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New York INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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NYIT MAGAZINE

SPRING
2017

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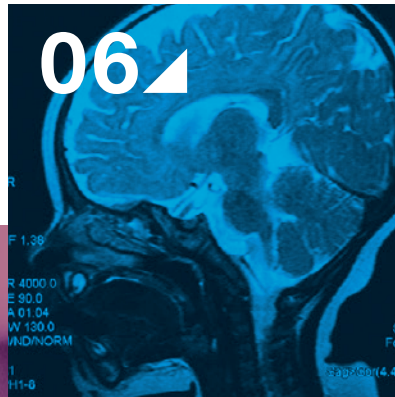
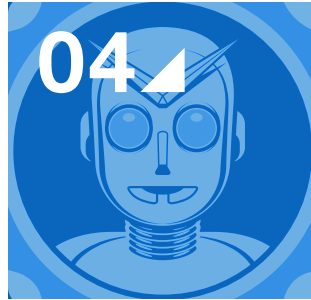
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Like what you see? Share your ideas, updates, and feedback at nyit.edu/alumni_notes and connect at [@NYITalumni](https://twitter.com/NYITalumni), facebook.com/mynyt, and nyit.edu/linkedin.



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Meet Henry C. “Hank” Foley: NYIT’s Fourth President

ON JUNE 1, Henry C. “Hank” Foley, Ph.D., will officially take the helm as NYIT’s fourth president. The announcement of his appointment was made on March 29 following a seven-month national search.

Foley comes to NYIT from University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) where he has served as interim chancellor since November 2015. He joined MU in 2013 as executive vice president for academic affairs and was responsible for growing the school’s academic and research expertise.

Foley, who holds 16 patents, has also served as a tenured professor of chemistry at MU and a professor of chemical and biochemical engineering at Missouri University of Science and Technology. Previously, he was vice president for research and dean of the graduate school at Penn State. He also has held faculty appointments at Penn State and the University of Delaware. Foley earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry at Providence College, a master’s degree in chemistry from Purdue University, and a doctorate in physical and inorganic chemistry from Penn State.

He recently shared insights with *NYIT Magazine* about his new role, his favorite patent, and his hidden talents.



Welcome to NYIT! What are you most looking forward to here?

Everything! Being in New York and working with faculty, staff, and students to make NYIT an even more well-known and respected institution of higher education.

What are your priorities?

I have a lot to learn. First priority: a period of attentive listening. Second: learning the details of the academic outcomes of all the degree programs. Third: studying in depth the finances and macro/micro economics of the whole enterprise. I plan to meet with as many people as possible and absorb as much information and data as I can. It is also very important to communicate with the campuses in Arkansas, Vancouver, Nanjing, and Abu Dhabi. All this will take time, but it is an incredibly important investment in our future and in improving our academic renown. We want to be the best at producing value for our graduates.

What surprised or impressed you about NYIT?

I love the European, polytechnic plan on which NYIT is based; it emphasizes useful higher education. Degrees in technological fields have

been such effective mechanisms for social mobility for over a century that it gives me great satisfaction to be at an “Institute of Technology.” I love the humanities and the fine arts very much, and I support education in these disciplines, but my first love as an educator is in science, engineering, technology, and business.

You hold 16 patents—which ones are your favorites?

Great question! One of my first was written with my first graduate student, Dr. Sourav Sengupta. We designed and built the first fast flow plasma reactor for downstream etching of materials, like silicon, with atomic hydrogen. It worked really well, and the patent has been cited more than 150 times. I’d love to pick up where we left off on this right now, but I can’t ... Maybe someday? Dr. Sengupta did the actual work. He was my very first Ph.D. student and research fellow, and has had a fantastic career as a scientist at DuPont. I take great pleasure in having mentored Ph.D. and M.S. students who hold chaired positions at top-flight universities around the country and at outstanding corporations. I am equally proud of the many undergraduates whom I have taught.



Alexander Berg

What do you value most about your college experience?

The most important aspect of my undergraduate experience was to learn how to teach myself. That awareness and adaptability is more crucial than ever for today's college students because professions and careers change rapidly, mostly due to technology. The ability to wield technology and adapt, while maintaining a profound sense of curiosity and thirst for new knowledge, is what I plan to cultivate in NYIT students.

If you hadn't gone into academia, what career would you have pursued?

If I had not been so moved by the Challenger disaster, I might have stayed in corporate life. I enjoyed industrial work very much, but after the space shuttle went down, I felt a strong and compelling pull toward teaching and research.

Can you tell us a little about your background?

I was born and raised in and around Providence, R.I. I met my spouse, Dr. Karin Foley, at Purdue while we were first-year graduate students. I have two beautiful adult daughters, and I am eminently proud of them.

What is the best piece of advice you've received?

Never attribute to malice that which may simply be a matter of ignorance, a lack of knowledge, or under-developed social skills. This has been so helpful to me.

Who do you consider your mentors?

Everyone.

Any hidden talents or other things readers may be surprised to learn about you?

While I have never had time to practice or to develop it, I'm sort of a natural on the clarinet and similar wind instruments. And when I had a sailboat, it was named Intensity. I love to be outdoors, and I hope to get back on my paddleboard here! ■



Learn more:
bit.ly/Foley-President

Buzzland

NYIT faculty members, alumni, and students are helping people explore and negotiate the human experience in new and better ways. Learn about recent projects and initiatives and read more at nyit.edu/box.

LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS

Three students took home first, second, and third place in NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine's Through the Lens initiative. For the first time, participants could submit photos in a double-themed category: Mentoring Moments and/or Reaching Beyond Boundaries. Priya Patel, a first-year osteopathic medical student, took first place for her photo "Up, Up and Away." See the full image on the back cover of this issue.

Priya Patel



bit.ly/Through-Lens-2017

bit.ly/LaGrandeur

SURVIVING THE RISE OF MACHINES

"The real threat to American jobs isn't foreign workers, it's robots and computers," writes Kevin LaGrandeur, Ph.D., professor at NYIT College of Arts and Sciences, in an op-ed published in *USA Today*. "Alleviating the worst effects of technological unemployment will require radically new approaches to economic policy," he says.

bit.ly/LaGrandeur



Roomi Staff

MAKE ROOMI! Entrepreneur and former NYIT engineering student Ajay Yadav has been selected as one of *Forbes* magazine's 30 Under 30 Class of 2017. Yadav is the founder and CEO of Roomi, an app that lets people find roommates and search for apartment listings. He launched the app in June 2015. One of his first users was a man from Norway; today, Roomi boasts approximately half a million users and has raised \$7 million to date.

bit.ly/Yadav-Forbes

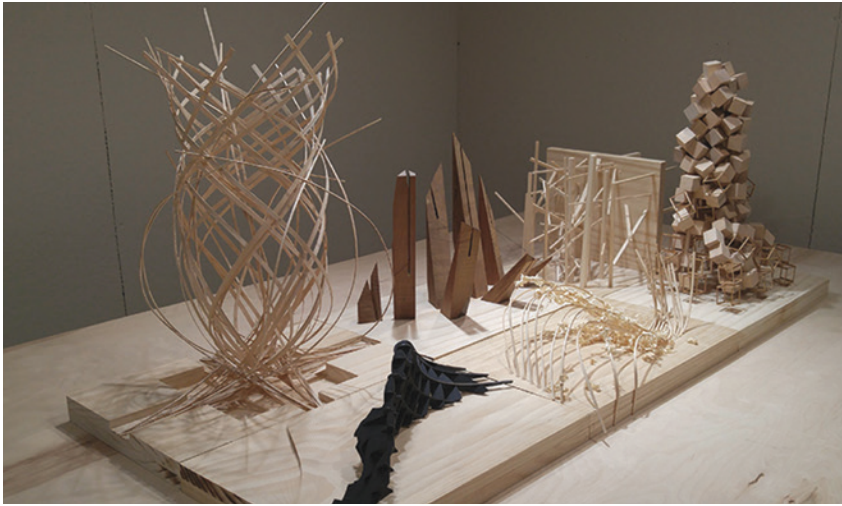
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

student Ariel Glickman won a coveted fieldwork slot to work with the Adaptive Design Association, a nonprofit organization that creates custom design solutions for children with special needs. The future occupational therapist has already fabricated a tilt-in space chair, adapted a tricycle seat, and has made further modifications to a wheelchair tray that the association adapted.

bit.ly/OT-Fieldwork



Tanya Couturier



REVEALING HIDDEN HERITAGE What lies behind the facades of iconic buildings like Grand Central Terminal and how do they relate to public spaces? That's what NYIT interior design students and post-graduate architecture students from the University of Lincoln in the United Kingdom aimed to find out as part of the exchange program Hidden Heritage. The experience was made possible with support from School of Architecture and Design Dean Maria R. Perbellini and the Friends of NYIT School of Architecture and Design.

 bit.ly/Hidden-Heritage

WAGE AGAINST THE GAP In a first-of-its-kind effort, NYIT School of Management launched a scholarship with the aim of raising awareness about the gender wage gap (the difference in average pay between men and women in the United States). The school, along with industry sponsors such as Bank of America, will fund the \$7,000 scholarship, which represents about 21 percent of NYIT's annual tuition—the same percentage as the nationally calculated earnings gap.

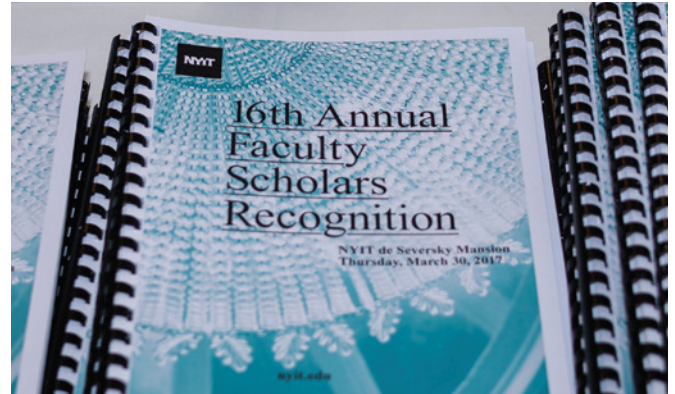


 bit.ly/Wage-Scholarship



FROM VANCOUVER TO THE BOILING RIVER In the foothills of the Andes runs a river so hot, you can poach an egg in it. Four energy management students from NYIT-Vancouver traveled to Pucallpa, Peru, on an Edward Guiliano Global Fellowship to investigate the Boiling River. The team examined the local ecosystems, including species that live there, and learned about its cultural and spiritual importance to indigenous communities.

 bit.ly/Boiling-River



RECOGNIZING FACULTY SCHOLARS From mice and methamphetamine to synthetic butterflies taking flight, faculty members were honored for their research and achievements at the 16th Annual Faculty Scholars Recognition reception in March. The event celebrated the work of more than 160 honorees, with a total of 713 entries.

 bit.ly/2017-Faculty-Scholars

Celebrity Athletes Go Head-to-Head With Concussions



Joe Namath spoke about the dangers of concussions at the Head Injury Awareness Sports Forum.

Steven Gaines

Did you know that only 10 percent of concussion patients experience a loss of consciousness? It is one of many misconceptions about the impact of concussions, a topic addressed by former professional athletes, faculty members, and NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) health care professionals from the Center for Sports Medicine at the Head Injury Awareness Sports Forum in March.

