks down how unfair scrutiny of what Black Americans eat keeps society from addressing systemic inequities.

Why did you want to write this book?
Shaming Black people for what and where they eat is not new. It began during enslavement; the ways farms and plantation owners set up were about surveilling Black bodies. And it’s moved straight into the contemporary moment, such as the 2018 arrest of the young Black man at a Starbucks in Philadelphia. People feel they’ve been given permission to overcorrect Black people’s lives, from music to clothing to language to food, because those things go against the grain of whiteness and “correctness.”

What’s an example of how Black Americans are food shamed?
We hear a lot about Black people and their diets, and how they’re unhealthy and obese because of soul food—but you can’t blame it all on food. How people eat and where they eat can be about money and survival. If you don’t set up in Black neighborhoods, offer food that’s culturally relevant for the elderly and other people who are alone. Farmers markets aren’t utopias. People like to criticize fast-food restaurants, but they are major gathering hubs for people. They provide a sense of community and a respite from the stressors of daily life.

What are some food misconceptions that you address?
People like to criticize fast-food restaurants, but they are major gathering hubs for the elderly and other people who are alone. Farmers markets aren’t utopias. People like to criticize fast-food restaurants, but they are major gathering hubs for people. They provide a sense of community and a respite from the stressors of daily life. People like to criticize fast-food restaurants, but they are major gathering hubs for people. They provide a sense of community and a respite from the stressors of daily life.

How can the conversation about Black food culture be harmful?
We hear a lot about Black people and their diets, and how they’re unhealthy and obese because of soul food—but you can’t blame it all on food. How people eat and where they eat can be about money and survival. If you don’t set up in Black neighborhoods, offer food that’s culturally relevant for the elderly and other people who are alone. Farmers markets aren’t utopias. People like to criticize fast-food restaurants, but they are major gathering hubs for people. They provide a sense of community and a respite from the stressors of daily life.

From MRIs to the QTC
Physicist Translates Quantum Theory Into Medical Devices and Tomorrow’s Tech

DIPPING A TOE into quantum science often creates a “this is your brain in a blender” effect on the uninstructed, but University of Maryland scientist Ron Walsworth is quick to point out that Hyperfine, a company he co-founded and that joined the NASDAQ exchange last fall, arises from a kinder, gentler variety—he calls it “20th-century quantum.”

This earlier understanding of the nature of space and time and the building blocks of matter informed Walsworth’s long-ago research at Harvard involving hyperpolarized gas imaging. He conducted the work alongside his former postdoc and later colleague and fellow Hyperfine co-founder Matt Rosen, now a Harvard School of Medicine professor. It eventually led to the company that builds small, low-cost magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines that operate at a low magnetic field—and thus can be wheeled into action in emergency rooms, intensive care units and other settings where expense, size or magnetic interactions with other medical equipment rule out full-size MRI machines.

“The quality of its images isn’t quite as good as a giant, multimillion-dollar MRI in a hospital, but that’s an acceptable tradeoff in many circumstances,” says Walsworth, director of UMD’s Quantum Technology Center (QTC) and a professor of electrical and computer engineering and of physics. Hyperfine’s low-field machines are already expanding health care access in the developing world; for instance, in a remote area of Malawi, after unpacking the machine and getting online instruction, doctors were able to quickly diagnose a child’s serious illness and refer her to proper medical care. Walsworth, no longer directly involved in the company, still gets emotional talking about how the machine helped the younger. His determination to make medical imaging more accessible stems from his young son’s 2006 diagnosis with a brain tumor, which plunged the family into the world of childhood disease.

“We slept in the pediatric intensive-care unit for a couple of weeks,” he says. “I realized maybe I could help make things better for these children and parents and the incredibly dedicated doctors and nurses.”

His son recovered, and with Rosen leading the development of the technology for brain imaging, Hyperfine launched in 2014, with scientist and entrepreneur Jonathan Rothberg as the third co-founder. “Ron and I are so proud of the trajectory of our combined academic effort,” Rosen says. “First it was him, and then me, just grinding away to get funding and improve the technology—NASA, NSF—it felt like pushing a rock uphill endlessly. And then finally, people understood what we were doing.”

In Walsworth’s current work on quantum sensors, communication networks and more, in the QTC, he focuses on the full-bore, mind-bending “21st-century quantum” that directly exploits confounding concepts like “entanglement.” But regardless of the century it arises from, he says, the idea is to create a better world.—GC

For onto the Mall exploration Explorations

EATING WHILE BLACK: Food Shaming and Race in America

—KS

FACULTY Q&A

Physics into Medical Devices and Tomorrow’s Tech

—cc
Safer Flights
Faculty, Students Study How to Make Buildings More Bird-Friendly

We’ve all heard that awful moment: We might be in our kitchen, brewing an early morning coffee, or working late on the 10th floor of an office building when suddenly a bird flies head-on into a window with a sickening thwack.

Buildings pose an enormous threat to birds, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Many birds migrating in the fall and spring—the deadliest times for the birds, says Michael Ezban, a clinical assistant professor at the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation’s Environmental Finance Center. Birds are attracted to buildings that are lit up internally—like office buildings with lights left on overnight—and steer themselves directly into windows, often in the hour before sunrise. Reflective windows are also a hazard. If a building is near trees, that vegetation could be mirrored in the window, giving birds the illusion that it’s safe to keep on flying.

“Fortunately, glass can be manufactured in a range of ways that make it visible” to birds, says Michael Ezban, a clinical assistant professor of architecture who’s taught students to design bird-friendly edifices. One option, he says, is fitted glass, made with lines or dots that act as a stop sign for birds. Ultraviolet pigmentation, another option, can make glass visible to avians but not humans. The effect could be glass that appears hot pink to our feathered friends, indicating to them that it’s perilous to fly there. Ezban and his students have also explored ways in which designs can serve as habitat. In the United Kingdom, many architects utilize what are known as “swift boxes,” named after the endangered common swift. These are bricks that have been hollowed out, making them an ideal habitat for birds.

