

WHITMAN

MAGAZINE



The Future is Bright
Meet the Class of 2024

SPRING 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Road Ahead

RETIREMENT. THAT SOUNDS SO FINAL. It's a concept I heard my grandfather talk about, and then my parents, and more recently my older brothers, but not me. So many things in our lives have been changed by this pandemic. I imagine many of you, like me, have been forced to contemplate your own mortality in new ways. My mom died of breast cancer at the age I am right now, and then a year later, when I was 27, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Thankfully my disease was at a very early stage, so I do not have to worry about that threat at this point in my life. But I have thought a great deal about the stage of life my mom missed. My dad retired just before she passed away. They never had that time together. Many of you have asked why I made this decision to retire earlier than expected. It's true that the pandemic accelerated the need for our collegewide financial sustainability review, and I believe the college will be best served by pivoting to a new president once that work has been implemented. But there is also a personal side to any decision like this. Now you know.



Once I made that decision, I was able to turn my attention to what I wanted to accomplish for Whitman before retiring. With more than a year still remaining in my presidency, there is much to be done. As more and more of us are vaccinated, I look forward to getting back on the road to visit in person with alumni and friends of the college. We need to continue building support for scholarships and financial aid, for curricular innovation, for the experience of our students on this campus and in their lives after Whitman. With the decisions about initial budget reductions made, we are able to explore exciting new initiatives that will help us to drive enrollment and revenue for the college. The faculty are exploring new curricular ideas that surfaced during our financial sustainability discussions. We are engaging the leaders of our distinctive Outdoor Program in the recruitment of prospective students to the college in ways we never have before. We are building a more comprehensive approach to health and wellness on this campus in collaboration with the offices that serve our students. We will continue our work of being an anti-racist campus including hiring a new vice president for diversity and inclusion.

It continues to be an exciting time to be at Whitman, and I am energized by the work ahead. I am also heartened by the glimpse of a return to normalcy that this season has brought. We were thrilled to be able to welcome students to campus for the Spring 2021 semester — some of them for the first time. In this issue, we're excited to introduce you to several members of the class of 2024, who all shared an unusual start to their college experience. I hope their stories will inspire you to feel optimistic about Whitman's future too.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen M. Murray". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kathleen M. Murray
President

WHITMAN MAGAZINE

PRESIDENT

Kathleen M. Murray

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Josh Jensen

VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Steve Setchell

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Gina Ohnstad

DIRECTOR OF CONTENT

Margie Reece '93

SENIOR WRITER AND EDITOR

Lara Hale

DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE SERVICES

Ryan Barnes

VIDEO AND MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER

Rebecca Devereaux

CLASS NOTES

Jennifer Dilworth Northam '91

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Kirsten Erwin

CONTACT US

Send comments about this issue and story ideas for future editions of Whitman Magazine to Lara Hale by mail at Whitman College, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362 or by email at halel@whitman.edu.

To notify us of a change of mailing address or to opt out of receiving this magazine, please contact Sarah Jones at jonesst@whitman.edu.

CLASS NOTES

To submit, go online to whitman.edu/classnotes.

WHITMAN MAGAZINE

Published four times a year by Whitman College, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362. Periodical postage paid at Walla Walla, WA, and additional mailing offices (USPS 968-620). ISSN: 0164-6990.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Whitman College has a strong commitment to the principle of nondiscrimination in all its forms. In its admission, educational and employment practices, programs and activities. Whitman College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and parenting status), gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, veteran's status, or any other basis prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and applicable federal, state or local laws.





FEATURES

12 **MEET THE CLASS OF 2024**
 Whitman College's first class to begin college remotely arrived on campus for the Spring 2021 semester. Read about the paths they took to get here.

22 **A SHOT OF HOPE**
 With the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, there's light at the end of the tunnel — and several Whitties are helping to lead the way.

26 **A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER**
 Last spring, the coronavirus forced Whitman to take decisive actions to keep its community safe. A year later, we take a look back at how the pandemic evolved and changed life on campus.

INSIDE EVERY ISSUE

ON BOYER AVENUE 2
 SPACES 8
 CLASS NOTES 40
 SYLLABUS 48

SPOTLIGHTS

FACULTY: JUSTIN LINCOLN 6
 STUDENT: BRAYDEN PRESKENIS 10
 ALUMNI: TIASHA GARCIA '96 38

ABOVE In the spring of 2020, two residents of Lakum Duckum find they have Whitman almost all to themselves after the campus closes due to the pandemic. Photo by Rebecca Devereaux.

ON THE COVER Members of the Class of 2024 celebrate finally arriving on campus. Back row, left to right: Marharyta Tkachenka, Robenia Herbert, William Hooper, Merry Cockroft. Front row, kneeling: Kylie Casper, Lydia Moriku. Photo by Rebecca Devereaux.

Whitman College is located on the traditional Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla homelands. We pay our respect to tribal elders both past and present and extend our respect to all Indigenous people today. We honor their stewardship of the land and ecosystem and commit to continuing that important work.



REBECCA DEGENAK

COMMUNITY

Amazing Place

Whitman's new labyrinth provides a spot for meditation and more

Volunteers from the campus community worked together to bring the labyrinth to life.

WHAT DO WHITMAN COLLEGE and Chartres Cathedral have in common? Both are home to labyrinths, maze-like paths that provide a place for reflection and contemplation.

Whitman's labyrinth was inspired by the one at France's famous medieval cathedral, but the tradition of labyrinths goes back to well before the Middle Ages. They were the key element to an ancient kinesthetic or "walking" meditative practice that is again growing in popularity around the

world, says Whitman's Interfaith Chaplain, Reverend Adam Kirtley, who has wanted to bring a labyrinth to campus for many years.

"They can be a powerful spiritual and meditative tool that is not necessarily tied to a specific religious tradition," Kirtley says. He adds that the kinesthetic nature of walking meditation — focusing step by step — can be beneficial for those who find typical meditation styles difficult.

The labyrinth is a project of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, but it was brought to fruition with the help of Facilities Director Tony Ichsan and Landscape Supervisor Jeff Jensen (who built the 36-foot outer circle and an inner meditation bench, both made of logs), as well as many volunteers from the college community who showed up to paint stones before placing them on the path.

In addition to being a place to practice meditation, the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life also plans to use the labyrinth

for events that bring the campus community together to reflect on shared experiences and raise awareness of social justice issues.

The labyrinth's installation in March serendipitously coincided with the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. In response, Kirtley led "Walking with Loss and Hope," an evening event that presented some of the ways various religious traditions confront loss and gave students the chance to walk the labyrinth and place candles along the path. The gradual illumination symbolized growing hope.



SHARING JOY

Although it serves as a beautiful site for serious and silent reflection, the labyrinth can also be a place for connection and celebration. On installation day, students chatted, laughed, and even danced along its path — and that's just fine by Kirtley.

"Ideally, you bring whoever you are and wherever you are to this space," he says.

Fine Fellows

Students awarded prestigious national fellowships

SENIOR LIAM VOORHEES FROM Bellevue, Washington, has been awarded the 2021 Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. He is one of only 42 students in the country to receive the award, which includes a \$36,000 stipend to enable “purposeful, independent exploration outside the United States.”

Voorhees, an environmental humanities major who wrote his senior thesis on water issues in the Yakima River, plans to spend the fellowship year traveling to Austria, Vietnam and Japan to study the links between water resources and food production, distribution and consumption in communities centered around rivers.