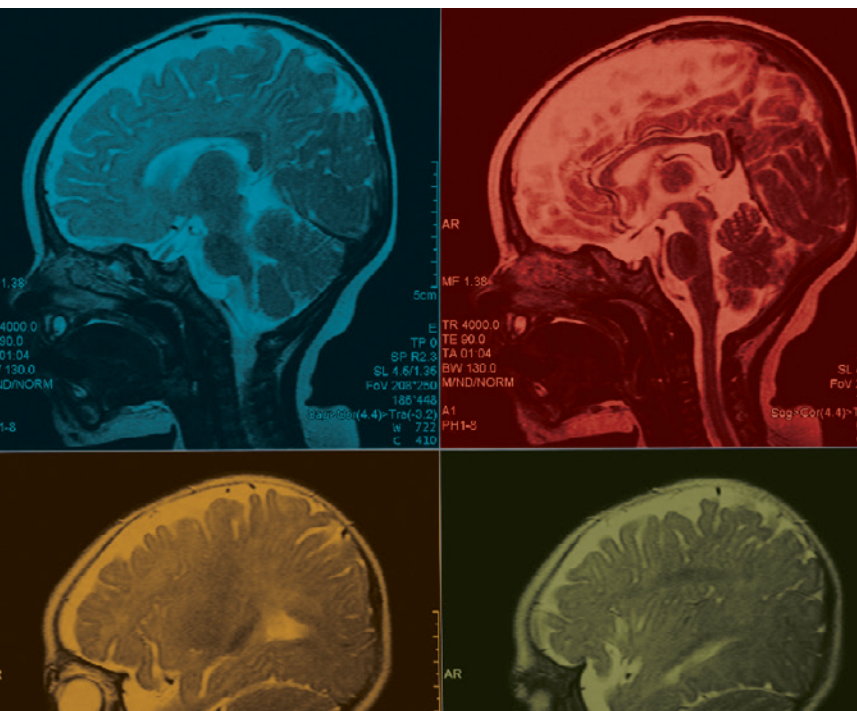
Speaking before a standing-room-only crowd at NYIT de Seversky Mansion, the presenters strongly encouraged parents, athletes, coaches, and students to be mindful of the dangers associated with concussions and to understand methods of prevention and treatment for these serious injuries.

The event, co-sponsored with the Head Injury Association, featured a keynote address by Barry Miskin, M.D., medical director of the Joe Namath Neurological Research Center, as well as a panel of eight retired athletes, including Joe Namath, former New York Jets quarterback; Curtis Martin, former New England Patriots and New York Jets running back; Bobby Nystrom, former New York Islander; and Ramon Dominguez, former professional jockey.

The panelists shared their firsthand experiences of dealing with concussions at a time when athletes were instructed to simply “shake it off” and remain on the field; they also said more action must be taken to educate athletes and coaches about the danger of concussions. Namath cited that he had suffered at least five concussions during his football career, while Martin noted that even as recently as 2006 (when he retired from the NFL), leaving the game for a concussion would be considered laughable. Dominguez, who was forced to retire from professional horse racing in 2013 due to a brain injury, recounted witnessing an incident at his child’s basketball game and urged parents to consider the risks of head injuries more seriously.

In addition to emphasizing the need to recognize signs and symptoms of concussions, the panelists spoke about options such as osteopathic manipulative treatment, which employs hands-on care to move muscles and joints via stretching, gentle pressure, and resistance, and hyperbaric oxygen treatment—all of which can enhance the body’s natural healing process.

HALLIE ZWIBEL (D.O. '11), assistant professor at NYITCOM and director of the Center for Sports Medicine, and Christina Finn, assistant professor at NYIT School of Health Professions, provided insight on the latest innovations in concussion management and reviewed the services offered at the Center for Sports Medicine, which treats amateur athletes and patients of all ages, as well as student-athletes from NYIT. ■



Learn more about how the center treats patients:
bit.ly/Center-Sports-Medicine

School of Health Professions Welcomes New Dean

Below: Sheldon Fields addresses the crowd at the Conversations in Transgender Health event.

IN JANUARY, Sheldon D. Fields, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, joined the university as the new dean of NYIT School of Health Professions. He brings more than 25 years of experience in nursing, research, higher education, and health policy analysis to NYIT, where he will oversee the school's five allied health degree programs. Fields also plans to focus on building research infrastructure, expanding the school's programs domestically as well as at NYIT's non-U.S. campuses, enhancing alumni relations and development activities, and recruiting and retaining a diverse base of faculty and staff members and students.

His efforts are already taking form. Fields launched a Dean's Speaker Series to explore key issues in health care. The first, Conversations in Transgender Health held in March, examined the difficulties people who are transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) experience when it comes to health care. NYIT students learned about transgender health policy and how, in their professional capacity, they can provide better care to TGNC patients. The event featured D'hana Perry, public health researcher, case manager, and video artist, and Asa Radix, M.D., director of research at the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center and assistant clinical professor of medicine at New York University.

"As a cutting-edge institution, preparing myriad students for roles as future health care providers, we must be in the business of bringing topics and high-quality speakers such as this to enrich the entire NYIT community," said Fields.

While most schools do not currently offer classes that specifically focus on transgender health, speaker events and learning sessions help prepare health professions students to treat all patients



Fields launched a Dean's Speaker Series to explore key issues in health care. The first examined the difficulties people who are transgender and gender nonconforming experience when it comes to health care.

and enhance their educational experience. "As our society continues to change and evolve, the issue of how to care for the transgender community seeking health care services is an important one for all health care students to have some understanding of," Fields added.

A native New Yorker and the youngest of six children, Fields' expertise lies in HIV/AIDS research and prevention. He is an advanced HIV/AIDS certified registered nurse and a nationally board-certified family nurse practitioner.

Prior to joining NYIT, he served as chief wellness officer, dean, and professor of the Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles, and assistant dean of clinical affairs and health policy, associate professor of nursing, and co-director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program in the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences at Florida International

University in Miami. He has also held faculty positions at the University of Rochester (N.Y.) School of Nursing and Binghamton University.

Outside the classroom, Fields was selected as the first-ever male registered nurse for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellowship program. In his spare time, he participates in extreme sports like the Tough Mudder.

"I look forward to joining the NYIT family and working with all of the faculty, staff, and students to continue to improve the global reach of the School of Health Professions," said Fields. ■



Read more about the event: bit.ly/Transgender-Healthcare

Steven Gaines

Student Spotlight: Destination Cuba



CHRISTA LOPEZ AND VASILIKI SGOURDOU (both graduate students majoring in communication arts) share the same motivations for traveling around the world: They wanted to listen to people's stories and relate those stories through photos and words. Applying for an Edward Guiliano Global Fellowship, which provides funds to students looking for experiential learning opportunities outside their communities, was the perfect opportunity for the budding journalists to test their talents.

When it came time to declare where they wanted to visit, Cuba was the place they had in mind. Because of the recent thaw in U.S.-Cuba relations, Lopez and Sgourdou felt the influx of Americans would soon transform the island's original identity and that this was the perfect time to visit.

Their goals were simple: to grasp the feelings of the Cuban people in photos and words, to get their side of the story, and to let them show what Cuba is really all about.

"I approached [the trip] mostly with the desire for Cuba to tell me about Cuba, for its people to tell me what it means to be Cuban," said Lopez, who took photographs of their journey.

But achieving that wasn't always easy. While the locals were very open and willing to talk, they would quickly divert questions if they felt Sgourdou and Lopez were digging too deep. "People were scared to talk out loud for fear of being imprisoned," said Sgourdou.

Still, the students—in true journalistic fashion—continued looking for stories. "We let ourselves sense the Cuban vibes; we stayed with locals and talked with them, and they opened their homes to us. We did a few touristy things, but we spent most of the time in their neighborhoods—the places where they eat and have fun," said Sgourdou.

They also followed unexpected leads that resulted in a better experience. In New York, Lopez met a woman on a bus whose sister lived in Havana, and they exchanged contact information. "Vasiliki and I spoke to the woman for months

before we went on our trip. When we arrived in Cuba, we connected with her," said Lopez. "She was amazing! She showed us places we would not have known about. She opened her heart and shared some painful memories and concerns for Cuba's future. Hearing her story touched me deeply."

The trip left a big impression on both women. "I do not want to forget the people we met or what they shared with me. Their voices have been silent outside of their country," said Lopez. "I don't think many people outside of Cuba know what it is like to live there. It was my deepest desire to give a voice to the people of Cuba, and especially to allow the parts of Cuba most tourists do not see be seen." ■



Learn more about the fellowship:
bit.ly/global-fellowship

Faculty Spotlight: Education and Technology

The highly ranked graduate education programs at NYIT School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Education

teach students to harness the latest modes of technology to serve in New York City P–12 schools, professional training, and e-learning environments. Meet a few of the faculty members whose research is transcending how technology is used in the classroom and teacher education and learn more online: nyit.edu/interdisciplinary.

The play's the thing for **Jim Martinez, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of instructional technology, who teaches graduate-level courses in the instructional technology program. Not only does he make extensive use of technology in his own teaching, but he also uses improvisational performance and play in his collaborations with teachers to create technology-rich learning environments. Martinez's research interests include K–8 STEM learning, service learning pedagogies, community research interventions, and Vygotskian approaches to human development and learning. He currently leads undergraduate service-learning initiatives in partnership with New York City Magnet Schools. nyit.edu/bio/jmarti23

Kate E. O'Hara, Ph.D., assistant professor for instructional technology, uses technology to empower users to become agents of social change—particularly in urban classrooms. She also looks at how teacher education can be contextualized in terms of power, oppression, and social justice. Her book, *Teacher Evaluation: The Charge and the Challenges*, “talks back” to the national rhetoric about teacher evaluation and accountability measures and offers potential solutions. O'Hara began her career as an English teacher in New York City public schools before moving on to positions with the U.S. Department of Education and the NYC United Federation of Teachers. nyit.edu/bio/kohara

When it comes to teacher education, Assistant Professor **Minaz Fazal, Ph.D.**, is all about assessment and blended learning. She has been collaborating with K–12 teachers and principals to develop and implement effective, data-guided blended learning practices, with a special emphasis on student agency. Her research interests also focus on evaluating blended and personalized learning practices using mixed-methods research, the role student agency plays in advancing learning, and how e-portfolios can help with assessing student learning. Her interests also include leveraging technology to train teachers in developing countries. nyit.edu/bio/mfazal

Melda N. Yildiz, Ed.D., associate professor and chair of instructional technology, travels the globe to research educational technology. Her first Fulbright in 2009 took her to Turkmenistan, where she used Turkmen literature to help teacher candidates develop global competencies and 21st-century skills. In fall 2016, she traveled to Azerbaijan for her second Fulbright, “Transforming Teacher Education Through Transdisciplinary Innovative Pedagogy: Participatory Action Research,” during which Yildiz investigated the role of new media and technology in the classroom. Yildiz also aims to advance traditional teaching methods. “I encourage students to learn how to learn,” she says. nyit.edu/bio/myildiz





The Hamiltons Are Not Throwing Away Their Shot

In summer 2016, NYIT sophomore and student-athlete Kieran Hamilton was driving home to Queens, N.Y., from his job at a basketball camp at Army West Point when he received a call from his father. Kevin Hamilton had just received an offer from NYIT to lead the men's Division II basketball team as head coach. Kieran was already on the team. "I'm your coach now!" his father said.

All Kieran could do was laugh. "Let's get to work," he responded.

The father-son duo had already been coach and player during Kieran's prep days at Holy Cross High School in Queens, N.Y., and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). Now they'd be taking up the roles again—this time on the college level.

"I asked my wife's permission first," says coach Hamilton. "And then I asked Kieran how he felt about it. Honestly, if it was something that he did not feel positive about, I wouldn't have done it."