At UMD, Shannon Browne, a lecturer in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, leads student volunteers—often members of the university’s student chapter of the Wildlife Society—around campus in their volunteer roles, sometimes (pandemic, downturn, etc.) you have to think a minute to determine how things might work out as you build it. When you listen to others, it is natural to judge what they are saying from our own perspective. Imagine if we could set aside our assumptions for a bit to seek clarification and confirm that we've heard what you mean. An integral part of this is understanding the idea of a moment will strengthen our democracy.

People can take one minute to determine whether the source of news they’re reading is trustworthy before sharing it. That investment of a moment will strengthen our democracy.

What’s the smallest change people can make to have the biggest positive impact on society?

Share your answer and see more faculty responses at terpfeedback.umd.edu. Suggest a future question at terp.umd.edu/BigQ14.
FOR TERPS WHO HAVEN’T been back to campus in a while, driving on Baltimore Avenue might be more of a journey of discovery than a trip down memory lane. It’s impossible not to notice the towering hotel across from the University of Maryland’s main entrance, a gleaming apartment complex rising where Plato’s Diner used to be, and—wait a minute—is that one, two, three new grocery stores?

Since its launch in 2015, the $2 billion public-private partnership known as Greater College Park has revitalized the community surrounding UMD as new businesses have taken root, housing options have dramatically expanded, and retailers have set up shop. While some recent establishments, like The Hotel at the University of Maryland and Vigilante Coffee, quickly became community fixtures, others, like the College Park City Hall and the landscape-altering Aster College Park complex, are just popping up as the transformation continues.

“All of it is part of a plan to be the great college town—the place that students, staff, faculty, parents and alumni want to be a part of,” says Ken Ulman, UMD’s chief strategy officer for economic development and president of the Terrapin Development Company, a partnership between the university and the University of Maryland College Park Foundation that is leading several Greater College Park projects.

“We’ve assembled idyllic historical images and vibrant modern-day scenes for a simultaneous look back and peek forward at the blossoming Baltimore Avenue corridor. Read on to see just how much ‘greater’ College Park is becoming.”

COLLEGE PARK IS HOPPING AND HUMMING WITH NEW BUSINESSES, HOUSING AND OTHER PERKS. SEE FOR YOURSELF.

BY ANNIE KRAKOWER CONTEMPORARY PHOTOS BY JOHN T. CONSOLI

NEAR CAMPUS DRIVE ENTRANCE

The view over the old circular drive in front of Ritchie Coliseum—framed by a two-lane road, fencing for an under-construction football stadium and rows of corn—is now dominated on the right by The Hotel. The 297-room, four-star hotel and conference center opened in 2017 as an anchor of Greater College Park, and now houses the Visitor Center. On the left, at the corner of Campus Drive, stands the Brendan Iribe Center for Computer Science and Engineering, a hub for virtual reality, robotics and artificial intelligence since 2019. Still in the picture’s Turner Hall, now home of Conferences and Visitor Services’ welcome desk and, yes, Terp offices.

HOW WE PICTURE GREATNESS

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS (ALL PAGES) COURTESY OF COLLEGE PARK CITY HALL;
ARCHIVAL PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
This shopping plaza might look familiar—even if most of the storefronts have changed—but the big difference can be seen on the right, where a gleaming new city hall now stands. It houses city offices, council chambers and meeting rooms on the first two floors, with UMD occupying the third and fourth. Retail space will start filling up this spring and summer, highlighted by Shop Made in Maryland, which will sell art, jewelry and home goods crafted in the state in order to support local businesses.

An Esso gas station and the old Maryland Book Exchange made way for the 843-bed Landmark Apartments and Target Express building, which opened in 2015 to provide quick and convenient shopping for Terps. Also coming soon to that area is Union on Knox, a project by Terrapin Development Company and Greystar Real Estate Partners to build nearly 800 student apartments and 21,000 square feet of retail where Marathon Deli and 7-Eleven used to be. (Don’t worry—Marathon just moved around the corner to face Baltimore Avenue and is as popular as ever.)
The 150-acre research park formerly known as M Square left plenty of room for budding innovation, and since 2017, the area now called the Discovery District has flourished as a magnet for new knowledge and entrepreneurship. Spaces such as IonQ and the Quantum Startup Foundry reinforce UMD’s reputation as the “Capital of Quantum,” and companies like The Shed, a rehearsal studio space; Medcura, a biomedical device developer; and Cybrary, a cybersecurity startup, contribute to the region’s growing business enterprise. If all that inspiration makes you hungry, stop by The Hall CP for a bite on the patio.

The Quality Inn and Plato’s Diner were demolished in 2019 to make way for Aster College Park, a Terrapin Development Company and Bozzuto project bringing nearly 400 residential units and 62,000 square feet of retail, including a much-anticipated grocery store. Opening this summer, the complex will also feature outdoor dining and gathering spaces with plenty of greenery, as well as a pedestrian bridge linking two buildings.

**GREATER COLLEGE PARK BY THE NUMBERS**

- $2B public-private investment
- 60+ companies, organizations and federal agencies
- 2M+ square feet of office, retail, residential and research space
- 150+ acre research park
- 6,500+ Discovery District employees
- Housing under construction for 4,000+ students
- 62+ acres of trails and parks

**BALTIMORE AVENUE AT CALVERT ROAD**

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Many Terps fondly remember… well, many Terps at least remember the Knox Boxes, two-story brick, budget-friendly apartment buildings on the south side of campus near Guilford Drive. The last well-worn box finally folded to make way for Terrapin Row, a student apartment building that opened in 2016. The complex features nearly 1,500 beds, along with retailers like Dunkin’, Amazon and Seoulspice.