Voorhees credits some of his favorite childhood experiences, including growing vegetables in his backyard and river fishing, as sparking his understanding of water as a resource. “I started to make the connection between the water I used to grow my plants and the water I would wade through for fishing,” he says.

“I started to make the connection between the water I used to grow my plants and the water I would wade through for fishing.” — Liam Voorhees



At Whitman, Voorhees continued to pursue his interest, studying the politics involved in water rights matters, water conservation efforts and the protection of river habitats. Last summer, he interned with Whitman alum Kevin Scribner '75, a member of the Columbia River Basin Partnership and Salmon-Safe, who leads outreach efforts aimed at transforming land management practices so Pacific salmon can thrive. As a Watson fellow, Voorhees will dive deeper into many of these issues.

“Particularly what I’m focusing on is agrarian societies and their relationships to waterways ... how they use water, whether they redirect it out of the river to farm or whether they farm in it by growing shrimp and fish,” he says. “I really want to engage with those people and learn from them on a more global scale what’s happening in other areas — and connect that back to what I’ve learned at Whitman and in growing up in the Pacific Northwest.”



“I am looking forward to getting to work alongside people who share the same passion and love for social change and service that I do.”

— Kaitlyne Jensen

SOPHOMORE POLITICS MAJOR Kaitlyne Jensen of Milton-Freewater, Oregon, is one of just 212 college students from across the country to receive the Newman Civic Fellowship. The year-long program, awarded by Boston-based nonprofit Campus Compact, recognizes students from its member institutions who demonstrate a commitment to finding solutions for challenges facing their communities.

Each year, fellows participate in virtual training and networking opportunities to provide them with the skills and connections needed to create large-scale positive change. The fellowship also provides students with pathways to apply for scholarship and post-graduate opportunities.

“I am looking forward to getting to work alongside people who share the same passion and love for social change and service that I do,” says Jensen, who identifies as a working-class student. “I am especially excited

to be able to focus on a project of my choosing and be given the guidance, support, and resources I need to make it happen.”

Jensen kicked off her college career by participating in a Whitman program that offers an in-depth learning experience focused on community needs in Walla Walla and how organizations can work collaboratively to address complex issues. Since then, she has helped register high school students to vote, addressed a city council meeting about injustices in funding distribution and led a fundraiser to donate much-needed menstrual products to local nonprofits.

Her community involvement further extends to working with Whitman Teaches the Movement, a civil rights education initiative; Bilingual United, a Spanish-speaking volunteer organization, and as a weekly mentor to a fourth-grade student. She also serves as a resident advisor (RA) for Whitman’s Stanton Hall.

ADVOCACY

Supporting Role

Whitman and Walla Walla YWCA partner to offer services for sexual assault survivors

THE TRAUMA OF SEXUAL assault takes its toll both physically and emotionally and, for many, it can be difficult to know where to turn for support. Thanks to a partnership with the Walla Walla YWCA, survivors in the Whitman College community have a resource to help them cope with their experiences: Sexual Assault Victim's Advocate (SAVA) Malia Lewis.

A survivor of sexual assault herself, Lewis serves the Whitman community as a confidential contact for people who have experienced sexual violence, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. Her role also includes providing outreach, education and prevention services.

The partnership between the two institutions began several years ago when Chuck Cleveland, then dean of students, contacted Anne-Marie Zell Schwerin '85, the executive director of the Walla Walla YWCA, to discuss how the organization could support assault survivors at Whitman. That initial meeting started a conversation about the role a victim's advocate would play.

"It was a really constructive process because there was a committee in place at the college that involved not only administrative and faculty leaders, but some students as well — and that was essential in my mind," says Zell Schwerin.

Although the YWCA has served survivors from all of Walla Walla's colleges over the years, the SAVA role is a unique crossover: a community-based advocate with an office on Whitman's campus.

"I believe that adds a lot of credibility to the position," says Zell Schwerin, explaining that Lewis's on-site presence allows students to see and get to know her. But

because Lewis works for the YWCA rather than Whitman, she is not a Title IX mandatory reporter and thus, Zell Schwerin says, "has the confidentiality and privilege protections that community-based advocates have under Washington state law."

COLLABORATION AND CHOICE

That confidentiality is crucial to making victims feel comfortable coming to Lewis, whose advocacy takes many shapes, from providing individual and group counseling services to helping survivors navigate medical and legal processes, if they choose to engage with those systems.

And, Lewis stresses, those choices are entirely up to the individual. Her job is to support victims in whatever way they decide they need.

"I am absolutely not here to judge anyone. That's not my role," Lewis says. "I am here to help collaborate and create a way that feels safer for you following whatever the experience was, and to demystify some of the cultural mythology around consent and sexual assault and the ways we harm one another."



Malia Lewis

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Sharon Alker, professor of English, co-published "Besieged: Early Modern British Siege Literature, 1642-1722" with her sister, Holly Faith Nelson, professor of English at Trinity Western University in British Columbia, Canada. The book-length study focuses on siege literature and narratives of urban warfare in British literature from Restoration to the early 18th century.

Shampa Biswas, professor of political science, participated in a panel at the annual meeting

of the American Association of Colleges & Universities. Biswas presented on the development of Whitman's interdisciplinary course "Studying COVID-19: A Liberal Arts Approach to a Global Pandemic."

Eunice Blavascunas, assistant professor of anthropology and environmental studies, published "Foresters, Borders, and Bark Beetles," a work of cultural analysis and storytelling that textures its ethnographic reading of people with the agency of the forest itself and its bark beetle outbreaks, which threaten to alter the very composition of the forest in the age of the Anthropocene.

Neal Christopherson, director of institutional research, published "Transformative Experiences in College: Connections and Community." The book is based on a five-year longitudinal interview study with Whitman students and focuses on the importance of relationships and community in student learning and development.

Alissa Cordner, associate professor of sociology, was appointed to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Standing Committee on Use of Emerging Science for Environmental Health

Decisions. The committee explores how new scientific advances, technologies and research methodologies could deepen our understanding of the effects of the environment on human health.

Arash Davari, assistant professor of politics, published the article "Paradox as Decolonization: Ali Shariati's Islamic Lawgiver" in SAGE Journals. The article reevaluates the Iranian polymath Shariati's most controversial lectures and his theory of the paradox of politics as decolonization.

Patrick Frierson, professor of philosophy, was awarded

GRANTS

Working Toward Just Futures

WHITMAN COLLEGE, IN COLLABORATION with the University of Oregon and the University of Idaho, was awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as part of the organization's Just Futures Initiative, which aims to create programs that expand public understanding of racism in United States history and advance more just and equitable futures.

With the \$4.52 million grant, the three schools will establish the Pacific Northwest Just Futures Institute, intended to provide a regional platform for initiatives that help rectify "the devastating consequences of intersectional racism and climate change" through collaborative research, community



World on fire. Whitman plans to use its part of the Just Futures grant to create a field-based class that focuses on climate and racial justice in the Inland Northwest.

engagement activities, the creation of digital archives, applied courses, and incentives to attract and retain underrepresented students, faculty and staff.

The college also received a Mellon Grant in 2020 as part of the Northwest Five Consortium (NW5C), a group of five liberal arts colleges in the Pacific Northwest that are working together to champion opportunities for community-engaged teaching and learning. The \$900,000 grant was awarded to support an NW5C initiative titled "Revitalizing the

Humanities in the Pacific Northwest through Community Engagement." During the first phase of the four-year project, which launched this spring, faculty from across the institutions will collaborate on faculty development webinars that explore approaches to campus and community engagement, make connections across campuses, and inspire ideas for collaborative projects. The first three workshops will focus on incarcerated learning, racial justice, and indigenous peoples and colonialism in the Northwest.

a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) fellowship to continue his scholarly work on the early 20th-century educational philosopher Maria Montessori.