But Kieran was on board. He remembered other successful father-son combinations in college basketball, including the recent Greg and Doug

McDermott pairing at Creighton University in Nebraska. (While playing for his father, Doug led the basketball team as a senior. The team ultimately reached the second round of the NCAA Tournament.)

"When my dad told me, I was in shock, but it was a good feeling," says Kieran, a political science major who aspires to play basketball in Europe and ultimately pursue a career in sports management. "My dad brings out the best in me."

In his first season with his father as coach, Kieran averaged 12.8 points per game. "I imagine that it is not easy for a player to have their dad as coach," says coach Hamilton. "Kieran is very mature



and knows how not to let that pressure affect his game. I'm certain Kieran does not agree with everything I do, but he shows his coach respect and works as



Women's Lacrosse Sticks It to Opponents

THE OPENER of the NYIT women's lacrosse season could not have been scripted better. The Bears, nationally ranked in Division II, won their inaugural game, 12-7, at Georgian Court University on February 25. Their start and their story were also prominently chronicled in the New York media. They appeared on the front page of *The New York Times'* sports section and have been featured in segments on ABC, CBS, and News 12 Long Island. (bit.ly/womens-lax-news)

Within 24 hours of Dowling College folding in the spring of 2016, NYIT committed to adding a women's lacrosse program. It swiftly hired Dowling coach Kerri Handras. Fourteen former Dowling student-athletes and two of Handras' recruits ultimately enrolled at NYIT to play women's lacrosse. The remainder of

the squad comprises NYIT soccer players who had experience playing lacrosse while in high school. In their win against Georgian Court, Alyssa Milano had six goals, Karie Znaniecki tallied three goals and three assists, Katie Meinecke had two goals and three assists, and Lauren Young had 13 saves.

"It was awesome," said Milano. "We were all really excited. We had a lot of high energy."

After winning on the road, the team went on to rally from a three-goal deficit to beat Merrimack, 6-5, in its first-ever home game at President's Stadium on the Old Westbury campus.

"Changing schools and now this comeback win, they just never give up," Handras said. "They believe in themselves and they believe in each other." ■

Photos: Adam Rubin and NYIT Athletics

hard as he can. I yell at him in practice like I do everyone else. He doesn't take it personally and often tries to help his teammates know me better when I yell at them. It's called coaching!"

Kieran agrees. "I played a year for NYIT before my father was hired, and I think that made my teammates more comfortable. It was something we all had to get used to in the fall."

This year, the Bears posted a modest 8-18 record, but that marked a five-game win improvement over the season before their new coach arrived. Now, the team's goal is to win the East Coast Conference (ECC) and reach the Division II NCAA Tournament. A talented class of signees should bolster the team's efforts. And they have more challenges and opportunities to prove themselves ahead: Next season's aggressive schedule includes multiple Division I opponents.

Kieran says the best part of playing for his father is that the elder Hamilton gets to share in his achievements. They

keep it a business relationship on the court, though.

"I call him, 'Coach,'" Kieran says. "I try to avoid the word 'Dad,' until after the season."

The two also still reflect on the process of coach Hamilton interviewing with NYIT last year.

"He did not know that I was having discussions with NYIT," coach Hamilton says. "When it got to the point of me deciding whether I wanted to do this, certainly he and my wife were two people I wanted to speak to. Kieran has played for me all his life at different levels. I think it's been a good experience, especially because I know how to separate being a coach and dad. It's worked out pretty well. I'm happy to be here." ■

Facing page: Coach Kevin Hamilton and his son, Kieran.

Above: NYIT's women's lacrosse team.

GOLF OUTING

Save the date for the 12th Annual NYIT Athletics Golf Outing: July 10, 2017, at the Woodside Club in Muttontown, N.Y. Join us to celebrate the 2016-2017 athletic year and induct notable athletes into the NYIT Athletic Hall of Fame. nyit.edu/alumni/golf17

NCAA BASKETBALL

Women's basketball returned to the NCAA tournament after a spirited run through the ECC playoffs. En route to the ECC title game, the Bears won at Roberts Wesleyan for the first time in school history, then snapped top-seeded Queens' 16-game winning streak in the semifinals.

Follow your favorite teams: nyit.edu/athletics

BY MICHAEL SCHIAVETTA (M.A. '07)

Dock and Roll:

A Mobile Solution for Digital Literacy

NYIT students are devising a unique architectural solution to improve digital literacy in Senegal.



In THE CITY OF THIÈS, an hour outside the capital of Senegal, sits a new community center constructed primarily of brick and concrete blocks. A local villager interacts with a wooden unit that perfectly fits within an open doorway of the center. The structure houses smartphones and tablet devices tethered to docking stations, which the woman and her neighbors use in order to access apps (such as those informing them of local weather, news, and health services) and explore the wider Internet. When the group is finished, the structure (mobile devices included) is removed from the doorway, affixed to a bicycle, and transported miles away to another community to spread more digital connectivity.

Members of NYIT School of Architecture and Design have a plan to make this scenario a reality: Meet AppDock, a technology-rich mobile interface that has the potential to raise digital literacy for underserved populations.

Proof of Concept

A 2015 Pew Research Center survey estimates that 83 percent of adults in Senegal own a smartphone or cell phone, yet the use of mobile apps and services remains low. NYIT Assistant Professor Farzana Gandhi says there are a number of reasons for this, including inadequate infrastructure and technology support. Nonprofits like Mobile Senegal (mobilesenegal.org), which help developers design apps for the Senegalese marketplace, want to change that. Two years ago, the organization reached out to Gandhi about designing an architectural solution to help spread the use of apps throughout Senegal and raise awareness of smartphone and tablet device usage.

Gandhi presented the problem to her Social Impact Design course students, who were immediately drawn to the idea. The group started by studying the construction

Traveling to Senegal helped the team understand AppDock's flexible design. "I could better see how its adaptability creates multiple opportunities to benefit communities—by providing access to online services such as apps targeted to their geographic region, and even charging ports for mobile devices," says student Carl Ricaurte.

(Left) The easily transportable AppDock is a modular unit that offers smartphone and tablet device accessibility to urban populations seeking to elevate their digital literacy.

(Right) In Old Westbury, students built a structure to test the AppDock's functionality. The unit fits inside doorways and windows. It can also be affixed to a bicycle—mobile devices included—and transported to other communities.



methodologies and culture of Dakar. By learning about the area, students gained a better understanding of issues of climate and durability, as well as what kind of design interface would appeal to Senegalese communities. Their immediate thought was that, along with designing a building with classrooms and community spaces, the solution needed to be mobile. “If you’re trying to target a more rural public, like the regions around Dakar, you can improve your reach tenfold if you create something that can be transported back and forth between communities,” says Gandhi, who also serves as chair of the Department of Architecture at NYIT. One simply attaches the AppDock unit to a motor vehicle or bicycle. Then, it’s ready to travel and be inserted into open doorways and ground-level windows.

“I was attracted to the AppDock project because of its practical application,” says student Daniel Hoernes, one of the first NYIT architecture students to join the project. “It allows me to further understand the relationships that connect builders, designers, architects, and engineers.” Initial designs and a prototype of AppDock, led by Hoernes, were completed in summer 2016, but the students still needed to determine how users would interact with the unit. To keep it mobile, they decided not to create something self-supporting, but rather to integrate it into existing structures—such as a doorway or window.

Gandhi and her students constructed a proof of concept on the Old Westbury campus to test how the AppDock unit would work. In fall 2016, nearly a dozen architecture students worked with bricklayers from the International Masonry Institute (IMI) to build a partial replica of a building that would incorporate the AppDock design (see p. 13).

For Gandhi’s students, the Old Westbury construction was an education in itself. “Lots of architecture students can study masonry, but you don’t fully understand it unless you’re actually building,” says NYIT student Matthew Acer.

Dakar We Go

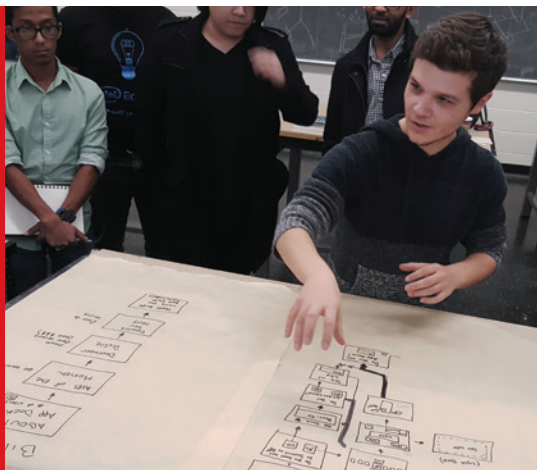
In January 2017, the AppDock team was ready for their next big move. Equipped with designs, drawings, and renderings, they traveled to Dakar to visit potential installation sites, connect with local architects and government officials to inquire about building permit approvals and local codes, and solicit feedback from communities.

Traveling to Senegal helped the team understand AppDock’s flexible design. “I could better see how its adaptability creates multiple opportunities to benefit communities—by providing access to online services such as apps targeted to their geographic region, and even charging ports for mobile devices,” says student Carl Ricaurte.

The group worked with members of the community and eventually found a site to build a new 2500 square foot technology education center complete with AppDock units—on the grounds of an existing public school in Thiès (population: 320,000).

Below: Architecture students begin to design the AppDock project (left) and meet with officials on location in Senegal (right).

Facing page: The schoolyard in Thiès where the technology education center and AppDock units will be installed.



The visit also revealed a crucial need: better infrastructure. With a site acquired, the team headed back to New York to begin developing the design of the building for the school, which will include solar panels to power the tablets and mobile phones. This will enable students and teachers to make the most effective use of technology.

“The computer classrooms in these areas are often left collecting dust and not well maintained,” says Gandhi. “We’re using this as an opportunity to update to the next wave of technology.” She estimates the cost of construction to reach about \$100,000 and plans to launch an online fundraising campaign later this year.

What’s Next

While in Senegal, the team held community forums to get feedback on the AppDock, including a formal presentation at the West African Research Center in Dakar. Among the issues discussed were how to protect against vandalism and theft, maintenance issues, durability of materials, and appropriate locations with the necessary technology (such as wifi) to install the AppDock unit. Later this year, the team plans to hold similar feedback sessions with residents of Le Petit Sénégal (“Little Senegal”), a central area for many West African immigrants in New York City. Gandhi hopes this will provide recommendations for further refinements to the final design. “We’d also like to pair those meetings in Little Senegal with our online fundraising push,” says Gandhi, who hopes to get private donors involved.

The team has remained in contact with the public school in Thiès. Recently, they submitted a master plan of their proposed educational technology center and received approval for building in this location. The team is also looking for ways to expand the project. “AppDock can be implemented in any location, not just in Africa,” says Gandhi. “There is an intelligence built into the design that makes it very modular and useful for a variety of places.”

They are also thinking of rebranding the unit so the name greater emphasizes its flexibility. The unit can be used for many purposes, such as this first test case of improving digital literacy as well as for outreach, to advance causes, and to house workshop materials. “We discovered people thought the name AppDock implied an actual app or some piece of technology rather than a physical structure,” says Acer.

Nearly two dozen NYIT students have contributed to the project over the past two years. Mingyang Yu appreciates how his collaborations with classmates will help influence how people congregate in a centralized location while connecting them to a digitally fueled knowledge-based society. “AppDock provides local communities a multifunctional building that not only teaches them technology, but also brings people together,” he says.