In Northern Baltimore Avenue

Up where the Clarion Inn used to be, discount supermarket Lidl debuted in 2019, adding to College Park’s growing list of grocers that also includes recent additions Whole Foods, MOM’s Organic Market and Target Express. Just across the street, another project is reaching new heights: Gilbane Development Co. is constructing Tempo, an eight-story, 299-unit student housing, parking and retail complex. Opening in space once occupied by Burger King, the building will include a swimming pool, fitness center and podcast/video studio.

New digs

Terps will soon have a plethora of new housing options, with plenty of pools, cozy courtyards, fancy fitness centers and countless other amenities. Here’s what’s taking shape and when:

ASTER COLLEGE PARK
Baltimore Avenue and Calvert Road
393 units of multifamily housing
Summer 2022

PARKSIDE
Lakeland Road and 48th Street
305 student beds
Fall 2022

THE NINE AT COLLEGE PARK
Baltimore Avenue and Tecumseh Street
669 student beds
Fall 2022

TEMPO
Baltimore Avenue and Berwyn Road
978 student beds
Fall 2022

THE STANDARD
Baltimore Avenue and Hartwick Road
951 student beds
Fall 2023

UNION ON KNOX
Knox Road and Sterling Place
788 student beds
Summer 2024

THE HUB
Knox Road and Lehigh Road
465 student beds
Under construction

ASPEN-MARYLAND
Knox Road and Guilford Drive
304 student beds
Ground being prepped for construction
Growing Justice From Grassroots Science

Trash and toxic substances are often dumped where poor people and communities of color live. Public health researcher Sacoby Wilson is empowering them to fight for cleaner, safer conditions.

BY LIAM FARRELL

Baltimore's southern edge is a rushing two-way conduit for products constantly flowing in and the detritus of modern life continually flushing out. Much of this effluent is headed for the neighborhood of Curtis Bay, home to a trifecta of foul final destinations: a landfill, a medical waste facility and an animal rendering plant.

When Destiny Watford was growing up there more than a decade ago, adults urged her to get out as soon as possible. Brick row homes, churches, corner stores and school playgrounds share the air with a coal silo and fleets of diesel trucks, and Watford saw neighbors die of lung cancer and her mother struggle with asthma attacks.

Photo by John T. Consoli; photo collage by Valerie Morgan

Growing Justice From Grassroots Science

Trash and toxic substances are often dumped where poor people and communities of color live. Public health researcher Sacoby Wilson is empowering them to fight for cleaner, safer conditions.

BY LIAM FARRELL

The community already had some of the nation's most polluted and deadly air, according to a collection of studies, when plans were announced in 2012 for a new trash incinerator—permitted to burn 4,000 tons a day and spew up to 1,240 pounds of lead and mercury annually—less than a mile from her high school. Anger overcoming her shy nature, then-16-year-old Watford co-founded an activist group and looked for allies in what became a four-year quest to stop it.

One important guide would be Sacoby Wilson, an assistant professor in the University of Maryland's School of Public Health. An expert on environmental toxins and the sociopolitical structures that make them so abundant where people of color live, Wilson helped the teenagers make contacts with legal and environmental groups and get their hands on the data they needed to mount a challenge to an international corporation.

"We weren't lawyers or experts in any way, shape or form," Watford says. "Sacoby ended up being one of those folks. He was really influential in making sure we had those connections."

Now an associate professor with the Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health and Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Wilson is at the forefront of investigating how the places where people live can determine their health. A proponent of community-based participatory research, he trains and assists people in getting the information they need to protect their families and homes. Wilson and his Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH) have worked alongside overburdened communities to address health disparities.

"We're learning that what once was considered normal is really a toxic standard that impacts communities of color and low-income communities," Wilson says.

The stories of Watford and Wilson are part of the growing movement for environmental justice, which seeks to put an end to the historic and current patterns of pollution and injustice that overburden communities of color.

"Environmental justice is about reclaiming the right to live where you want to live," Watford says. "It's about creating a world where everyone has access to the same opportunities for healthy living, regardless of where you were born or where you live."

Photo by John T. Consoli; photo collage by Valerie Morgan

PHOTO BY JOHN T. CONSOLI; PHOTO COLLAGE BY VALERIE MORGAN
through when they are different." But his bright and precocious nature survived, says Bobbie Wilson, Sacoby's mother. He spoke and read early in childhood, built his own lawnmower business and traveled 200 miles from home to board at an advanced science and math high school, full of determination and curiosity.

"He gave the teachers holy hell, as he would put it, because he was always trying to figure out this and figure out that," Bobbie says. "He didn’t have any problem expressing himself. He is one of those people who would not stop talking.

And he applied a burgeoning interest in biology and ecology to himself: "What had made his body turn against itself? had made his body turn against itself?" Sacoby Wilson

"He showed up. He would initiate things. He was enthusiastic. He had a great deal of knowledge," says Victor Schoenborn, who was a professor in the UNC Department of Epidemiology and advised the Minority Student Caucus led by Wilson. "I have a hard time thinking of what he didn’t do."

ABOUT 10 MILES northwest of Chapel Hill’s campus are the neighborhoods where Wilson says he got his “other Ph.D.” While his actual doctorate was based on researching into industrial hog farming, the historically Black communities outside of Melborne, N.C., were where he learned how to listen to and partner with people on the ground.

Omega Wilson and his wife, Brenda, were living under nearby Melborne’s zoning and land-use control that denied services like public water and sewer through a process known as “extraterritorial application,” where they founded the West End Revitalization Association in 1994 to oppose a highway project and advocate for basic amenities.

“We were treated like the worst of the worst,” he says, “like we were no better than trash and sewage.”

The two Wilsons met at an environmental justice conference in 2000, bonding over shared Mississippi roots and then collaborating on a water quality study. They found not only water in the West End and other neighborhoods contaminated by feces and bacteria such as E. coli and Enterococci, but also failing pipes made of paper and tar, 1890s, never have been able to get

"SACOBY WILSON, associate professor, Marymail Institute for Applied Environmental Health and Department of Biomedical and Health Sciences.