Jack Iverson, professor of French and francophone studies, contributed to Volume 145 of the "Complete Works of Voltaire," which was awarded an honorable mention for the 2020 Prize for Collaborative, Bibliographic, or Archival Scholarship by the Modern Language Association.

Kynde Kiefel, co-director of the Sheehan Gallery, is the 2020 recipient of the Higher Education Award for the Whitman College Pete and Hedda Reid Service Award as part of the Walla Walla

Valley Chamber of Commerce's Higher Education Service Awards. Kiefel was honored for her volunteer and advocacy work with numerous local organizations, including the Carnegie Picture Lab, a nonprofit organization dedicated to art education for local students.

Kirsten Nicolaysen, professor of geology, co-authored research revealing the discovery of a giant underwater volcano off the southwestern coast of Alaska. She presented the research at the 2020 American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting last December.

Nicole Pietrantoni, associate professor of art, had a piece acquired by the Washington

State Arts Commission for its permanent collection. "Sunset Strips" will become part of the state's Art in Public Places Program.

David F. Schmitz, the Robert Allen Skotheim Chair of History, published his 11th book, "The Sailor: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Transformation of American Foreign Policy."

Yukiko Shigeto, associate professor of Japanese, published her translation of Tsushima Yuko's story "Wildfire" in the Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies.

Xiaobo Yuan, assistant professor of anthropology and religion,

has recently published an article titled, "Gendering Heterodoxy: The Corporeal Politics of Xiejiao in Chinese Christianity" in the March 2021 issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Religion.

Zahi Zalloua, professor of French and interdisciplinary studies, published "Being Posthuman: Ontologies of the Future." The book interrogates the narrative of humanity and shows that 'post-' does not necessarily mean 'after' or that what comes after is more advanced than what has gone before. He pursues this line of inquiry across four distinct, yet interrelated, figures: cyborgs, animals, objects, and racialized and excluded 'others.'



Creating on the Edge

PROFESSOR OF NEW MEDIA
JUSTIN LINCOLN USES
TECHNOLOGY TO EXPLORE
THE BOUNDARIES OF ART

BY TARA ROBERTS

A BLACK-AND-MAGENTA BLOB UNDULATES over a blue field. It shudders, disrupting the smooth rhythm, before resuming a gentle wobble. For eight minutes, the sphere flows and morphs, its hypnotic motion occasionally interrupted by flashes, jerks and jumps.

The blob—in a video titled “noise sphere with pattern 1”—was created by Justin Lincoln, associate professor of art. Lincoln specializes in work he describes as “time-based art.”

Paintings, drawings and sculptures usually don’t include movement or sound that require a set duration to experience. But art like Lincoln’s unfolds over time.

“There’s something kind of magical in watching something move,” Lincoln says.

Like the blob in “noise sphere,” Lincoln’s work, research and teaching have evolved over his career, incorporating the unexpected—such as the coronavirus pandemic—into the flow of the whole.

Lincoln came to Whitman in 2010, pleased to find a tenure-track position for

PHOTO BY CALVIN BOBE-SHEED, JUNIOR FROM PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON



new media at a small liberal arts college. He was hired “to address art practices that are less traditional,” with a few decades of history instead of a few centuries.

Lincoln was first drawn to the experimentative potential of new media while earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts in sculpture at Virginia Commonwealth University. He already had one degree, so his professors encouraged him to pursue his interests. He started creating videos and performance art. It didn’t line up with his major, exactly, but that didn’t matter.

“One of the things about contemporary art right now, is how we categorize what artists do is very slippery,” he says.

A DAILY PRACTICE

After earning a Master of Fine Arts at the California Institute of the Arts in 2004, Lincoln taught in Japan and at Virginia Commonwealth while showing artwork at galleries and festivals across the United States. At Whitman, he began his most recent project, adding new permutations to it over the years.

While chairing the art department in 2018, he struggled to find time and energy to work on something new for a faculty show, so he started what seemed like a small-scale project: making short daily videos for his Instagram account, @thebuildingisacamera.

Lincoln says, “I thought, ‘I can make a minute of video every day. If I do that, I have a lot of choices in terms of what I present in my show.’”

He used a programming language called Processing to create 30 videos that wound up being the core of his piece for the show. But after those 30 days, he was enjoying the practice of daily creation and decided to keep with it.

More than three years later, the project is still going. Two years ago, he started adding experimental sounds. The interruption of the pandemic in 2020 introduced a new layer.

During the slow days of quarantine, he’d noticed how his desktop was filled

with applications he’d downloaded but never used for more than a few days—a problem he’d commiserated about with students. He wondered what he might learn if he committed to experimenting with a new piece of software or hardware for 30 days.

“I just try to do something with it every day for a month. That framework, more than anything else I’m doing, is the thing that interests me, fascinates me,” Lincoln says.

In January 2021, he worked with the visual programming language TouchDesigner (which he used to make “noise sphere”). In February 2021, he learned an iOS app his students introduced him to, Procreate. Whenever someone suggests a new tool, he adds it to his list for the future.


LIFELONG LEARNING

This personal practice has extended to Lincoln’s teaching. In his “Beginning New Genres Practices” class, he used to have students test a handful of digital tools in addition to learning Processing. For the Spring 2021 semester, Lincoln instead divided them into small groups, each responsible for learning a tool in more depth and creating a tutorial for their classmates.

This focused, semester-long project helps students learn by teaching others and builds connections within the groups despite the conditions of virtual learning and hybrid classes.

“The relationship aspect in learning is really essential,” Lincoln says. “I like that it overshadows a lot of other content issues.”

Lincoln has enjoyed learning these new tools alongside his students, adding yet another dimension to the personal and professional layers that blend together in his art and life.

“I feel like I never outgrew being a student, and that seems really appropriate for new media, because new things are always coming out.” 

CONNECTING STUDENT AND ALUMNI ARTISTS

When the pandemic meant Justin Lincoln was unable to take his senior students on their usual trip to New York City, the associate professor of art created a new plan to connect his students to the art world beyond college.

Lincoln reached out to recent alumni, inviting them to become virtual mentors to the seniors.

One such pair is Sage Ali, a senior double major in studio art and psychology, and Allison Felt ’14, who works as the manager of creative production for the Stanford Graduate School of Business alumni magazine and is a portrait photographer, illustrator and designer.

Ali’s senior thesis is a photo and text project exploring how pairs of people perceive and remember events in different ways. Felt has been a guide, supporter, brainstorming partner and more throughout the process—whether they’re talking about art or life.

“She really has been a fountain of knowledge for me,” Ali says.

Felt says she was excited to volunteer, remembering how Lincoln was a mentor to her during her days at Whitman.

“It’s a cool way to make it like a tiny community,” Felt says. “It fosters a sense of collaboration that can be hard to find once you go off into the workplace.”


Above: Frames from Lincoln’s “noise sphere with pattern 1.” See the video at whitman.edu/magazine.



Hunter Conservatory Atrium

Visitors to Whitman College's Hunter Conservatory are in for an architectural treat. As you enter the historic building's spacious atrium, three stories of elegant and elaborate details greet you, including neoclassical elements such as Corinthian capitals. Balconies with varied wood-patterned railings wrap the upper levels, looking down onto the open lobby area. Gaze up from the floor of the atrium and you'll see three leaded-glass skylights that brighten the space, adding to the splendor and drama.