“There are already many ways for groups of people to learn,” adds student Heather Andersen. “With AppDock, we created another.” ■

“There is an intelligence built into the design that makes it very modular and useful for a variety of places.”
says Farzana Gandhi



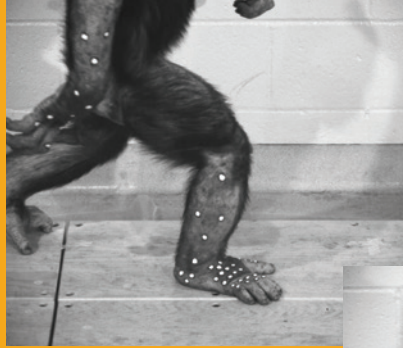
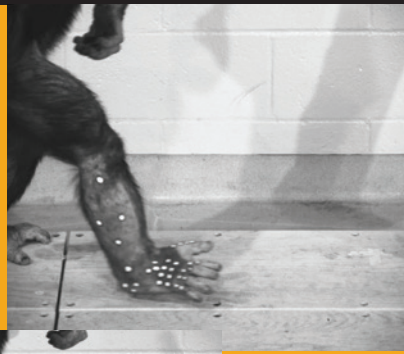
Learn more about the project:
bit.ly/AppDock-for-Africa



FEATURE

BY RENEE G. LEVY

Walk, Think, “Like,” Evolve:



Research With a Human Side

(This page, facing)
Nathan Thompson
spent six years
collecting data from
three chimpanzees
at Stony Brook
University.

**NYIT's exceptional
faculty is at the
forefront of scholarship
and discovery. Four
professors share their
current research.**

NATHAN THOMPSON, PH.D. The Evolution of Walking

AN ANATOMY CLASS is studying the structure of the human foot and the mechanics of how it works.

NATHAN THOMPSON, PH.D., assistant professor of anatomy at NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM), asks the medical students to look at their own feet, pointing to the abductor hallucis muscle. “Now everyone, use your abductor to open your big toe.”

The students look at him blankly. “It happens every time,” says Thompson with a chuckle. In a chimpanzee foot, he tells them, the muscle is part of what gives apes the ability to climb so well. “[Humans] no longer have a grasping big toe because, presumably, we no longer need it,” he says. “The muscle is probably just a retention from when it was actually useful.”

Thompson is attempting to answer evolutionary questions about why and when humans began walking on two feet. As a doctoral student at Stony Brook University, he spent six years collecting movement data from three chimpanzees, which he uses to compare against human movement. “Working with chimps was an incredibly unique experience,” says Thompson, who came to the project with undergraduate degrees in structural engineering and anthropology. “We’ve created a digital model of walking and validated it with real movement data from chimpanzees. Now we can look at how bones and ligaments and muscles move.”

Very early fossil humans look similar to chimps in many ways, so the data he collected helps determine the biomechanics of how our early ancestors walked, as well as how humans evolved to walk on two legs.

While modern chimpanzees occasionally walk upright, their skeletons are not adapted for regular walking on two legs. While it was once believed their rigid torso was partly to blame for lack of upright mobility, Thompson found that chimps swing their pelvis more.

“Only when our early ancestors were able to reduce this hip rotation were their upper bodies able to play a role in promoting efficient bipedal walking,” says Thompson. That research, published in *Nature Communications* in 2015, changed the evolutionary view of how early human ancestors walked.

While the torso research was the subject of Thompson’s doctoral dissertation, he says the data collected will fuel research for him and his colleagues well into the future. His new study, recently published in the *Journal of Human Evolution*, challenges the long-accepted notion that the human foot evolved to be a rigid lever during two-legged walking. Chimpanzees and other primates have very flexible feet and big toes that are like thumbs. Scientists have thought of human feet as rigid—good for forcefully pushing off the ground while walking. But Thompson says that the bones in human feet actually move a lot, even more than in chimpanzees, and provide a springlike motion. “Everyone studying fossils has focused on whether the foot was rigid or mobile, but it’s actually about discovering when the springlike motions in the foot were present,” he says. That

“[Humans] no longer have a grasping big toe because, presumably, we no longer need it,” he says. “The muscle is probably just a retention from when it was actually useful.”

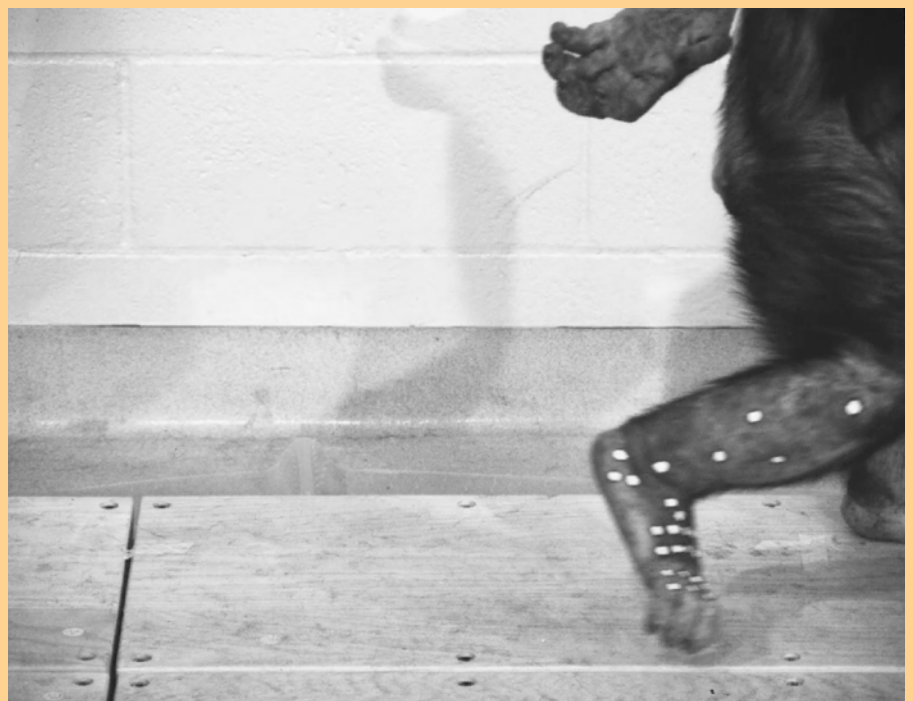
research will lead to more answers about our origins.

And Thompson is not done. Last summer, he traveled to Uganda and Rwanda to collect movement data on gorillas in the wild, using the same motion-tracking technology he’s employed in the lab in the field. This time he’s looking at knuckle walking, a form of locomotion currently used almost exclusively by chimpanzees and gorillas, but also potentially by the earliest human ancestors.

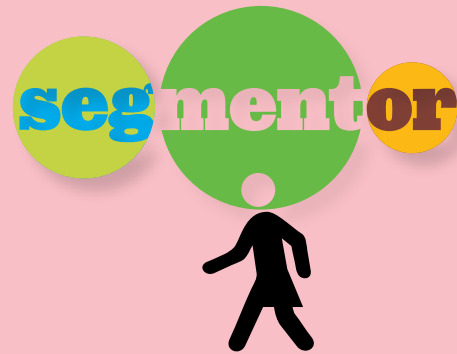
(continued next page)



See a chimpanzee in motion and read more: bit.ly/Nathan-Thompson



Photos: Courtesy of Nathan Thompson and Navin Pokala



DEBORAH COHN (M.B.A. '89), PH.D., AND JOSHUA BIENSTOCK, J.D. Workplace “Friends”

OVER THE PAST DECADE, social media has become an integral part of the way people interact with friends and family in daily life. The decision to extend that interaction to co-workers—and the resulting conflict that may occur—is the subject of new research by NYIT School of Management professors **DEBORAH Y. COHN (M.B.A. '89), PH.D.**, and **JOSHUA BIENSTOCK, J.D.**

Cohn, associate professor of marketing, and Bienstock, assistant professor of human resource management, are studying social media in the workplace across five countries through \$100,000 in grant funding from the Albert and Pearl Ginsberg Foundation and the Mallah Family Foundation.

The first phase of the project, which they presented at the Athens Institute for Education and Research in July 2016, focused on employees of small- and medium-sized businesses in the New York City area. Cohn and Bienstock found that some people, known as “integrators,” enjoy sharing across the personal/professional divide. Others, called “segmentors,” strive to keep their work and personal social media strictly separate. They might connect with friends and family on Facebook and

Instagram, for example, and with co-workers and professional colleagues on LinkedIn. Their careful balance can be disturbed if, for example, a marketing manager asks employees to share a new offering via their personal social media.

Even with a distinct strategy, those who tried to keep their personal and professional lives separated on social media often had difficulty. “They might have one or two close friends at work they were friends with on Facebook and may be connected with their brother-in-law on LinkedIn. The lines become blurred,” says Cohn.

Regardless of the choices individuals make, Cohn and Bienstock say the universal goal among most people is to maintain harmony in the workplace. “We heard far fewer stories about conflict arising from social media than we anticipated,” says Bienstock. “Politics was the one subject that resulted in relationships being terminated in social media.”

Over the next four years, the duo will replicate their study in Israel as well as in countries where NYIT has campuses—the United Arab Emirates, China, and Canada. They’ll look to see if cultural norms play a role in workplace social media usage.

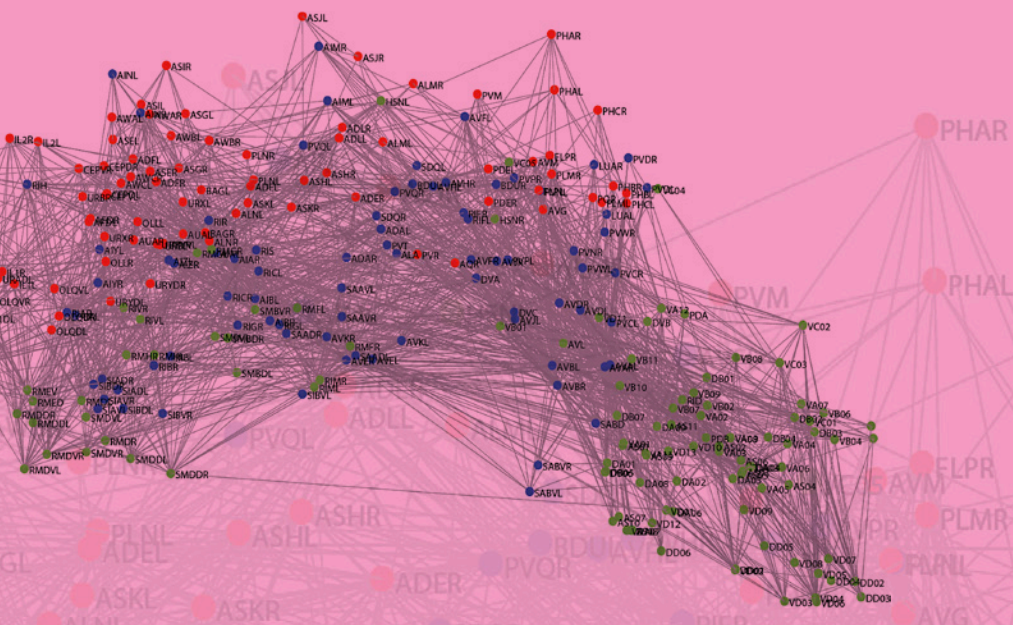
Cohn and Bienstock plan to use Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory, which facilitates intercultural comparisons by scoring national cultures on six dimensions, in their new research. While they expect to find differences based on culture, they are interested in identifying similarities. “There could be a generational divide,” says Bienstock. “Younger college-educated users may share more in common in different countries. We’ll see.”

Ultimately, their findings have the potential to help professionals make better decisions about social media use and to help businesses develop strategies to avoid friction and conflict, particularly when asking employees to use social media on their behalf.

As for Cohn’s personal choice, she leans more toward “segmentor” than “integrator.” “My Twitter account is personal,” she says. “I don’t really want to use it for professional reasons.”