It’s about where we live, where we work, where we pray, where we learn... We’re talking about food, faith, family, and jobs.

THREE CITIES—Vicksburg, Miss., the late 1800s and early 1900s, remote rural landscapes of toxic exposures, and a relative’s house in Vicksburg, Miss., in the late 1970s.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SACOBY WILSON

and undererved people of color and low-senthal populations from Houston and New Orleans to Washington, D.C., aiming for the nexus of pollution, zoning and community development practices that disproportionally hurt vulnerable neighborhoods and reflect the ingrown biases of government and private industry actors.

By teaching people how to take water samples, read air monitor data from their homes and understand complex legal and regulatory structures, Wilson tries to do more than just document what happens to someone who lives near or works in a power plant or hog farm. Ultimately, as climate change intensifies and it looks more like COVID-19, how deadly historic health disparities can be, Wilson wants to help people “liberate themselves from the toxic trauma they are experiencing every day.”

“With people, you got to provide services,” he says. “It’s about solutions, about action, about mitigation, about investments.”

WILSON, WHO GREW up in Vicksburg, Miss., in the late 1800s and early 1900s, remote rural landscapes of toxic exposures, and a relative’s house in Vicksburg, Miss., in the late 1970s.

But he also remembers the racism, especially when he played sports, as taunts and slurs rained down from not only spectators and opposing players, but also coaches and referees. He wasn’t singled out just for his skin color, either; as age 7, he was diagnosed with alopecia, causing his hair to start falling out as his immune system attacked his follicles.

“Frightening, confusing, ostracizing— it was all those things,” Wilson says. “I went through all that stuff that kids go through when they are different.”

But his bright and precocious nature survived, says Bobbie Wilson, Sacoby’s mother. He spoke and read early in childhood, built his own lawnmower business and traveled 200 miles from home to board at an advanced science and math high school, full of determination and curiosity.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF SACOBY WILSON
He’s applied that philosophy in a targeted manner, such as working with Millennials, Del., residents for a July 2015 health assessment on a proposed poultry processing plant in an area already contaminated by dangerous chemicals like lead, chromium and arsenic. He’s also put it into practice more broadly through his center’s Maryland Environmental Justice Screen Tool. That allows anyone to pull up a map online and see how areas compare in pollution burdens like diesel particulates, proximity to treatment and disposal facilities, and watershed failures, while adding socioeconomic and contextual layers like education and income levels, supermarket locations and public transit stops.

This way, Wilson says, money for green investment and mitigation in the state can be targeted to the communities that need it most.

Created in 2017 with colleagues from UMD and the Maryland Environmental Health Network, the map may be enhanced through a new $100,000 Environmental Protection Agency contract to add more rural issues such as pesticide exposure and proximity to Environmental Protection Agency treatment and disposal facilities, and sewage lines have been installed for more than 100 homes in the Mebane area.

“He lived with those disparities. He’s not just talking about them from an academic point of view,” Omega says. “It’s in his heart. You don’t see that very often.”

KAREN MOE DESCRIBES (the smell that occasionally invades her house in Cheverly, Md., as similar to burning coffee—even though it’s definitely not from a Starbucks.)

Sitting between the District of Columbia and College Park, portions of Cheverly are home to industrial operations like a waste and scrap metal recycling, concrete manufacturing facilities, and emissions from commuters and delivery vehicles. Moe, who has lived there for 35 years, knows plenty of people suffering from asthma and respiratory problems.

“People wash cars and the next day, they can wipe the dust off of it,” she says. “So since last year, Moe has been one of about two dozen Cheverly residents helping to build a “hyperlocal” air quality monitoring network. CEEJH staff installed small, low-cost sensors on homes that draw in air with a fan and use a laser to measure particles, and provided training so residents can access and analyze real-time data posted online. Coupled with more Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) inspections and warnings to local business about tailing diesel trucks and errant dust, Moe says she is already feeling “more looked after” and hopes the information can be used to provide air quality warnings and show MDE where violations might be occurring.

“We can provide information that will help people who have sensitive conditions,” Moe says. “Give them guidance—don’t work outside today, limit your outdoor time.”

Environmental justice, Wilson says, requires long-term vision and support, and CEEJH is capable of that. Meta, the company formerly known as Facebook, recently made a $1.75 million gift to the center, supporting a new paid internship program, staff hires and its annual symposium.

“You’re trying to make up for 40, 50 years of stuff. It’s generational to even get incremental change,” he says. “That’s how insoluble, how deep, how entrenched these issues are.”

Wilson is an expert at preparing people for this “marathon,” says Omar Muhammad, the executive director of the North Charlston, S.C., LowCountry Alliance for Model Communities, which Wilson helped produce the research needed to protest and lobby the government to cancel its contracts. The incinerator’s permits eventually expired without construction in 2016; today, Watford, who won a global environmental prize for her efforts, works for Greenpeace Colorado.

“It was fundamental—not only for my own development as a person, but for realizing that people have power,” she says. “Things aren’t set in stone. We can change things for the better.”

Wilson and his students and colleagues have tackled issues from the mid-Atlantic to the Deep South. Along the Gulf Coast, projects involved coastal revitalization, food insecurity and quality of life in marginalized communities. In the Carolinas, they partnered with residents to address the effects of concentrated hog farming as well as to bolster disaster resilience after a North Carolina storm surge. Closer to College Park, the group studied potential health risks for urban anglers and the impact of air pollution from buses and commercial vehicles.
FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE LAW’S PASSAGE, THE LEGACY OF BERNICE SANDLER ED.D. ’69 ENDURES THROUGH THE MILLIONS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN WHOSE LIVES SHE’S CHANGED

BY KAREN SHIH ’09    PHOTO COLLAGES BY LAUREN BIAGINI

IN THE SAME YEAR the U.S. landed a man on the moon, Bernice “Bunny” Sandler Ed.D. ’69, a married mother of two and owner of a new doctoral degree, couldn’t even land a job.