Portland, Oregon, architect Ellis F. Lawrence (1879-1946) designed the Music Conservatory (1908-1910). You can find his historic period styles in other spots on campus—namely Lyman House (1923) and Prentiss Hall (1926).

For the Whitman community, Hunter's remarkable atrium is an attractive, quiet location for study, reflection or conversation. Thanks to a renovation in 1998 that included upgrades for the Film and Media Studies Department and Multimedia Development Lab housed there, Hunter offers modern technology, including strong Wi-Fi, in a setting that so beautifully speaks to the past. 







PHOTOS BY LEO CORRALES, SENIOR FROM HAILEY, IDAHO

Tiny House, Big Effort

DISMAYED BY THE DEVASTATION WILDFIRES WROUGHT IN HIS HOMETOWN, SENIOR BRAYDEN PRESKENIS PICKED UP A HAMMER AND GOT TO WORK

BY WHITNEY RICH '20

DURING THE HOT, dry summers, Whitman College senior Brayden Preskenis can often be found backpacking through the Eastern Oregon mountains. It was during these trips that he first observed the effects of wildfires.

Although the biology, biochemistry and molecular biology (BBMB) major recognizes the natural processes taking place through wildfire and their benefits to forests that have long been suppressed of any fires at all, he admits it's been difficult to see his favorite wilderness areas burn, leaving behind patchwork landscapes over the years.

"I always see the destruction of natural beauty as sad," says Preskenis.

Wildfires had been something that happened a safe distance away from the region of Southern Oregon where Preskenis grew up, in the places he visits on backpacking trips. That changed in late summer 2020, when the fires came too close to home.

Just a month into his senior year at Whitman, Preskenis was living off-campus with a few close friends. His days were filled with studying for his molecular biology and physics classes and writing his thesis on research he'd conducted over the summer.

On Sept. 8, he received a phone call from his dad. "Have you seen the news?" he asked. Preskenis, noting the urgency in his father's voice, felt his heart drop.

"The Rogue Valley is on fire, Brayden," his dad said. Because the cell phone connection

was patchy, his father's words were garbled and Preskenis couldn't find out much more than that his dad was safe, gathered in the parking lot of a Medford elementary school with many others who had fled their homes.

"I was sad and depressed about everything that was happening and about my lack of ability to help," Preskenis says. He thought about driving home, but between the COVID-19 risks and his busy senior-year schedule, it wasn't a feasible option.

FROM HELPLESS TO HOPEFUL

As the smoke from the Rogue Valley wildfires clogged the skies above Walla Walla, Preskenis realized there was something he could do for his community, something he knew how to do very well because he's done it before: He would build a tiny house on a trailer in Walla Walla and drive it to Ashland, Oregon, where it would become the home of a family who had lost theirs in the fire.

"I had been working on small building projects throughout the pandemic, so the jump from those projects to building a tiny house to donate was super exciting," says Preskenis. "I was thrilled that it could be

for his tiny home project poured in from the Whitman and Walla Walla communities.

"I wasn't expecting that my friends at Whitman would donate as well. I know funds are tight when you're a student."

The greater Walla Walla community also stepped up with material support. From his previous construction projects, Preskenis knew Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace can be great for finding building materials, so he decided to use them as sources for the Ashland tiny house project too. He'd see a window or a door that he needed for the tiny house and would reach out to the local seller, explaining why he was building the tiny house and who it would help.

"When I shared the story and told them about my community, everyone was open to changing the price or even completely donating the materials," says Preskenis. Many people have continued to help him out; one Walla Walla contractor calls every time he has materials left over from a project.

Although Walla Walla is 500 miles from the Oregon cities affected by the fire, Preskenis says the tiny house project proved they're "connected through their community support."



Building community. Senior Brayden Preskenis put his construction skills to the test building a tiny house for an Oregon family who lost their home to wildfires.

"It is amazing how the community has all come together to do their best to help one another and to provide support for those who need it the most." — Brayden Preskenis

meaningful and something that a family in my community needed."

Preskenis had built a tiny house for his high school senior project. In his Whitman admission essay, he wrote about how the tiny house's smaller footprint reduced the environmental impact and how the building process strengthened his construction skills.

But when Preskenis began planning for his second tiny house, he met a few obstacles.

"I felt like I could do most of the manual labor. I have amazing housemates who were eager to help and I knew many friends in the Whitman community who would get out there and swing a hammer with me, but finances for the tiny house were an issue that needed to be solved."

Preskenis took the first step, purchasing the trailer that would become the foundation for the home. Then he decided to create an online fundraiser.

What happened next was Preskenis's second shock of the semester: Donations

"My goal, my hope from the start was to give back. And 50 donors—family, friends and community members—have given back with me," Preskenis says, adding that his housemates, seniors Maamoon Saleh and Craig Brunner and sophomore Ben Daume, were instrumental in the building process.

"In high school when I built my tiny house, I was learning all these new skills from my dad and YouTube videos. It's crazy now, being the most experienced person on the 'construction site.' Maamoon and Craig have been so enthusiastic about learning how to build, it's always so fun to work with them. I know I won't soon forget when we all hammered the last wall into place as the November rain soaked us to the bone."

COMMUNITY RISES FROM THE ASHES

As the fall semester came to an end, Preskenis made the nine-hour drive to Ashland, arriving home at 3 a.m. "It didn't

register for me. If it had been light outside, I would've seen all the devastation. Instead, it was dark and it was easy to forget what happened, because I hadn't been there."

The next day, Preskenis got his first look at the devastation in his community. The tiny house he built in high school is now occupied by a local family who lost their home. Preskenis's family lives in the basement and garage of their house. Three families displaced by the fire live upstairs. This living arrangement is just one example of the ways in which the people in his community who didn't lose their homes have responded by providing housing for those who did.

"It is amazing how the community has all come together to do their best to help one another and to provide support for those who need it the most," Preskenis says.

When Preskenis built his first tiny house, he wasn't thinking about community impact—it was about saving money, learning construction skills and having a small environmental impact footprint. The difference now is emotional for Preskenis, "It's only one home. It's not the thousands of homes that are needed, but it's what I can do. With the aid of my family, friends and the Whitman community, I am doing everything I can to help my community rebuild." **W**

To check the latest status of Preskenis's tiny house project or to contribute to his fundraising efforts, visit whitman.edu/magazine.

Get to Know the Class of 2024

Like no class before them, they began at Whitman College virtually. The Class of 2024's true uniqueness lies, though, in the depth and breadth each of their personal narratives adds to the Whitman community. Here are some of their stories.

BY GENEVIEVE VOGEL '24



William Hooper

Los Altos, California

➔ William Hooper started cycling around the San Francisco Bay Area with his dad the summer between his freshman and sophomore years of high school.

"We'd ride around 10 miles on the weekends, then it slowly just crept up. I was enjoying it and I started riding more and more," Hooper says.

He spent three weeks of the following summer biking the Pacific Coast with the encouragement of his parents.

"Cycling is almost meditation for me. Spending hours, all I have to really worry about is pedaling."

In the summer of 2019, just before his senior year, Hooper decided to challenge himself by joining a group to bike across the United States. With two guides leading the way, Hooper and a group of other teenagers made the trip from Savannah, Georgia, to the Santa Monica Pier in California in six weeks. Along the way, they rode over the Rocky Mountains and marveled at the Grand Canyon.