Read more:
bit.ly/Cohn-Bienstock



works pretty well, and we'd like to see if we can replicate that experimentally. It's a mathematical prediction, so essentially, we want to see whether the math works in the real world."

Roundworms exhibit behaviors ranging from simple reflexes to searching for food when hungry to learning to avoid foods that previously made them ill. They also exhibit social behavior. "We would like to understand how the networks of neurons in the brain produce behaviors and emotions and how to best intervene when those networks produce undesired behaviors and emotions that may result because of mental illnesses," he says.

Ultimately, experimental methods and computational algorithms developed with the help of the humble *C. elegans* can eventually be applied to more complex nervous systems, like mice and, eventually, human patients suffering from psychiatric illnesses.

"Psychiatric illnesses cause damage by disrupting neural circuits," explains Pokala. "We hope to better understand and predict how neural circuits generate behaviors."

In fall 2017, Pokala plans to invite undergraduates into the genetics lab to undertake roundworm research on a project related to autism. "It's a good opportunity for this group of undergraduates because most of them are interested in medical applications," he says. ■

NAVIN POKALA, PH.D.
An Elegans Mind: Decoding Mental Illness

THE SHEER COMPLEXITY of the human brain makes understanding its function a formidable challenge. Scientists trying to understand brain function—and dysfunction—often look to simpler organisms for clues.

Biologist **NAVIN POKALA, PH.D.**, assistant professor of life sciences in NYIT College of Arts and Sciences, is studying the brain behavior of the microscopic nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* (*C. elegans*), more commonly known as the roundworm, with the hope of gaining insight into human mental illness and autism.

While the human brain has 86 billion neurons with trillions of unmapped connections, the roundworm has only 302 neurons and a completely mapped neural wiring of 6,000 connections. Despite the disparity in the complexity of the human and roundworm brains, Pokala believes architectural patterns of how the nervous system works might be similar, leading to human implications for his research.

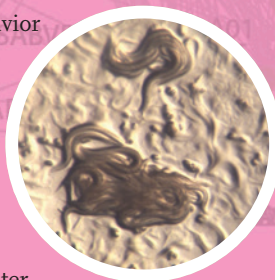
Pokala says the roundworm brain is the closest biological analogue to an

electronic circuit board. Engineers design and study circuits using breadboards that allow circuit elements to be added, removed, or modified. This method can be implemented in biology to understand how neural circuits in the brain work and allow scientists to manipulate the activity of neurons.

Pokala along with colleagues at Caltech have created tools that manipulate the activity of specific roundworm neurons, which he described in *Nature Methods* in December. Using either light-activated ion channels or histamine as a chemical tool, Pokala is able to activate or silence individual neurons

depending on the behavior desired, essentially reverse-engineering the nervous system.

The plan is to use these tools to test experiments conducted with computer-simulated neural networks in the real world. "Right now, I can introduce various defects into a simulated nervous system and have a model for predicting the behavior affected by those defects," says Pokala. "That model



Above and background: A visualization showing the neural wiring and connections of a roundworm.

Inset: The humble roundworm, *Caenorhabditis elegans*.



Read more: bit.ly/Navin-Pokala

In NYIT's Rock Steady Boxing program, people with Parkinson's disease are fighting their symptoms and embracing a new community.

Boxing

in the Fight

to

Knock Out

Parkinson's

Above: Boxer Paul Shelden works out with a volunteer instructor.

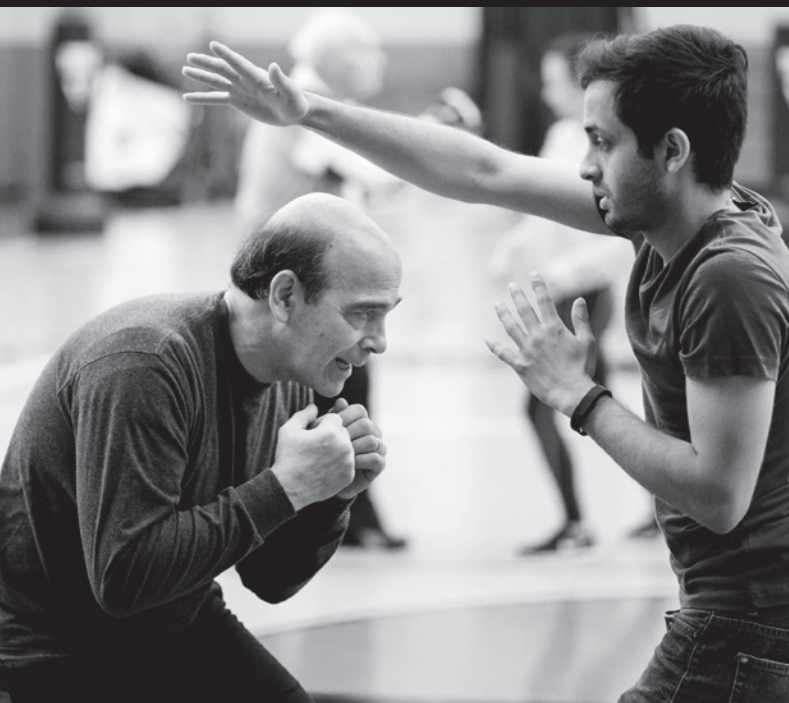
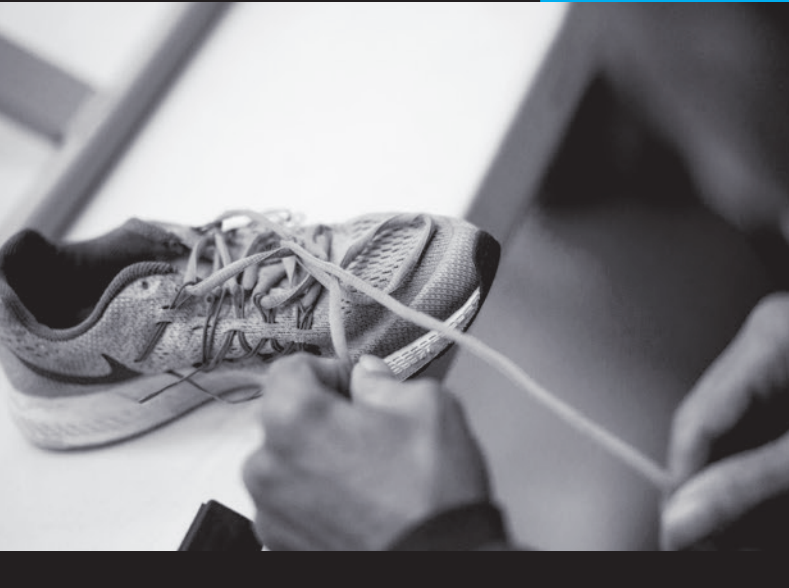
Facing (top to bottom): Adena Leder started the program at NYIT.

Boxers do exercises, like tying shoes, to help with their symptoms.

Kirtan Patel (right) with Marc Burns (left), who has Parkinson's and is also a volunteer instructor.



BY ANDREA CHAPIN



JACOB MUNN (B.S. '72) is taking a water break during a Wednesday morning boxing class, one of the several Rock Steady Boxing classes he takes weekly at NYIT-Old Westbury. “It’s pretty rigorous,” says Munn, “I come away sweating.” Munn, who received his degree at NYIT in architectural technology, was diagnosed almost a year ago with Parkinson’s disease. His doctor referred him to **Adena Leder (D.O. '99)**, a neurologist, movement disorders specialist, and assistant professor at NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM). Through Leder, Munn discovered boxing and immediately got hooked. Now he tries to go to class twice a week and wants to increase to three times a week.



Watch Rock Steady Boxing in action: bit.ly/movement-NYIT

Approximately 1 million people in the United States have Parkinson’s disease, and 60,000 are diagnosed with the neurodegenerative brain disorder each year, according to the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation. There is no cure, and patients typically take medication to help control symptoms.

Studies show that exercise can help people with Parkinson’s manage symptoms and possibly even slow the progression of the disease. Rock Steady Boxing is putting the studies to the test. The program (rocksteadyboxing.org) has been up and running in gyms around the nation for the past 10 years. And the NYIT affiliate, Leder explains, offers additional benefits, including its natural synergy with NYIT’s Adele Smithers Parkinson’s Disease Treatment Center and W. Kenneth Riland Academic Health Care Center. Hundreds of patients come to NYIT to see a variety of specialists, including physical and occupational therapists, osteopathic physicians, and a speech therapist. Rock Steady now gives them another form of treatment—and fun.

On this Wednesday morning, the gymnasium at NYIT-Old Westbury is a hive of activity with an almost one-to-one ratio of boxers to volunteers, many of whom are students at NYITCOM or NYIT School of Health Professions. Warm-up has begun, and the boxers stand in a semicircle. “I want to see everyone moving. If you don’t have a ball, find one,” instructs Leder.

After kicking balls around, the boxers separate into pairs to work on counterpunching: one boxer practices the one-two punch while the other practices ducking, then they switch (see image left). The volunteers guide and coach the pairs on motion and timing. Then they break into groups to start circuit training—going from station to station with activities that would be challenging for anyone starting an exercise program, including stepping over squares of ropes on the floor while grabbing horizontal ropes in their hands or practicing jabs, stepping on one foot and then the other to tap a rubber tire, and donning boxing gloves to jab at punching bags. Participants also work on fine motor skills and cognitive drills, such as lacing and unlacing shoes and buttoning and unbuttoning shirts while being quizzed on vocabulary.

The room is a combination of serious concentration and friendly banter. At the boxing station, volunteers shout, “Duck,

Right: Jacob Munn (right) takes on the ropes with Leder and Patel.

Facing (top): Boxer Mindi Ageloff-Guendel works out with Burns.

Below (this page, facing): Boxers start each class warming up with volunteers and instructors in a circle. Later, they move between stations, doing various activities such as core strengthening and circuit-training exercises.



cross, cross, jab.” There is joking and smiling between the student volunteers and the boxers. “Okay, next station,” says Leder, and the groups each move on to the next activity.

Leder heard about the program from a patient at NYIT’s Parkinson’s Disease Treatment Center. In 2016, she and three faculty members at NYITCOM’s Academic Health Care Center—occupational therapist Ling Wan-Albert and physical therapists Kyle Corbett and Shari Gessner—went to the Rock Steady Boxing Indianapolis headquarters to train. “We brought the skills back to NYITCOM and looked for a space,” says Leder.

Classes began in early October 2016 and have been growing ever since. There are now four a week—at \$20 a class—with 75 registered boxers. The numbers are impressive, considering they haven’t even advertised. “Most participants hear about the program through NYIT’s Adele Smithers Parkinson’s Disease Treatment Center or through a relative or friend,” says Leder. The program offers boxers the added benefit of working with health professionals with different specialties. “We are passionate about helping people with Parkinson’s disease and have years of experience working with this population,” says Wan-Albert. “We are not just one more boxing gym on the street.”

Corbett, who works at the center full-time and runs the Friday boxing class, has become a firm believer in the program. “When we started the training course in Indianapolis, the two directors said that their boxers were in better shape than the room that was full of trainers and physical and occupational therapists. We went through the rigorous course ourselves.”

As with any exercise program, the beginning wasn’t easy. “We’re trying to develop neuroplasticity through vigorous exercise,” he explains. “At first it was a challenge for many of the boxers to get off the ground and to be physically independent,

“At first it was a challenge for many of the boxers to get off the ground and to be physically independent, but now after months of the boxing classes, they yell at me if I try to help them up.”
—Kyle Corbett



but now after months of the boxing classes, they yell at me if I try to help them up.” But Corbett also sees how the boxing classes have become more than the exercise. “They help each other develop and push each other to their limits.” He describes how one boxer was having a difficult time standing up by herself. The team helped her focus on core strength building, motor planning, and strategizing which limb to move first and where to place it on the ground. “About four weeks ago, she did it,” says Corbett. “She got up off the ground by herself.”