As she applied for research and teaching jobs, one interviewer called her “just a housewife who went back to school.” Another said he couldn’t hire women because they would stay home when their children were sick—never mind that Sandler’s daughters were in high school. But it was the rejection from her own school, the University of Maryland’s College of Education, where she taught part-time throughout her graduate studies in counseling, that stung most.

She asked why she wasn’t considered for one of the seven open positions in the department, and a male faculty member said: “Let’s face it. You come on too strong for a woman.”

Sandler could have gone home and cried—and she did, at first. She could have blamed herself—and she did that too, regretting how she spoke up during staff meetings and class discussions. But it was a time when men held nearly every position of power at the university and outnumbered women eight to one among faculty at the biggest school on campus; when female students still were subjected to curfews and dress codes and steered to majors like home economics. She realized her failure to find work wasn’t about her qualifications, but her gender.

She never did secure a faculty job. Instead, Sandler launched a battle that spanned classrooms, Congress and national stages to create, pass and defend the groundbreaking federal legislation formally known as Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, opening doors for millions of girls and women to achieve educational, athletic and professional equality. The “Godmother of Title IX,” as she became known, spent the rest of her career, until her 2019 death, raising awareness of and advocating for enforcement of the law.

“She was phenomenal, a force of nature—so outspoken and adamant about women’s rights,” says Georgina Dodge, vice president for diversity and inclusion at UMD, who served on the board of the Association of Title IX Administrators with Sandler for six years.

The law, now widely known for its impact on women’s sports, not only improved opportunities in education, including admissions and hiring, but also offered recourse for victims of sexual harassment and assault, as well as
And it wasn’t just in the classroom that women were held to strict standards. At UMD, where Adele Stamp, UMD’s first dean and nursing, they were barred from domains like engineering or business. It was in this constrictive and demoralizing environment that Sandler tried to begin a career in academia.

**ON THE BASIS OF SEX**

Sandler’s lifelong nickname, “Bunny,” belied her tenacity in the face of blatant unfairness. Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, she was outraged that boys could operate the slide projector in school or serve as crossing guards when girls couldn’t. She recalled how her college application stated frankly that girls needed higher grades and test scores to be admitted. “Nobody complained. Nobody even saw this as wrong. I remember thinking, I’m just going to have to work harder,” Sandler said in a 2003 talk.

But even after she earned her doctorate, the sexist job rejections made her realize her story was just one anecdote in a much broader tale of injustice enveloping all women seeking to advance their education and careers.

“Knowing that sex discrimination was immoral, I assumed it would also be illegal,” Sandler wrote in her 1997 reflections on the 25th anniversary of Title IX. She examined law after law to find out if that was true, only to see that many contained loopholes exempting educational institutions, students or faculty members from antidiscrimination statutes. Finally, she discovered Executive Order 11246, which prohibited federal contractors from discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion and national origin—and it had been amended in 1968 to include sex.

“Even though I was alone, I shrieked aloud with my discovery,” she wrote. The connection was clear: Most colleges had federal contracts; therefore, they could not discriminate against women and preserve that funding.

She took this explosive information to the Department of Labor. She joined the Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL). She shared her findings to members of Congress. In 1976, WEAL filed a class-action lawsuit against universities across the country—including UMD—and charged Sandler with collecting information from women in academia about admissions quotas, financial aid, hiring practices, promotions and salary differences to support their case. She worked with U.S. Rep. Edith Green (D-Oregon), who chaired the House subcommittee on higher education, to shape legislation explicitly prohibiting sex discrimination in employment and education. Sandler was told explicitly not to publicly lobby for the bill with WEAL beyond its initial testimony, to avoid drawing attention.

The stealth strategy worked. Two years later, on June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed Title IX into law. It states, in part, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

**THE LEGACY OF TITLE IX**

With its impact still palpable in the U.S. today, and it’s easy to see that the gender balance has shifted. Since the late 1970s, female undergraduates have outnumbered male ones, making up about 57% of the college population as of 2019, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports. Now free to pursue all majors, women at UMD make up a third of the undergraduates studying engineering and nearly half of all students in the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences.

“Life chances depend on education. If we discriminate against women in K-12 or higher education, we are setting the foundation for lifelong disparities,” says UMD Provost and Senior Vice President Jennifer King Rice, who served as dean of the College of Education decades after Sandler couldn’t get hired there.

For many, Title IX remains synonymous with women’s sports, where opportunities have grown exponentially. Girls’ participation in high school sports is 10 times greater than in 1972, according to the NCES. In college, the NCAA reports that women now make up nearly half of all Division I athletes. And while it’s still more common for men to coach women’s teams, women are starting to make inroads into men’s sports, like WNBA star Kristi Toliver, ’09, an assistant coach with the Dallas Mavericks.
Today, UMD is a national powerhouse in women’s sports. The basketball team won the NCAA tournament in 2006 and became the university’s winningest coach, recalls McKnight, 1964-76. She knew that many of the women in the suffrage movement never got to see the fruits of their labor,” says Sanders. “The women who came before her had an even tougher road, and that gave her calmsness and perspective.”

That perspective is critical as advocates tackle new and ongoing challenges. In athletics, though 3.5 million high school girls participated in sports in 2018, that’s still fewer than the number of boys who played in 1971, before the passage of Title IX, reports the Women’s Sports Foundation (WSF). The gap is even wider for girls of color, which keeps them from reaping the health, educational and employment benefits of playing sports. In college athletics, WSF reports that men in NCAA Division I and II still receive $4.5 million more in scholarship funding annually, and just last year, a viral Instagram post revealed dramatically unequal weight room set-ups for women and men playing in the NCAA basketball tournaments.

In higher education, female students and faculty alike are stymied by the “chilly climate,” a phrase Sanders coined when she was growing up in the 1970s. But today, her student-athletes have gone on to play professionally and represent their countries in the Olympics; become doc tors and entrepreneurs; and create clubs to help them.”