"I love cycling. Any excuse to ride a bike a long distance is a good one, and this gave me the opportunity to see the country in a way I hadn't before."

The trip was far from easy coasting. Mechanical problems, like bent wheels and broken gear shifters, and general exhaustion from long days carrying gear created fierce challenges for the cyclists. After cycling an average of 80 miles a day, the group slept on the floor at churches and community centers, often relying on help from strangers to make the trip a success.

Meaningful experiences and connections came out of some of the adversities they faced as they made their way across the patchwork of landscapes and cultures of the United States, says Hooper, noting how incredible it was to receive help from "people of all different faiths and political views." A prime example of that generous spirit came when a teammate's crash in the Colorado mountains led to a friendly couple helping to transport the teammate to the hospital.

Faced with many unknowns, Hooper says he came back with an increased confidence in his own abilities and an appreciation for how far a bit of determination and a love for cycling could get him.

"It's not until I look back on it that I realize just how impressive it was."



Marharyta Tkachenka

Minsk, Belarus

➔ In the summer of 2019, Marharyta Tkachenka had an epiphany about the realities of climate change. It came when she enrolled in a United World College (UWC) summer program, Building A Sustainable Future (BASF), in Germany. The course description seemed to be in line with the biological science route she had in mind, but Tkachenka knew nothing about sustainability.

In her home country of Belarus, Tkachenka says, news about the environment often goes unnoticed when there are seemingly more immediate issues grabbing the headlines.

“When you realize that everything you do in your life is interconnected, every choice of eating meat or using plastic, has ultimately led to this ... it’s like ‘What should I do?’”

Having never considered the severe impacts of climate change, Tkachenka found all of the 18-day program illuminating. However, the mental lightning bolt for Tkachenka

was when a record-shattering heat wave hit Europe during the program. Day after day of extreme heat—temperatures over 100 degrees—connected what she was learning in the classroom with real life.

“The other students were like, super casually, ‘Oh, it’s the outcomes of climate change,’” Tkachenka says.

A young European climate activist had begun making news as she warned of the climate crisis and empowered the youth climate movement. Greta Thunberg’s “house on fire” metaphor was taking shape in reality to Tkachenka.

“I was definitely really inspired by her. What she did was a model for me. Firstly, she was not afraid; second, she was pissed off at the government,” says Tkachenka.

When Tkachenka returned to Belarus, she resolved to increase global warming awareness and make her school community more sustainable. Her key achievement was organizing a sustainability student council. The group successfully appealed to the parents association for funding for projects that would reduce school plastic waste. Tkachenka saw a marked difference with the administration afterwards, and was surprised how eager her community was

to engage with the student council’s awareness efforts and sustainable solutions.

“By the end of the campaign of raising awareness, people were really different. They even sometimes created posters about plastic or climate change without my knowledge or the administration’s. We definitely reduced plastic use,” Tkachenka says.

The challenge came when Tkachenka wanted to bring her efforts to the greater Minsk area. Organized protests and marches in Belarus face bureaucratic roadblocks that suppress free speech. Instead, a campaign rally became the basis for the youth activism of the Belarusian Young Greens, the unofficial youth green party. They organized the first-ever climate strike in Belarus. Government agents patrolled the rally and took pictures of participants, including Tkachenka, while harassing the organizers about permit requirements.

“You have to believe in what you are doing so much,” Tkachenka says. “Knowing that there were a lot of people interested in what I was interested in, I was inflamed by the idea that I could do more when it comes to local and political [issues]. I think now, that will be the ultimate goal of what I learned in Germany.”

Lydia Moriku

Kampala, Uganda

➔ As a refugee from the South Sudan Civil War, Lydia Moriku's path to Whitman was anything but straightforward. After both her parents and a brother were killed in the conflict, Moriku also lost contact with her sister. She was just 13 years old when she arrived, alone, at a United Nations refugee camp at the Ugandan border.

"They gave me tins and some cooking stuff. They made me a tent. Fortunately enough, there was a school right next to me," Moriku says, adding that because the majority of refugees are women and children, there is a great need for education.

Provided by a refugee organization, the school was very small and only had one teacher for around 100 students. "It was made out of carpets—the roof and everything. Mind you, the weather is really very hot," Moriku says.

Many students attended the school because their parents made them. For Moriku, it was a choice; she understood that education was her best option to move forward in life.

"For me, I knew that's just not the end of my life. I needed to do something, something really had to work out," she says.

Moriku spent five years in the refugee camp. She received her Uganda Certificate of Education and performed very well on exams, gaining her entry to the United World College in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the last two years of her upper school education.

There, she became involved in environmental activism and doing her part to save the planet, starting with helping clean up rivers of plastic garbage around her school.

"I feel I am a person very concerned with the environment. I hate to hear about animals dying because of pollution, such issues are so critical in my mind."

Now at Whitman, Moriku is also working on other ways to make a difference in her new home.

In addition to being a member of the Black Student Union and Whitman African Student Association, Moriku has already become the President of International Whitties Club, where she is trying to foster an environment that encourages open dialogue.

"We want to create a space for international students to maybe share their cultural heritage," says Moriku, adding that students of all nationalities are welcome to engage. "We want to encourage domestic students to join in because that's how we exchange our cultures and that's how we get to know each other's cultures."

Moriku plans to major in biology at Whitman and has her sights set on a career in medicine. She'd like to become a pediatrician or gynecologist since she sees children and women needing the most help in Africa. Women's health in particular isn't taken seriously, Moriku says, adding that her career goal was galvanized by a video she saw about an African woman who had to be transported to the United States for reproductive treatment after years of being neglected.

"In my head, I imagine if I was a doctor or gynecologist, maybe she would not have to go through all she went through."





Will Wrigley

Anchorage, Alaska

➔ Having spent years hearing his father's good friends and fellow Whitman alums raving about their college experiences, Will Wrigley spent most of high school looking forward to coming to Whitman. As an outdoor enthusiast, he was especially intrigued by the college's Outdoor Program (OP).

But even before he imagined himself skiing and rafting with the OP, Wrigley's dream was to summit Denali, the mountain looming large in the background of his childhood in Alaska.

Wrigley remembers, at 8 years old, meeting up with his uncle at a pizza restaurant to hear stories of his recent summit of Denali, and seeing how his uncle glowed with accomplishment.

"I think that memory really stuck with me. Just seeing the bliss you get after accomplishing something that you really wanted to do. I never really told anybody that was my goal until I was a sophomore."

In May of his junior year, right after turning 17, Wrigley, along with his father, uncle and cousin, flew to Denali's base camp. He'd been looking forward to it for so long that it didn't hit him how physically challenging it would be until he started the climb. Denali, the tallest

mountain in North America, has a summit rate of only 40%. With around 140 pounds of gear on his back, Wrigley made his way up and down the mountain, dropping off supplies and reascending to become acclimated to the elevation.

On one of the first nights, a whiteout blizzard separated Wrigley and his father from his uncle and cousin. His uncle and cousin spent the night in an igloo and made it back safely to the lower camp. For an anxious night, he thought that it would be the end to their climb.

"That realization that this could really be over now was disappointing. I had a big switch in attitude. I started thinking, 'Wow, how many people have stood here and seen this view, especially as a 17-year-old with their dad?' If I hadn't made that switch in attitude, I probably wouldn't have gone up."

Other obstacles came: Will became hypothermic on the way up to the 17,000-foot camp. Then dwindling food supplies put pressure on the group's chance to summit as they waited out winds of up to 50 mph. Finally, at 10:15 p.m. on June 4, 2019, they reached Denali's 20,310-foot peak.