Wan-Albert, who leads the Monday boxing class, says many boxers have said to her that they feel empowered by the class. “They really enjoy the group format because when you are working out with people who have similar challenges, you see that you are not alone. This fall, after I taught the class I’d walk back to the Parkinson’s center and see a group of my female boxers having their lunch together at a picnic table by the lake on campus. And I’ve heard the guys have formed a lunch group as well. I didn’t expect that. In the training, I was focused on the moves, the conditioning, and the technique, but I never thought of the social aspect—that’s the greatest surprise.”



The friendships that have resulted from Rock Steady classes is a common denominator that the boxers, instructors, and student volunteers all remark on. “The activity in class helps slow down the disease, keep the muscles going and flexible, and we also do a little cognitive work,” says boxer Munn, “but the best thing about the boxing is the camaraderie that I come away with—meeting people with similar problems and issues. During the session, we are able to talk and push each other and help each other out. We have coffee on Friday after class.”

The experience is also benefiting the NYIT students who volunteer at the classes: “For an osteopathic doctor, who uses a ‘whole-body’ approach to medicine, this couldn’t be a more perfect fit,” says Leder. “The program takes students out of the classroom and shows them how to offer treatment that does not involve medications or surgery.”

For Ummul Asfeen, a first-year student at NYITCOM who started volunteering at the Rock Steady Boxing classes in February, the hands-on involvement with the patients is important. “I go to classes. I read textbooks, but this is real experience.” Asfeen studied medicine in India and was accepted into the NYITCOM Émigré Physicians program, where highly trained doctors from other countries retrain as doctors of osteopathic medicine. The Rock Steady Boxing program, she says, works with the D.O.’s holistic approach to treat the whole human and not just the condition. “We are keeping the patients physically active as well as mentally and providing them with a social life, a community.” says Asfeen, who also has a relative who was diagnosed with Parkinson’s. “I find the program to be personally rewarding,” she adds.

Kirtan Patel (B.S. '16), who received his undergraduate degree at NYIT in biology with a health science minor and is currently a first-year student at NYITCOM, initially thought of volunteering as a way to become involved in campus activities, but now he feels the experience has evolved. “The group has become like family to me. We have a special relationship. The boxers ask me how I’m doing, if I’m keeping up with my courses. I didn’t know I would come in and gain a family.”

As the only Rock Steady Boxing affiliate on Long Island, and as the word gets out, the demand for classes is growing. One of Leder’s biggest goals was just realized—the group moved to a permanent space in NYIT de Seversky Mansion this spring. The new space means the instructors no longer need to bring equipment in and out for every class. It’s also further proof of the program’s success.

Back in the gym, boxer Munn says he tries to keep abreast of the treatment and medications and works out several times a week, but for him, “Rock Steady is the big thing right now, and I’ll keep doing it as long as I can.” ■



Learn more about the Adele Smithers
Parkinson’s Disease Treatment Center
bit.ly/Parkinsons-Treatment

On May 21, we welcome NYIT's newest graduates to the Alumni Federation. The class of 2017 joins our global community of 100,000 alumni. Networking with your fellow alumni is one of the best ways to grow and enhance your career at any stage. And reaching back to your alma mater to source talent for your company or organization completes the circle of being a graduate of NYIT.

There are several ways you can connect with alumni in your field:

- Follow our community on LinkedIn (nyit.edu/linkedin).
- Register with the alumni website (nyit.edu/alumni) and engage with fellow classmates through the online alumni directory.
- Attend an upcoming alumni event.

Find more ways to get involved: nyit.edu/alumni

ALUMNI

Alumni Notes

1960s

"I graduated in 1966 with the love of my life, my wife of 50 years, Anita," says **ED GENTILE (B.F.A. '66)**. "I owe NYIT for my good education and a great life. Thank you, NYIT."

1970s

JEROME L. EBEN (B.S. '71) is principal at Jerome Leslie Eben Architect in West Orange, N.J. In his home community, he has advocated for the rehabilitation and preservation of prominent historic structures. He was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects and represented the institute before a congressional subcommittee in 2008. "NYIT provided me with the foundation I needed to become an architect, which is what I wanted to be from the time I was in the seventh grade," Eben says.

CHESTER SCHNEPF (B.F.A. '72) was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from Hofstra University. He is currently chair of the Humanities Department at Gateway Community College in New Haven, Conn., where he teaches literature and philosophy.



Martin Gibson

After living 30 years in the Arizona desert southwest, **MARTIN GIBSON (B.S. '77)** (pictured) wrote *Phoenix's Ahwatukee-Foothills* for Arcadia Publishing as part of its Images of America series. "The book documents the history of the area south of Sky Harbor Airport, from pioneer families of the early 20th century to today's vibrant village of 87,000 people," he writes. Gibson is authoring a second local-history book that will be published this fall.

DUKE R. KHADAN-SAWH (B.S. '77) is a retired U.S. Army veteran who worked on nuclear, anti-terrorism, and counterterrorism programs. He also oversaw logistical and operational projects in southwest Asia and served as senior operations officer at the Communications-Electronics Command in the U.S. Department of Defense. "My NYIT experiences enhanced my ability to comprehend complex and in-depth issues to the pleasure of my superiors. My military promotions were accelerated beyond my peers."

JUNE CARTER (B.F.A. '78) moved from Nassau County, Long Island, to Nassau County, Florida. She is the founder of GYST (Get Your Stuff Together) Solutions, which helps clients with interior design, professional organizing, home staging, sales training, and time management. After earning her degree, she worked in facilities planning for multinational companies and in sales for major furniture manufacturers before starting her own businesses, Corporate Interior Solutions and GYST

ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT

Solutions. Attending NYIT was a no brainer. “My mother, **JUNE MACMILLAN CONBOY (M.P.S. '82)**, and brother, **CHRISTOPHER CONBOY (B.S. '92)**, got their degrees from NYIT. It’s in the family.”

MARTIN GORSKI (B.S. '78) is head of sales in the West region of the United States at GF Machining Solutions LLC, based in Orange County, Calif. He is responsible for enhancing the sales, service, and support for their milling, additive, laser texturing, and automation and tooling systems across various industries.

1980s

RENEE O'BRIEN (M.A. '82) is professor of photography at SUNY Adirondack in Queensbury, N.Y., and an adjunct instructor/mentor for SUNY Empire State College. Her pinhole photography is on display at the National Media Museum in Bradford, United Kingdom. The exhibition *Poetics of Light: Pinhole Photography* is on display through June 25. Her book, *The Post-Romantic Vision of Contemporary Pinhole Photographers*, is featured in the pinhole photography collection at the New Mexico History Museum. “My NYIT television production classes with Tony Piazza were the best!” she says. “Today, I work with students making still and moving images, and Tony’s core teaching remains alive and well in a new frontier of digital technology.”

JAMES GRAY (D.O. '83) joined Community Memorial Hospital’s Family Health Center in Auburn, Ind. The primary care physician is board-certified by the American College of Osteopathic Family Practice, as well as a member of the American Osteopathic Association and the Ohio Osteopathic

Gabriela Rodriguez

(B.S. '13)

GABRIELA RODRIGUEZ is one of only three employees in the press office in the Mexican Consulate in New York City. Now, as immigrants and undocumented workers face an unclear future, her role has taken on new responsibilities. “We have always helped the local Mexican community with information and documentation,” she says, “but there is a new emphasis on helping people prepare for the unknown. We are spreading the word for people to keep calm, but also to do what you can to prepare yourselves now, because no one is sure what this administration will bring.”

Rodriguez, who was born in Hermosillo in northern Mexico, joined the consulate’s press office in 2014 and performs a number of duties, including handling all digital and social media. “I have always been interested in social justice and human rights, but what brought me to the consulate was the chance to put all my efforts into one community—it just so happens that it’s also my community,” she says. The consulate estimates that there are more than a million Mexicans living in the New York tristate area, and the community is as diverse as it is large. “In New York, Mexican immigrants contribute on every level,” Rodriguez says. “There are Mexicans who are running their own businesses and those who are hospitality workers in kitchens. We have everything. It’s like another Mexico.” As a consulate worker, she interacts with both documented and undocumented immigrants on a regular basis. “It’s hard now because some of the undocumented workers have been in this country for more than 20 years.”

A lifelong tennis player, Rodriguez traveled around her home country and even represented Mexico at the Junior Olympics before she moved to New York to attend NYIT. Here, she played as a member of NYIT’s East Coast Conference (ECC) winning team and went to the NCAA championships. The interdisciplinary studies major (with a focus on political science, communications, and psychology) also worked with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and the Community Service Center. “I focused on public policy and social issues,” she says. “NYIT has a very international student body, so it was a helpful experience.” That work led to other life-changing events as well. She met her future husband, **Staffan Alm (B.S. '13)**, a student from Sweden, when they were student-athletes (Alm played soccer) and participated in the SAAC.

Rodriguez says that by working in New York City, she sees a lot of positives. “New York is protective of the Mexican community,” she says. “I have hope that the same kind of acceptance and tolerance we see here can spread to other places. Every city has some faults, but when it comes to this, New York is doing something right.” ■

Barry Sloan

Association. He and his wife, Sue, have eight grandchildren.

DANIEL MONTROY (B.ARCH. '83), **STEVEN ANDERSEN (B.S. '84)**, and **RICHARD DEMARCO (B.ARCH. '83)** are principals at design firm Montroy Andersen DeMarco, based in New York City, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. The company employs 40 architects, interior designers, LEED professionals, project managers, and a support staff. *Building Design & Construction* magazine ranks Montroy Andersen DeMarco as the 88th largest architectural and design firm in the nation.

DANIEL CONTELMO (B.ARCH. '85) and his firm, Daniel Contelmo Architects, took home gold awards at the 2016 *Qualified Remodeler* Master Design Awards. They are also finalists in the *Westchester Home Magazine* design competition in 13 categories. In addition, Contelmo and his team of architects are working on a 10,000-square-foot home and estate in Stanfordville, N.Y., and a new home on the water in Westhampton, N.Y. "While an NYIT student, I worked on a group project to rehabilitate Long Beach Island, N.J. The collaboration was amazing, and by the end of our presentation, the mayor high-fived all of us," he says. As a business owner, Contelmo keeps an eye out for fellow NYIT alumni in the architecture field. "I receive résumés from graduates at many universities, and I know I can rely on NYIT alumni."

BERNARD WHEATLEY (M.B.A. '86) was named one of 60 rural hospital CEOs to know by Becker's Hospital Review. He is CEO of Schneider Regional Medical Center in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. "I value the friends I met at NYIT," he says. "We still reminisce

about the great times we had studying and helping each other. Though we are located far apart, we stay in touch."

WILLIAM J. BAILEY (B.F.A. '87) is CEO of Kabinet King in Queens Village, N.Y. "My favorite place at NYIT was *LI News Tonight*," he says. "I spent my last two years as a cameraman and enjoyed the spontaneous aspect of news gathering and teamwork during the process. It's hard to believe so many years have passed so quickly."

THOMAS BAIO (B.ARCH. '87) celebrated the 25th anniversary of his firm, Thomas Baio Architect PC, of Millburn/Short Hills, N.J. Baio's work was recently profiled in the fourth book covering his work, *Signature Homes*, by Panache Publishing. He recently visited NYIT-Old Westbury with his son, Ian, who is considering attending NYIT School of Architecture and Design. "Seeing Education Hall after 30 years was very nostalgic and I was surprised by how little it has changed," says Baio.