“I remember being exhaust ed—It was such a battle for me to even get a ride on or to take over a game to a game.” When Title IX was passed, that meant not only scholarship opportunities for players, but funding for coaches and staff. “The last time I got paid to coach sports was when I taught high school,” she says. “I was excited that people could have that level of protection and make it financially worthwhile for them.”

Title IX is a powerful tool,” says Toliver, who played in 1971, before the passage of Title IX, and is an Olympic gold medalist. “Now we’re embarking on a new team and make it financially worthwhile for them.”
Executive Director, Alumni Association

Maryland is also mapping out its future with a new 10-year strategic plan, which was influenced by feedback from stakeholders, including alumni. The strategic plan highlights four pillars: to reimagine learning, research and service; and to address the world’s grand challenges.

The Alumni Association's survey of its members and multiple alumni listening sessions revealed that you want to see the reputation of our university through remarkable accomplishments nationally; and to invest in people and communities. With these goals to advance the public good, to tackle the grand challenges of our time, and to lay out the ways the association and alumni as a whole can play a role in advancing UMD. We will build on the work we are doing to serve others; to support alumni personally and professionally; and to address the world’s grand challenges.

Our alumni are a crucial component of this new vision for our university. The Alumni Association’s survey of its members and multiple alumni listening sessions revealed that you want to see our university take on important issues like climate change and racial injustice, and that diversity and academic excellence are among your top priorities for UMD.

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The Alumni Association is uniquely positioned to help UMD achieve its ambitious goals. Our 400,000-plus graduates mentor students, hire Terps for internships and jobs, and elevate the reputation of our university through remarkable accomplishments across a wide breadth of professional fields.

In conjunction with the university’s new strategic plan, the Alumni Association will launch our version this summer. In it, we will lay out the ways the association and alumni as a whole can play a role in advancing UMD. We will build on the work we are doing to serve others; to support alumni personally and professionally; and to address the world’s grand challenges.

I wish all of you a summer filled with fun and adventures!

Go Terps!

Executive Director, Alumni Association

Letter From the Executive Director

WITH SUMMER JUST around the corner, many of us are making plans for our summer at home. If you’re like most Terps, you’re looking forward to relaxation, fun in the sun, and maybe a bit of a change of pace. And if you’re like most Terps, you’re also looking forward to meeting new people and experiences that will help you grow and learn.

Terps Supporting Terps

New Business Directory Generates Leads, Connections

HAVING LAUNCHED a business less than a month after graduating, Kiara Anthony ’21 is the picture of the University of Maryland entrepreneurial spirit.

The former government and politics major, member of the UMD Equestrian Team and co-chair of the University Student Judiciary, owns Perfectly Possible, a virtual tutoring and college admissions consulting firm that helps students get the most out of higher education.

She’s also an inaugural member of the University of Maryland Alumni Association’s new Terp Referral Exchange Business Directory.

“You’re like a LinkedIn for Terps who are also entrepreneurs,” Anthony says. “A community of alumni and people who are like-minded, driven, pushing boundaries and helping others to do the same.”

She was among more than 350 guests attending the launch of the online directory in March during the Alumni Association’s Celebration of Entrepreneurship event at The Hall CP, in the university’s Discovery District. It featured Scott Plank ’88 (above, right), developer of the restaurant and event venue, talking with President Darryll J. Pines about entrepreneurship and Plank’s journey to success.

The directory allows for easy exploration of businesses that are owned by alumni or lifetime members of the association. It’s yet another way the Alumni Association encourages Terps around the world to do business with each other, says Amy Eichhorst, associate vice president of alumni and donor relations and executive director of alumni relations.

“The University of Maryland has been named one of the top 10 entrepreneurship programs in the country seven years in a row,” she says. “This new business directory will serve as a catalyst for connections and create a culture of Terps patronizing other Terps’ businesses.”

Here’s how the directory works: Business leaders apply to be in the directory. Once approved, they are listed under a number of six categories: coaches and consultants, creatives, finance and development, food and beverage, products and services and Terps in technology.

Users can then search by category or name. They can also apply filters to find Alumni Association members, minority-owned businesses or members of the Alumni Association’s Coaches Corner program.

The directory is free for all students and alumni, although participants can upgrade their profiles for a yearly fee. Lifetime Alumni Association members receive a complimentary profile upgrade.

“I see this platform as an opportunity to reconnect to the school, reconnect to a community I loved being a part of, help other Terp alumni grow their businesses, and of course, to grow my own business,” says Lauren Leftonwitz ’98, a leadership coach. “I love the idea that this network can make us all feel local and connected in a world that’s gone virtual.”

—ALLISON EATOUGH ‘97
A Tail of Success

Alum's Popular “Cat Cafés” in D.C., Hollywood Draw Celebrities While Saving Kitties

With pink and white fluffy pillows for lounging, greenery-covered walls that serve as a perfect Instagram backdrop and more than two dozen kitties eager to chase a feathered toy or have a snuggle, Kanchan Singh’s Crumbs & Whiskers “cat cafés” offer a serotonin boost to human customers—and a chance for its feline inhabitants to find a fur-ever home.

“I’ve always wanted to work with animals and connect other people with animals, but I never knew how,” says Singh ’12 (right), who grew up in India with a pet peacock and dozens of bunnies. “Sometimes this feels too good to be true.”

It was a trip to an elephant sanctuary and a cat café in Thailand that spurred her to leave an unfulfilling corporate job and pursue her own venture. “On the flight back home, I didn’t even have a notebook, so I kept asking the air hostess for more napkins to map out my entire business plan,” she says.

What’s a cat café, you might ask? These cozy spots first started in Japan, where many people don’t own pets because of long work hours and apartment restrictions but want to interact with animals. The concept has since spread all over the world. Singh opened her Washington, D.C., café in 2014 and her Los Angeles location the following year.