Wrigley was overcome with a sense of pure happiness.

"It was like every trouble I'd ever had didn't matter and I knew then that anything hard that I would need to do in the future, I could do."

Kylie Casper

Boise, Idaho

Although Kylie Casper began 10th grade at her local public school, she soon found herself spending evenings volunteering with a community program of another—One Stone—a tuition-free private school in Boise that emphasizes inclusion and youth leadership.

Casper enjoyed the program so much, she transferred to One Stone in 11th grade. She was excited for the chance to make her mark by joining the student-led board of the school, which relies on student initiative to foster change and make decisions.

She got additional lessons in leadership serving on the board of Wild Hearts, a nonprofit that provides free outdoor adventure programs to help girls age 12 to 18 grow their confidence. She also filled the student board member position for the Boise Airport Commission, where her role included reviewing plans regarding finances and future endeavors.

“It was such a great experience for me to learn more about the economic impact the airport had on the city, as well as getting to know more about the airport that I’ve been traveling through my entire life.”

The peak of Casper’s advocacy work came in January 2019, during her junior year. Through the student-run organization People for Unity, Casper co-organized Idaho’s first re-titled Womxn’s March. The shift to “womxn” was made to symbolize the intersectionality of all people who identify as female.

“Being a woman looks different for everyone, and that’s totally OK,” Casper says.

In the buildup to the event, Casper sought input from the City of Boise and other organizations in order to learn how to organize a march. Her team had to tackle issues with funding and securing permits to make the march a success.

“It was very much a learning experience. If I were to do it again I’d do a lot of things differently. In the end it turned out super powerful,” says Casper.

The march itself was memorable, but the speeches in front of the Capitol are most vibrant in Casper’s mind. In addition to having former White House Communications Director Jennifer Palmieri as their featured speaker, the group had speakers from all walks of life, Casper says. She, along with her co-organizer, also had the opportunity to speak to a roaring crowd from the building’s imposing stone steps, and admits tearing up as she spoke.

“I lived in a very privileged bubble in Boise. This experience ... opened my eyes to how important it is to get different perspectives and work together to come up with the best solution to reach as many people as possible. You can try to do everything by yourself, but that will not get you nearly as successful results.”



Robenia Herbert

Queens, New York

As president of her high school’s Black Student Union, Robenia Herbert facilitated fundraising for everything from informative workshops with local businesses to educational trips. In her junior year, she organized a three-day trip to Washington, D.C.—open to members and nonmembers alike—to explore the nation’s capital.

The group’s itinerary included a trip to the National Museum of African American History & Culture, where Herbert recalls the installation of a Jim Crow-era railway car with segregated seating and an exhibit dedicated to Emmett Till as being particularly impactful.

“What I really appreciated was that people really got to learn something. It’s not that you don’t know, it’s just that people don’t take time out to focus on African American history, which is so vast,” Herbert says.

Back at her high school, Herbert dedicated herself to sharing that history and the damage caused by structural, systemic racism by organizing workshops for the “Black Lives Matter at School” program’s annual Week of Action, a series of anti-racist programs and events held in schools around the country. She created rotating presentations on gentrification and colorism. Students could also get involved with a pop-up museum of Black leaders with accompanying student presenters.

In addition, Herbert was also very involved with her school’s mentorship programs, serving as a “big sibling” to five underclassmen. In this role, she prioritized creating relationships and educational opportunities with her mentees by checking in on how they were doing, planning activities with them outside school, and acting as a go-between for teacher and student communications.

“I was everything in one, but less formal than an academic coach or advisor,” Herbert says. “I could give them the real details and be there for them socially.”





Neftali Segovia-Cruz

College Place, Washington

➔ Neftali Segovia-Cruz grew up knowing she wanted to come to Whitman. As a Walla Walla area local, she'd fallen in love with the campus and was excited about the idea of attending college close to home. What she never imagined was that she'd be recruited to the college in her senior year of high school by Whitman Women's Soccer Coach Michelle Voiland. After all, she'd only seriously started playing soccer as a junior.

Segovia-Cruz had played soccer in elementary school, but left the game after an injury. Between that and her father's injury history when he played soccer in high school, it took time for Segovia-Cruz and her family to be comfortable with her playing competitively.

When she was ready to return to the sport, Segovia-Cruz tried out for — and made — the Walla Walla United Soccer Club (WWUSC) team.

"I'd never received any training or anything like that so I was literally starting at zero. I didn't know how to kick the ball, I didn't know how to do anything," says Segovia-Cruz.

After that experience, she felt more confident trying out for the team at Walla Walla High School.

As a starter on the Wa-Hi junior varsity team in her junior year, Segovia-Cruz proved to be a scoring machine. She worked hard, training for and competing in different tournaments with the school and club teams and practicing with her younger brother, who she says

keeps her on her toes and motivated. In her senior year, she made the varsity team as a starter — and caught the attention of Coach Voiland.

At Whitman, Segovia-Cruz plays outside midfielder — one of the most demanding positions on a soccer team — and is excited to play her first college soccer season in her hometown.

"It's been challenging to have a new team and new coaches, but there's a good team dynamic."

Soccer isn't the only activity Segovia-Cruz is passionate about. She's also involved in folklorico, a traditional Mexican dance.

"I'm Hispanic and I went through a time period where I didn't really understand my identity," Segovia-Cruz says.

Folklorico allowed Segovia-Cruz to connect with her culture and history, which she is now proud to share with the community through performances her dance group puts on at local fairs and other events.

Language is another way Segovia-Cruz connects with her heritage. At home, she speaks English, but when she began school her first language was Spanish, which she still uses to communicate with many extended family members. Now comfortable switching back and forth between Spanish and English, Segovia-Cruz knows being able to speak two languages is an asset — one she often uses to help community members who are experiencing language difficulties.

Communicating with and helping others defines Segovia-Cruz's future goals, too. She currently plans to major in psychology and minor in sociology, with the hope of one day becoming a clinical psychologist.

Jackson Lancaster

Seattle, Washington

➔ Whitman's supportive community was part of what drew Jackson Lancaster to the college. So when the self-described very sociable student was accepted through the college's early decision option, he wasn't about to let the fact that his first-ever semester of college would be held entirely online stand in his way of connecting with his classmates. Instead, Lancaster decided to recreate the camaraderie he'd seen on his campus visit in the virtual world.

"I wanted to create a community to bring people together, especially during COVID."

Each year, Whitman establishes a Facebook group for the incoming class to connect—but Lancaster wanted additional, more interactive ways first-years could get to know each other before they could meet in person.

In early 2020, he teamed up with another early decision student, Emily Mowry, to create a Snapchat group, drawing 30-plus future classmates, after posting in the class Facebook group. From there, a few students started playing video games together through Discord, a chat app popular with gamers. The Discord group hit it off and Lancaster came up with the idea to create a Discord server, a dedicated platform for a community to chat and video call. In its first month, the "Whitman Gang" server picked up around 30 people, more than Lancaster expected.

Making friends can be difficult without the on-campus casual interactions where students might exchange social media handles and phone numbers, says Lancaster. "But on the Discord server, being able to join in on my game nights or something—then you start meeting people."

In March 2020, when more future Whitties learned they'd been admitted, the server experienced a huge jump, from 30 to 300 members in just a few weeks. Keeping tabs on it all is a council of moderators who manage the various communication channels devoted to specific topics like memes, interests and personal stories.