After two decades of working with some of the entertainment industry's biggest companies, including DreamWorks and Disney, Los Angeles-based artist **MATT ELSON (M.A. '87)** returned to fine art. He also produces "infinity boxes" that incorporate color, light, and mirrors to create optical illusions in a shared space to create shared experiences. mattelson.dphoto.com/albums

PAUL O'ROURKE (B.S. '88) is chief operating officer of EW Howell Construction Group, which has offices on Long Island and New York City. He joined the company shortly after earning his NYIT degree and began his career as an assistant project manager.



Jonathan Moser

STEVE MATTEO (B.F.A. '89) (pictured) serves as publicity director for Media Connect, the book publishing division of Manhattan-based public relations firm Finn Partners, where he has worked for four years. "I have worked as a journalist, author, and publicist and appeared on radio and TV, so my well-rounded NYIT education has served me well over the years," he says. "Working at WNYT and *The Campus Slate* conjure up enough happy memories to fill up two books."

1990s



Lilly Berge

LISA MONTELEONE BERGE (B.S. '90) (pictured) is a licensed real estate salesperson for Exit Kingdom Realty in Forest Hills, N.Y. "I have two favorite NYIT memories," she says. "The first is getting engaged at commencement in 1990. The

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second is watching my daughter, **DANIELLA (B.P.S. '16)**, graduate magna cum laude from NYIT's Manhattan campus in 2016."

ANTHONY DUPREE (B.F.A. '90) is chief information officer for Novitex Enterprise Solutions Inc. in Stamford, Conn., where he leads a team of information security specialists to further its innovative strategies safeguarding client and employee data. Dupree's enterprise security and risk management experience helps him proactively anticipate and address vulnerabilities. "My NYIT degree enabled me to pursue a career in technology and achieving my dream job as a CIO," he says.

News and documentary filmmaker **PATRICK LEE (B.F.A. '90, M.A. '92)** has worked with CBS News for more than 10 years. In 2011, he joined *60 Minutes* as a video editor. His latest documentary, *Black Women in Medicine*, was recently screened at film festivals. Lee is the recipient of Emmy, Edward R. Murrow, and Asian American Journalists Association awards.

SAL SCOTTO (B.T. '92, M.S. '05) is a senior engineer for Southport Engineering in Ridgefield, Conn.

GREG SMOLLEY (B.S. '93) is senior project manager at Drummey Rosane Anderson, an architecture and interior design firm based in Waltham, Mass. He brings 28 years of experience as a master planner working on educational facilities throughout New England.

"The one NYIT memory that I think changed my life was going outside Ed Hall and picking up 12 sticks and stones for my first design project," says **RAYMOND GIVARGIS (B.S. '94)**. "With ordinary objects, I learned to create spaces and volumes. I started looking at things with an architectural



Arun Manansingh

(B.S. '95)

AS THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER (CIO) of the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA), **Arun Manansingh** is responsible for the information technology and computers systems for an organization that connects real estate developers, businesses, and communities in more than 300 World Trade Centers in approximately 90 countries. While his current role is all about overseeing technology in our global digital age, Manansingh got his start in a more analog manner. He landed at NYIT after taking drafting classes in high school and pursued an architecture degree.

He recalls the four-year studio-based architectural technology program as exciting and diverse. "The students were from all over New York City and the world," says Manansingh, who was born in Brooklyn, raised in Westchester and upstate New York, and was the first one in his family to go to college. "All the design teachers were world-class architects," he adds. "I was able to interact with such a diverse student and faculty population." says Manansingh. "My professors encouraged me to explore. They were very tough and fair, but they knew the world and how hard it was, and gave us what we needed to survive."

Manansingh took a drafting job after graduation, but moved on to a firm that sold design microstations during the time when the industry was moving from paper to AutoCAD. The owner of the firm needed someone who could incorporate knowledge of CAD management with computers, servers, and networks. Manansingh began by selling CAD systems to architecture firms in the tristate area, and then he helped design their computer networks. "NYIT gave me the foundation for architectural technology, and it gave me the learning and aptitude to use those skills to transition to other industries and other careers," he says. He shifted from architecture into tech and never looked back.

Over the years, he has worked in multiple industries in increasingly demanding roles, but he never lost track of his alma mater. NYIT's global expansion in particular intrigued him. "The school is very global now," he says. That fact aligns well with WTCA's mission and drew Manansingh back to campus. He is currently working with Jess Boronico, Ph.D., dean of NYIT School of Management, and John Hyde, executive director of Career Services, to find undergraduate and graduate career opportunities at the WTCA—bringing his own NYIT experience full circle. ■

Courtesy of Arun Manansingh



ALL MAJORS JOB AND INTERNSHIP FAIR

Barry Sloan

In March, nearly 70 employers attended the All Majors Job and Internship Fair; more than a quarter of those were NYIT alumni. The annual event welcomed approximately 500 alumni and students from NYIT-Old Westbury and NYIT-Manhattan, who represented undergraduate and graduate programs from nearly all schools and colleges. Participants spoke with recruiters—including those like **Chloe Johnson (B.S. '14)** (pictured front row, above left) from JRM Construction Management—in architecture and design, engineering, health professions, hospitality, and more. nyit.edu/career_services



Students interview with various companies at the All Majors Job and Internship Fair; alumni employers do the “bear claw” (above left).



Watch more: bit.ly/2017-Career-Fair

perspective.” Today, he works with more than sticks and stones as a senior project architect at Frank G. Relf Architect P.C. in Melville, N.Y.

JACEY WYATT (B.S. '94) is seeking an endorsement to run for governor of Connecticut next year on the Democratic ticket. If she wins, she will be the first transgender governor of the state. Wyatt currently works for Branford Parks and Open Space Authority. She has also held

positions in retail and as a fashion model. Read more about her candidacy: bit.ly/Jacey-Wyatt.

ROBERT M. GALLER (D.O. '96) is director of neurosurgery at Peconic Bay Medical Center in Riverhead, N.Y., and of neurosurgical spine for Northwell Health’s Eastern Region. He has received numerous professional honors, including being named a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and Outstanding Surgeon

Educator at Stony Brook University Hospital.

BELLAMY CARTER BROOK (D.O. '98) is a medical director certified by the American Board of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine. He serves as medical director at Peconic Landing, a continuing care retirement and life care community in Greenport, N.Y. He also is affiliated with Peconic Bay Medical Center and Eastern Long Island Hospital, also in Greenport.

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KEVIN CHAN (D.O. '99) runs his own practice, Pineapple Health-Rejensis, in the Ahwatukee neighborhood in Phoenix, Ariz. He completed his fellowship at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

When he was a student, **PETER HALKIAS (B.ARCH. '99)** heard a classmate say that an architecture degree from NYIT was “dollar for dollar one of the best bargains you will ever find.” He didn’t know exactly what that meant at the time, but in hindsight came to realize it. “Every job in architecture that I’ve had was due in some way to being affiliated with NYIT,” says Halkias. After graduation, he worked for an NYIT professor and then for an architecture firm after a headhunter found him among a list of NYIT alumni. When he interviewed for a position at Gannett Fleming Engineers and Architects P.C. in New York City, Halkias was interviewed by another NYIT graduate, **GIUSEPPE TULUMELLO (B.ARCH. '05)**. “Five years later, as a senior architect at Gannett Fleming, I had the privilege of attending this year’s NYIT career fair with **JOE LOQUERCIO (B.ARCH. '15)**, another graduate I recruited from NYIT in 2015.”

COLIN MONTOUTE (B.ARCH. '99) is an associate principal at AECOM within the Building + Places Metro Business group, where he oversees transportation, infrastructure, and multimodal projects. “I wanted a school that was in the middle of the city and on the front row for many of the large-scale urban issues that had become increasingly important to my life,” he says. “The Manhattan campus was ideal and provided a window to the world that fed my interest. I graduated with a set of analytical and representational skills that have allowed me to pursue my aspirations wherever they may lead me.”



Barbara Connors

(D.O. '81)

“**IT WAS A SMALL CLASS**; there were only 36 of us,” says **Barbara Connors**, a member of the inaugural class at NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM). When NYITCOM was founded in 1977, Riland and Rockefeller were still in the blueprint stages and “dissections were held in a converted barn.” But the small size of the class and the feeling they were part of a school that could be something special made them like family. “It was more than a class. We were more like siblings. We really got to know each other well,” Connors recalls. The members of the first class also benefited from the newness of the school and the excitement and commitment of the professors. “They clearly had our best interest at heart,” says Connors. “They wanted us all to succeed.”

Before attending NYIT, Connors worked as a registered nurse at the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Staten Island. Several of the doctors there encouraged her to apply to medical school. The fledgling NYITCOM was not yet accredited, but Connors sent in her application and won a public health scholarship to the school, which meant her tuition and books were covered and that she received a stipend for living expenses. “With the scholarship, I was ultimately able to give back to the community by practicing in a physician-shortage area. I worked where no other doctor would go,” says Connors.

Connors went on to train in internal and preventive medicine and received a Master of Public Health from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Her combination of skills and knowledge of government led to some unique opportunities. “I’ve done some incredible things because of my training,” she says. Connors worked on the ground after Hurricane Katrina addressing the occupational health needs for search and rescue personnel; she helped U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents manage an unusually high number of Tuberculosis cases; and she even traveled five miles underground to investigate coal mines and the health implications for miners.

For the past 11 years, Connors has served as chief medical officer at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in Philadelphia where she works with clinicians in six states to ensure they meet CMS requirements. It’s a demanding role and one that can make a real difference in the health of the country’s population. “I have been able to impact large groups of people, but I still believe it’s the doctors in the trenches who are pulling the motherlode,” says Connors, who lives in Moorestown, N.J., with her husband, Dr. John Junior and her three daughters. “The wheels move slowly in government, and we need more clinicians at the table. While there have been some positive changes to the practice of medicine, we still have much more work to do.” ■

Craig Wallace Dale

2000s



Grace Viasi

THOMAS ZIMMERMAN (D.O. '00) (pictured) was recruited as associate dean for clinical affairs at the new School of Osteopathic Medicine of the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio. He is a nationally recognized expert on medical informatics and served as assistant professor of family medicine at NYITCOM, as well as director of medical education and family medicine residency at South Nassau Communities Hospital in Oceanside, N.Y. In addition, Zimmerman has served on the board of trustees and as president of the American Osteopathic Association of Medical Informatics. He chairs the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians' Committee on Medical Homes and Accountable Care Organizations.

MAUREEN ALADIN (M.S. '02) is the creative director and executive producer for TWELVE18 Media Inc., which has offices in New York City and Los Angeles. The production company specializes in broadcast, digital, and exclusive branded content, as well as social media consultation.

Actor **JERMAIN HOLLMAN (B.F.A. '02, M.A. '05)** starred in *Hope 4 Dating in LA*, an official selection for the Hollywood Black Film Festival. He also wrote and

played the lead in 2017's *Glory Days*, which was selected for the Indie Night Film Festival.

NITI VAID PERUVEMBA (D.O. '02) owns a solo primary care private practice in Westlake Village, Calif. She was recently honored as a Fellow of the American College of Physicians.

GAIL SCHUMAN (D.O. '02), FACP, joined Mercyhealth in Rockford, Ill., as a pediatric neurology and headache medicine physician. Her specialties include epilepsy, childhood stroke, developmental delays, and headaches in elementary school-age children.