Customers can book online or walk in for half to 70-minute time slots. While petting kittens and chatting with friends, they order drinks and pastries, which are delivered from local bakeries (to overcome regulatory hurdles on preparing food around animals). All the cats come from local animal rescue organizations, and customers interested in adopting one can fill out an application to get the process started. More than 1,800 cats have been adopted through Crumbs & Whiskers so far.

The café’s success has been buoyed by a steady stream of celebrities who visit, mostly in L.A. (though rocker Dave Grohl recently stopped by the D.C. location), increasing their visibility on social media and television. Recognizable faces include James Corden—a regular who has shot segments there for his late-night show—Nicole Kidman and Drew Barrymore, who adopted two cats. Countless reality stars have also used the cafés for a change of scenery for their glossy plotlines, from Netflix’s “Bling Empire” to Peacock’s “Paris in Love.” (Luckily, no catfights have broken out on the premises.)

Some cats want to be the star of the show; though, batting at microphones or jumping on top of cameras and distracting production crews from their work.

With a business model that depends on in-person clientele, Crumbs & Whiskers has had to pivot during COVID-19 lockdowns and had to shut down for more than a year. “The good thing is, during the pandemic, so many people were adopting cats that our partners were like, ‘Don’t worry! We don’t have cats to give you right now!’ That made things a little easier,” Singh says.

During her time off, she wrote a book of poetry and reflection called “Dear Me, I Love You” to help process the anxiety, depression and imposter syndrome that came hand-in-hand with the success of her business. Proceeds from the book, which came out in April, go back into the cafés.

The cafés’ success has been buttressed by a steady stream of celebrities who visit, mostly in L.A. (though rocker Dave Grohl recently stopped by the D.C. location), increasing their visibility on social media and television. Recognizable faces include James Corden—a regular who has shot segments there for his late-night show—Nicole Kidman and Drew Barrymore, who adopted two cats. Countless reality stars have also used the cafés for a change of scenery for their glossy plotlines, from Netflix’s “Bling Empire” to Peacock’s “Paris in Love.” (Luckily, no catfights have broken out on the premises.)

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Crumbs & Whiskers reopened last summer after vaccines became widely available, and Singh is excited to debut a Boston location next year. “We’re looking forward to getting more cats adopted, and maybe expand to New York and Chicago too,” she says.

Meet three of the cats recently available for adoption at Crumbs & Whiskers. Follow @crumbsandwhiskers on social media to get acquainted with the latest ones.

LULU
AGE: 3 months
LIKES: Charms big eyes and is & the way to mark an Instagram.

JULIUS
AGE: 3 months
LIKES: Using his big eyes and bat-like ears to track down string toys.

SUCKY
AGE: 2 months
LIKES: Snuggling in laps for comfy naps.

Purr-fect Companions
Meet three of the cats recently available for adoption at Crumbs & Whiskers. Follow @crumbsandwhiskers on social media to get acquainted with the latest ones.

LULU
AGE: 3 months
LIKES: Charm big eyes and bat-like ears to track down string toys.

JULIUS
AGE: 3 months
LIKES: Using his big eyes and bat-like ears to track down string toys.

SUCKY
AGE: 2 months
LIKES: Snuggling in laps for comfy naps.

Seven alumni were named to the 2022 Forbes 30 Under 30, a compilation of what the magazine calls 600 of the brightest young entrepreneurs, leaders and stars. JERON DAVIS ’18, a senior associate at R.J. Equity Partners (Finance); SAM DROZDOV ’18, co-founder of Blocltz (Marketing and Advertising); SRUJAN KUMAR M.S. ’16, PhD. ’17, assistant professor at Georgia Institute of Technology (Science); ANNDER MAYFIELD ’14, founder of To Be Hosted (Markets); OLIVIA OWENS ’14, creator of FundofMoms of Color (Social Impact); JORGE RICHARDSON ’67, founder of HDFE Hydration Marketing and Advertising; and ALI SALIM M.S. ’16, chief technology officer of Loop (Social Impact).

“We Own This City,” a miniseries based on a book by reporter JASON FENTON ’03, debuted on HBO on April 25. Created by “The Wire’s” DAVID SIMON ’83 and GEORGE PELCANS ’80, the six-part series chronicles the rise and fall of the Baltimore Police Department’s corruption-ridden Gun Trace Task Force.

KATHERINE CALVIN ’03 was named chief scientist and senior climate adviser at NASA. Previously, she was an Earth scientist at UMD and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory’s Joint Global Change Research Institute in College Park. Calvin holds master’s and doctoral degrees in management, science and engineering from Stanford University.

The university’s 80th class of comedian LARRY DAVID ‘70 was featured in HBO’s promotion of a new two-part documentary series, “The Larry David Story.” The creator of “Seinfeld” and “Curb Your Enthusiasm” has since put its release on hold, saying he wants to perform its highlights, on his life and career, live on stage.

“Don’t worry! We don’t have cats to give you right now!” That made things a little easier,” Singh says.
Brothers’ Truebill Pays Off, Truly

Entrepreneurial Terps Sell Financial Planning App for $1.275B

After selling their website-building company, Webs.com, to Vistaprint in 2015, brothers Haroon ’01, Zeki ’02, Yahya ’06 and Idrais ’10 Mokhtarzada turned their attention to solving what seemed to be a universal problem in the digital subscription age: How many people are paying for that they don’t even use or remember? In Haroon’s case, it turned out that he was still shelling out $40 a month for a security system at a house he no longer lived in.

Six years later, their Truebill financial management system, which offers subscription management, tracks spending and even helps with bill negotiations, had reached more than 2 million people and resulted in $1 million in savings. In December, the Silver Spring, Md., firm was acquired by Rocket Capital for $1.275 billion.