While the server has had a few conduct issues, Lancaster has been pleased to see how fast community members speak up or notify a moderator to make sure people respect the chat rules. "People want to create a safe space. That's been the most interesting thing to see."

Upperclassmen joined in on Discord as well, offering their firsthand experiences of Whitman and information about the opportunities the college offers. That's a role Lancaster looks forward to taking on as he connects newly admitted students from the Class of 2025 to the server. He's also worked with the Office of Admission to brainstorm new ways to expand the server and align the digital space with campus, such as sharing details of campus events and creating spaces for clubs to communicate.

"It's been a great experience so far and I've met a lot of really great friends. It's allowed people to get a sense of community within Whitman without being on campus."



LEFT: QUINN CHRISTIAN, RIGHT: REBECCA DEVERAUX



Merry Cockroft

Poulsbo, Washington

➔ At 12 years old, Merry Cockroft started selling her home-baked cupcakes. By 14, she'd launched a website and her business, Merry's Wee Cakes, was attracting a much larger clientele.

Although she describes baking and cooking for people as "one of her love languages," doing so professionally initially took Cockroft out of her comfort zone. "I was a very quiet person," she says, explaining the challenges of marketing herself and her business.

Cockroft's baking career peaked in her sophomore year, when she was hired by the Washington Department of Transportation to bake 500 cupcakes for the grand opening of a new ferry in Bremerton. Governor Jay Inslee was among the high-profile guests at the launch event.

Finding success with Merry's Wee Cakes helped the quiet student find her voice: "It really pushed me in the direction of realizing that I have something to offer," she says. At the same time, Cockroft was also realizing that she was interested in using her voice for other purposes.

Cockroft joined her school's student government and started engaging in environmental advocacy. She established her school's first environmental club, the Green Team, while creating her own environmental policy internship at City Hall. She also got more involved with the Episcopal Church. In her junior year, she attended the Al Gore Climate Reality Leadership Corps in Atlanta, where she heard minister

and activist William Barber II speak about environmental justice.

"It was then that I fully realized the importance of faith communities in addressing the intersectionality of environmental justice, food/health justice and anti-poverty issues."

When she returned from the training, she interned with the Earth and Spirit ministry at Bainbridge Island's Grace Episcopal Church, where she helped expand the children's Sunday school curriculum to include "creation care" education and started leading presentations on why Christians should be involved in seeking environmental justice.

In her first year at Whitman, Cockroft continues to use her voice to help others and to advocate for justice in many forms. She helps educate school-age kids about civil rights as a volunteer with Whitman Teaches the Movement, encourages members of the community to take part in the civic process through her involvement with Whitman Votes, and offers support to her fellow students as a Peer Listener with the Whitman College Counseling Center.

Cockroft is also the Inclusion Fellow for Religious and Spiritual Life for the Intercultural Center, where she works with Interfaith Chaplain Adam Kirtley "to support religious and spiritual identities on campus, and to provide opportunities for students to find wholeness and discover what their own spiritual identity means to them."

In this role, she's already played a key part in organizing the installation of Whitman's meditative labyrinth (read more on page 2) and has launched "Around the Table," a monthly arts digest of religion- and spirituality-focused reflections and poetry from the campus community.

Erin McKinney

Bozeman, Montana

➔ Erin McKinney first visited Whitman on the way home from a trip to the Oregon coast. A lifelong competitive swimmer, McKinney eagerly met with the assistant swim coach for a quick chat. She was impressed by the close-knit community.

"I came during the Blue and Gold Meet and that really made me want to come here just because there was so much support on the team. People were constantly cheering, people were dressed up in banana suits. It really just seemed like a family," McKinney says.

In her senior year of high school, McKinney was swim team captain. She won all four of her state competition races. She also set her high school's record in the 100-yard breaststroke and in relays. Having spent the past year mostly out of the pool, McKinney prepared herself for a more low-key college start. She was ready to focus on being part of the team and community, while making the best of a more limited season. That's why she was pleasantly surprised when she got close to her best times at her first college swim meet.

"It was pretty exciting. I wasn't expecting a whole lot, just staying positive and hoping that we'd have a more competitive season next year," McKinney says.

In high school, McKinney's love for swimming extended into volunteering as a coach with the Special Olympics swim team. She soon found that being someone to talk with was just as important as being a coach.

"I could tell I was making a difference in their lives, however small, and that also changed my perspective on community engagement, because they showed me that I really make an impact."

McKinney also participated in her school's Partners Club, where she spent her lunch hours getting to know special education students. She credits the experience with helping her understand different perspectives.

At college, McKinney is participating in the Whitman Friends Mentor Program, which pairs Whitman students with Walla Walla elementary schoolers to create positive and supporting relationships.



PHOTO BY CALLAY BOIRE-SHEED, JUNIOR FROM PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON



About the Author Genevieve Vogel from Brunswick, Maine, is a member of Whitman's Class of 2024. She says she's honored that her classmates trusted her with their stories: "Not only do they bring unique experiences to the table, they've arrived with remarkable introspection. What I have taken away is that everyone here has something to offer, large and small, that makes our community what it is." In addition to her interest in journalism, Vogel is studying history and economics and is active in the Young Democrat Socialists Club and the Whitman chapter of Every Vote Counts.

Across Distance, Across Cultures

Alumni help welcome first-year students to Whitman

BY WHITNEY RICH '20



Having spent her first semester at Whitman College taking classes from her home in Nairobi, Kenya, it wouldn't have been surprising if Stacy

Wamuchii felt apprehensive traveling to a new country and embarking on her in-person college experience for the first time—especially during a pandemic. But when Wamuchii stepped off the plane in Seattle, she wasn't a bit nervous.

Clutching tightly to her list of U.S. phone numbers—which included the number of Whitman alumna Kirsten Adams Gable '01—Wamuchii knew there was a strong support network ready to help her at a moment's notice.

"Even when I was traveling, I wasn't really scared about coming to college, because I felt like I already had built a community and I knew where I would get support," says Wamuchii.

Common Interests

Gable and Wamuchii first connected in the summer of 2020 through a program that brought together alumni and first-year students. The program, developed in response to the need to welcome an entire class of Whitties virtually and managed by many student support services on campus, paired alumni and students based on common interests, geographic locations and more. More than 130 first-year students and 70 alumni signed up and were paired.

Gable, a biology major and environmental studies minor, has continued to be involved with the college since graduating. When the Alumni Office reached out to the alumni network to garner volunteers, she eagerly accepted. Gable and Wamuchii began chatting over video calls before classes started in August and continued their conversations throughout the fall semester.

"For Stacy, it was not just a transition to college, but a transition into a whole different culture," Gable says. And as Wamuchii prepared to come to the U.S., their conversations shifted.

Their discussions would often begin by talking about the Whitman campus, but would veer to other relevant topics, current events and holidays happening during the fall semester. "We talked about how voting works in the United States and Stacy would share how voting works in Kenya. We had these wonderful conversations, getting to know each other."

Growing Connections

The periodic chats strengthened Wamuchii's connection to her college and served as a reminder that, although thousands of miles apart, the Whitman community was her community too.

"I was able to feel like I was part of the Whitman community even when I was still in Nairobi, doing my everyday things, I would still know and be reminded: 'Oh, I am part of the Whitman community,'" says Wamuchii.

Gable and Wamuchii were connected by their shared interests in biology and environmental studies. After Whitman, Gable worked for an environmental consulting firm. In 2003, she and her colleagues started their own firm, Sapere Consulting, which

integrates organizational and digital transformation and energy solutions.