The International Association of Health-Care Professionals added **STANISLAV B. AVSHALUMOV (D.O. '03)** to *The Leading Physicians of the World*. He serves patients at Advanced Orthopedics & Joint Preservation in Valley Stream, N.Y. Avshalumov is also affiliated with Franklin Hospital, St. Joseph Hospital, Mercy Medical Center, and New York Community Hospital.

FILIO FANDAROS (B.S. '03) is occupational therapy clinical supervisor at Kidz Therapy Services LLC on Long Island. "During my time at NYIT, I made lifelong friends," she says. "We spent hours together studying and laughing in the labs and had many picnics on campus."

SCOTT GIANNOTTI (B.S. '03) is managing director for the Cannabis World Congress and Business Expositions produced by Leading Edge Expositions LLC. Previously, Giannotti had a 15-year career in telecommunications and is the founder of the Cannabis and Hemp Association of New York.

Author **ROBIN PANDEY (M.B.A. '03)** will soon publish his fourth book, *Mirror*, to help

readers "find their natural state of being." One of the most important things he learned at NYIT was that "to be successful in business or career, you'll need input from many key people to help you make good decisions instead of assuming that you know everything."

authorrobinpandey.wordpress.com

The International Association of Health-Care Professionals named **FRANCESCO POLICARO (B.S. '03, D.P.T. '05)** among its Worldwide Leaders in Healthcare. The physical therapist serves patients at Orlin & Cohen Orthopedic Group in Lynbrook, N.Y.

NICHOLAS BELASCO (D.O. '06) is a physician member at the Bon Secours Medical Group, which serves more than 400,000 patients throughout New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. He is board-certified in family and sports medicine, as well as the founder of the Bon Secours Concussion Management Program that promotes concussion education, prevention, diagnosis, and management.

"My M.B.A. from NYIT gave me a broader perspective of how the business world operates," says **KHEK GRIFFIN (M.B.A. '07)**. "It also gave me the confidence to want to pursue higher goals in life." She currently works as a tenant coordinator at Rivercrest Realty Investors, located in Raleigh, N.C.

DUANE ALBRO (M.B.A. '08) is CEO of SQUAN in Englewood, N.J. The company serves wireless, cable, and enterprise markets. Their partners include top telecommunications providers such as AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile, Sprint, and Cablevision.

2010s



Chris Balow

CHRIS BALOW (M.B.A. '08) has photographed some of the world's most popular musicians, including James Hetfield of Metallica (pictured), Garth Brooks, and Taylor Swift. "NYIT's online M.B.A. program provided me with the flexibility I needed to obtain my graduate degree while still allowing me to work full-time," he says. "As I was starting my own photography business, I wore the hats of financier, owner, marketing, and branding. I had NYIT courses that supported each of those functional areas."

@Detroitrockchris, vitalradar.com

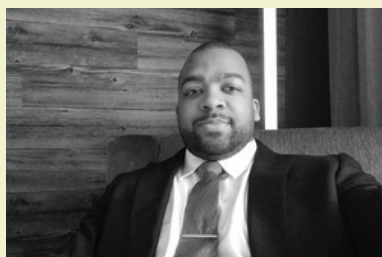
ROSTISLAV PERSION (B.S. '08) published opinion pieces in the *Journal of Computer Science & Systems Biology*: "Data Compression Based Accelerated Evolution" and "Fourier Transform Using Spring-Mass System."

ANTHONY ROTELLA (D.O. '09) joined Crouse Medical Practice in Syracuse, N.Y. He specializes in family medicine and completed his residency at Aria Health in Philadelphia.

MICHAEL A. TROMBLEE (M.S. '09) serves as director of technology for the City School District of New Rochelle (N.Y.). The U.S. Air Force veteran is also the recipient of the Air Force Commendation Medal and the NATO Medal and was named Airman of the Year in 2000 for the 341st Support Group and the 341st Communications Squadron.

Cardiologist **OMID JAVDAN (D.O. '10)** serves patients at NYU Langone Heart in Manhasset, N.Y. He completed his residency at North Shore University Hospital and a fellowship in cardiology at New York Presbyterian Queens. He and his wife, **SARAH JAVDAN (D.O. '16)**, recently celebrated the birth of their first child. "I still remember my first day of clinical rotation as a third-year NYITCOM student," Javdan says. "After two years of very hard work and many sleepless nights working, it was euphoric and almost surreal to finally be there." At NYITCOM's hooding ceremony in 2016, he had the honor to hood his wife. "It brought back great memories and was very emotional."

LIVIA AREAS-HOLMBLAD (B.F.A. '12) is a journalist for addictionnow.com, which covers news related to drug addiction. "My degree didn't just enhance my career, it allowed me to have one by opening doors. Shortly after I graduated, I began working at renowned media companies like Vice and SinoVision in New York City. NYIT's communication arts program allowed me to gain expertise and in-depth knowledge about every facet of the industry."
addictionnow.com



Mickell Vickers

Former NYIT basketball player **MICKELL VICKERS (M.B.A. '12)** (pictured) works for Capital One as a bank officer specializing in Know Your Customer review and Anti-Money Laundering assessment. Before joining the financial services firm, he served

as a compliance officer at JPMorgan. He says, "Having an M.B.A. from a respectable school like NYIT has helped me advance in the competitive New York banking field."

LARRY KAMGUIA (M.A. '13) serves as assistant director of career advising at Princeton University. "I still use lessons from my NYIT classes in special events and public relations to organize career fairs and build strong relationships with employers and students, as well as my NYIT classes in advertising and graphic design to create integrated marketing campaigns," he says.

CHLOE JOHNSON (B.S. '14) handles PR and marketing for JRM Construction Management LLC in New York City. She is also a food blogger and shares her favorite dishes on Instagram @EatMeNYC. "I have had the privilege of working with Dunkin' Donuts, Baskin Robbins, Burger King, Mr. Green Tea Ice Cream, IT'SUGAR Candy Store, and many other well known brands," she says. "I can definitely credit my background at NYIT for helping me create content for brands and also helping me scope out the next hot food item."

JOVANNI ORTIZ (B.S. '14) was honored at Star Network's Queens Stars Under 40 Awards & Networking event on January 26. He serves as a real estate salesperson for Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty on Long Island. He also volunteers for Healing the Children, a nonprofit that provides free pediatric care to underprivileged children around the world.

LAURA BENNEGADI (M.A. '15) is CEO and founder of ArtBound Initiative, a global internship program that connects college students and graduates with artists and arts organizations in New York, Berlin, and Hong Kong. Her favorite NYIT memory? "In my film production class, our final assignment was to produce a short film with

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Subscription requests: magazine@nyit.edu.

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NYIT Magazine is published by the Office of Communications and Marketing, New York Institute of Technology, P.O. Box 8000, Old Westbury, NY 11568-8000

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my classmates. After brainstorming ideas and storylines, we ended up filming in my apartment in the Lower East Side. Our film, *Manic*, was selected to be screened at the NYIT Film Festival." It was an education that still pays off: "NYIT allowed me to perfect my technique on several design and video software programs that I now use daily as an entrepreneur." artboundinitiative.com

SEAN BURGER (B.S. '15) works as a junior estimator and pre-construction assistant at T.G. Nickel & Associates LLC in New York City. After attending NYIT's career fair in 2015, he received three job offers. "Graduating from NYIT with a job in hand and knowing I had professors who still help and care is something that will stick with me for a lifetime."

JOSEPH LOQUERCIO (B.ARCH. '15) is an architectural designer at Gannett Fleming Engineers and Architects P.C. "I owe NYIT a lot when it comes to my personal, academic, and professional success," he says. "The connections I made led me to industry contacts, valuable mentors, life-long friends, and even my future wife!"

CHIAGOZIEM NNODUM (B.S. '16) wasted no time putting his NYIT degree in business administration to work as the co-owner of Replenish Juice Bar in Bridgeport, Conn. The menu includes juices, smoothies, protein shakes, energy shots, salads, sandwiches, and wraps.

STEPHANIE L. RAMANAND (B.ARCH. '16) is an architectural designer at the Melville, N.Y., office of Frank G. Relf Architect P.C. "My favorite memories of NYIT were when I joined Greek life and the American Institute of Architecture Students," she says. "It opened many doors for me, including leading me on my career path to become a New York-licensed architect."

Marriages

EVAN DANIEL LEVINE (D.O. '13) to Alexandra Heather Gutman

THERESA ELIZABETH APOZNANSKI (D.O. '16) to Kyle Scott

Passings

JAMES M. CURTIS (B.S. '76)

MARY (LARKIN) BRODSKY (B.S. '77)

LEONARD CAMPANELLO (B.S. '87)

JUDITH R. GJERTSEN (B.F.A. '87)

ABDERRAHMANE "AB" ZEMIRLINE (B.S. '13, M.B.A. '15)

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ALUMNI NOTES

**NEW JOB? ON THE MOVE?
TELL US AT NYIT.EDU/ALUMNI_NOTES
OR MAGAZINE@NYIT.EDU.**

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Left: Chad Robichaux recognized by the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps at a Mighty Oaks Warrior event.

Right: In his role as founder of the Mighty Oaks Foundation, Robichaux often speaks about his own experiences with PTSD and helps other veterans and their families find the support they need.



Chad M. Robichaux

(M.B.A. '07)

A **S PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER** of the Mighty Oaks Foundation and Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs (mightyoaksprograms.org), **Chad Robichaux** travels the country holding workshops for veterans—particularly those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—and their families. Robichaux’s story shows why he’s the right person for such an important job. When he was 14, Robichaux’s brother was shot and killed, and his father abandoned the family. Robichaux dropped out of high school and did roofing jobs until he joined the Marines in 1993. He got his GED when he graduated from boot camp, but he didn’t sign up for the G.I. Bill because he didn’t think he’d ever go back to school. He was wrong. At age 18, Robichaux became Force Recon Marine, one of the U.S. Marine Corps’ special operation-capable forces that provide essential military intelligence. He ended up being second in his class academically. It was while he was in the Marine Corps that he realized—after facing a “giant pile of books” and a “lot of memorization”—that he could pursue an advanced degree. He deployed to Afghanistan in 2003 and was ultimately deployed eight times. While serving, he earned his associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees—all online. “Earning my M.B.A. from NYIT was a big achievement,” he says. “I am the first college graduate in my family, and I use the knowledge I learned every day in the workplace.”

After serving as a Marine in Afghanistan for years in special operations, Robichaux faced a different kind of obstacle. “PTSD ended up overtaking me,” he says. “I had a final meltdown. I felt like I was dying and my face and limbs would go numb. I was in such a bad mental state, I couldn’t go through a day of work.” When he returned to the states in 2007, the PTSD came with him, along with anxiety and depression. Robichaux started a successful MMA and jiu-jitsu school and became a world-class competitor and Pro MMA Champion, but personally he “was a train wreck. My life started plummeting inside.”

After several rocky years, Robichaux found a mentor—from his wife Kathy’s church—and he began the difficult process of recovery. “My failures and crashing allowed me to rebound,” says Robichaux. “I’m very grateful for that.” Robichaux is very aware of how dedication to helping others saved his own life. He also never forgets this statistic: Roughly 20 vets commit suicide every day. Mighty Oaks Warriors is trying to change that. An excerpt from the organization’s mission statement reads, “Through instructional sessions, camaraderie, and team-building activities, our programs teach Warriors to overcome the past experience and move forward into a life of purpose.” For Robichaux, that sentiment continues. “I’m still growing,” he says, “and I continue healing and discovering.” ■

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SCENE AT NYIT

Medical student Priya Patel took first place in NYIT's Through the Lens competition for "Up, Up and Away."
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