“It definitely exceeded all of our expectations in a major way, not just in how big it got, but how fast it got there,” says Haroon. The family connection to UMD began with their parents, Mohammad Younos Mokhtarzada ’70, M.A. ’74 and Ilhan and returning to Maryland after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

“In December, the Silver Spring, Md., firm was acquired by Rocket Capital for $1.275 billion,” says Haroon.

“Zeki and Haroon’s dorm room.”

Truebill was initially based in San Francisco. But in 2019, the family’s long-time and renowned East Coast ties—Idrais’ wife, Sara Rahnama ’06, joined the faculty at Morgan State—along with having some remote employees already in the D.C. area and obtaining economic development grants from Montgomery County prompted a shift of its center of operations. From a strategic standpoint, Idrais (at center below, with Haroon, left, and Yahya, right) says the move to Maryland was also an attempt to stave off the “brain drain” of local talented techies by providing a nearby, competitive experience for anyone who might otherwise go to Silicon Valley.

“There’s this untapped market in this area,” he says. “We get to be a shining star.”

For now, they plan to stay on and work with Truebill and Rocket. And from being angel investors in more than 100 startups, giving to charities and funding their own entrepreneurship program at UMD (see right), the Mokhtarzada brothers also want to make sure their success is defined by more than just high-profile acquisitions.

“Our parents really made sure that ethos was cemented in us. We were very fortunate to be leaving (Afghanistan),” Haroon says. “When you have that opportunity, it comes with a lot of responsibility.”—LF

Hatching the Future

The Mokhtarzada brothers are trying to make sure the next billion-dollar tech company also comes from UMD through their support of a new startup incubator on campus.

The Mokhtarzada Hatchery, located in the Brendan Iribe Center for Computer Science and Engineering, annually provides up to $400,000 in funding to startups with grants of up to $100,000, workspace, and mentoring and networking opportunities.

Creating Style to Augment Substance

Costume Designer Makes Stars Shine on Small and Big Screens

Whether she’s finding the lined leather jackets for the cast of an Oscar-winning movie or designing outfits for dancers celebrating decades of Black music, Marci Rodgers M.F.A. ’16 isn’t just dressing her characters. She’s telling a story.

“What’s magical to me is when you go from research to a rendering to a costume on screen,” says Rodgers. “When an actor puts on a costume and feels like their character, that’s priceless.”

Her latest projects include this fall’s “Till,” which focuses on Emmett Till’s mother’s pursuit of justice after her son’s lynching; a Super Bowl spot for Michelob Ultra featuring sports legends Serena Williams and Peyton Manning; and the Netflix film “Passing,” which follows the divergent paths of two Black women, one of whom “passes” as white, in 1950s New York.

Shot in monochrome, the movie posed an unusual challenge for Rodgers. But by focusing on texture, contrast and accessories, she developed stylish looks appropriate for upper-class women of the era while avoiding clichés like flapper dresses. Rodgers felt lucky that one of her mentors, School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS) Professor Helen Huang, had prepared her for that moment. “In my last semester at UMD, she gave me a project to render costumes in a grayscale. I wondered, ‘Why is she making me do this?’ But five years later, I used what I learned in this project,” Rodgers says.

Growing up with bold 1980s styles, Rodgers says. “I want to collaborate with great artists who push the envelope.”—KS

for fashion. But her father said he’d only pay for college if she studied business, so that’s what she did at Howard University. After she graduated, however, she found a new path to her passion: Howard Professor Reggie Ray let her assist him with costumes for several Broadway plays. One of those was “Holler If Ya Hear Me,” where she met famed director Spike Lee. He hired her as a production assistant on “Chi-Raq” in 2015 and eventually as a costume designer for the acclaimed film “BlackKklansman” and TV series “She’s Gotta Have It.”

Her early work overlapped with her time as a UMD student, and she still draws on TDPS lessons, such as how costumes interact with sets (“What color is the carpet? Or the inside of the car?”) and with lighting (“Will this texture show up?”). She always follows the advice of Professor Daniel Conway: “When you read a script, create a playlist. Ask the director: What music would this person listen to?”

She can’t always believe how quickly her career has taken off—“I look around and pinch myself”—but takes it as a sign that she should keep dreaming big.

“I love the audacity and creativity of Kanye West,” a fellow Chicago native, she says. “I want to collaborate with great artists who push the envelope.”
Clean Sheet
See How University Archives Restored a Rare Piece of Maryland’s Musical History

A man’s phone call to University Archives in 2017 about a mysterious discovery in his late mother’s piano bench turned out to be music to the staff’s ears.

Thomas Livingston had a hunch that the sheet music he’d found, entitled the “MAC Cadet Two-Step,” might have a UMD connection. Turns out he was right: The peppy tune, composed by 1899 Maryland Agricultural College grad and musical ensemble member Ira E. Whitehill (seated second from left), is Maryland’s oldest original published school song. The only other known copy resides in the Library of Congress.

Upon donation, the fragile find needed immediate attention. Enter conservator Bryan Draper, part of UMD Libraries’ preservation department, who set to work removing dirt with latex sponges and vinyl eraser crumbs, humidifying and flattening folded edges, and mending loose fragments with special Japanese tissue paper and starch paste.

The painstaking process will help keep the melody alive for many years to come.

—AK

Listen to the “MAC Cadet Two-Step” at terp.umd.edu.

As members of the Alumni Association, Terp alums and their families and friends can enjoy unforgettable experiences around the globe. With land, river and cruise programs available, the opportunities to explore the world are endless.

To learn more, visit ALUMNI.UMD.EDU/TRAVEL or call 301.405.0896.
WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SOLVE THE GRAND CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME, LIKE RACISM, CLIMATE CHANGE AND PANDEMICS? Bold, groundbreaking research. Arts exploration that fires our imagination and reveals our shared humanity. A welcoming of diverse perspectives and an open exchange of ideas. Matchless learning experiences that go far beyond a classroom. To all of this, the University of Maryland brings a shoulders-squared, chin-up grit and a fierce commitment to doing good.