"Just being able to hear about what Kirsten does now and what school was like for her, taking biology classes and then studying abroad in Australia, it's also prepared me toward what I want to do," says Wamuchii. "I now know that these opportunities exist. It was a way of

informing me what Whitman has to offer without directly listing everything."

While their connection started at biology, it didn't stop there. Throughout the fall and winter, Wamuchii and Gable talked about different student affinity groups and programs at Whitman, the first-year seminars and more. Gable encouraged Wamuchii to check out the Outdoor Program (OP), telling her that she wished she'd been more involved with the many trips and leadership opportunities it offers. Wamuchii now works in the OP's rental shop.

Wamuchii says she appreciates the perspective that Gable has as a Whitman alumna. "I think that the best person to

explain Whitman is somebody who has been to Whitman. They have an idea of their own student experience, even if it is from 20 years ago, I feel like it is still relevant and important."


A Sense of Belonging

Prior to Wamuchii's arrival on campus in January, Gable introduced her to another international student she mentors, senior geology major Sharon Ndayambaje, and the trio held what Wamuchii cheerfully named their "family Zoom call."

Ndayambaje, who is from Rwanda, was eager to share tips and insights from her own experiences. Wamuchii found Ndayambaje and Gable's advice on packing—particularly how to pack and dress for cold weather—very helpful.

"Sharon told me, 'When it snows a lot, it will fall into your shoes, so you need tall boots.'" And when Walla Walla got multiple feet of snow this February, as Ndayambaje had predicted, Wamuchii was prepared.

Wamuchii's connections with Ndayambaje and Gable, along with Whitman's International Student Support Services programming—which covers everything from how to set up a bank account to getting a campus job—all contributed to her confidence and comfort as she arrived on campus to start her second semester in person.

"I was imagining one day, if all these meetings did not exist, how would I be feeling about coming to Whitman?," Wamuchii says. "I think I would be really scared and full of fear to come to Whitman in my first few weeks. Because, often, you're not sure what to do, but, just having the confidence that you've talked to people before makes you feel like you belong." 

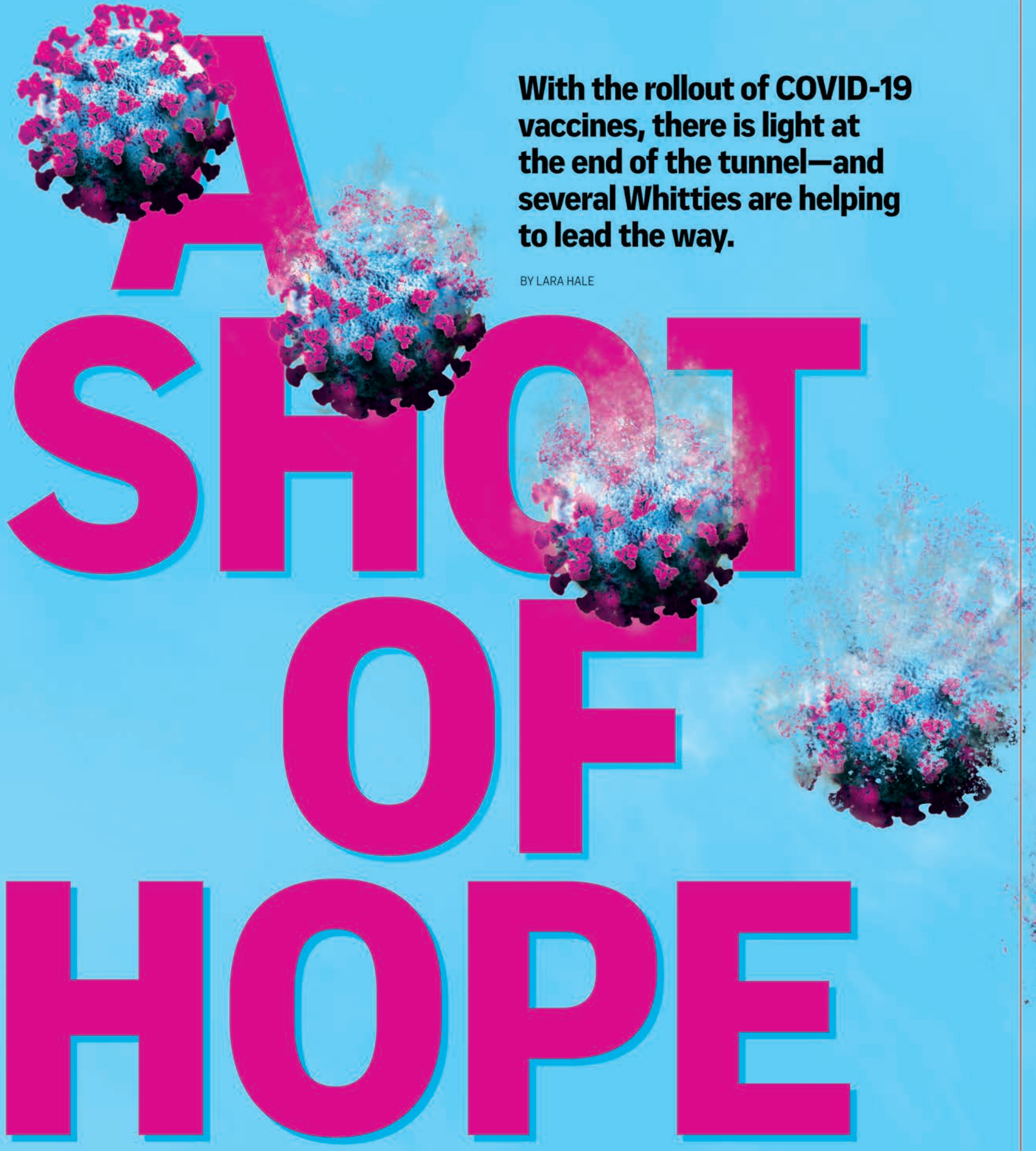
Visit whitman.edu/magazine to read more stories of first-year and alum friendships sparked by the program.



Kirsten Adams Gable '01



Stacy Wamuchii, first-year student from Nairobi, Kenya



With the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, there is light at the end of the tunnel—and several Whitties are helping to lead the way.

BY LARA HALE



After 16 years of working on immunizations projects in public health, Michele Roberts '98 (Biology) says she is accustomed to hearing from people who don't want to be vaccinated. But things changed when the first COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Washington state in December 2020. That's when Roberts started hearing from people who do want to be vaccinated. And there are a lot of them.

"The vaccine is really the pathway out of this pandemic. It's the most powerful prevention tool we have," says Roberts, who has led the immunizations office of the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) for the last seven years, and has been acting assistant secretary for DOH's prevention and community health division since June 2020.

"The demand is high—and rightfully so—but there's just not enough vaccine for everyone [to get it at once]," she says.

DOH Chief of Staff Jessica Todorovich '98 (Politics) agrees that lack of supply is the greatest challenge to the agency's efforts.

"I think the reason why is that it jeopardizes the best practices around how we can roll out the vaccine," she says. "Low supply, in and of itself, is what it is, but it creates certain dynamics. If we had more supply, we'd be able to hit a broader range of the targets we set of what's important to us around vaccine distribution."

One of those targets is equity

in providing the vaccine to traditionally underserved and marginalized communities.

Prioritizing Need

With limited amounts of the vaccine available in the early months of the rollout, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued recommendations to federal, state and local governments about who should be vaccinated first—based on three goals: decreasing death and serious disease, preserving the functioning of society, and reducing the additional burden the pandemic is having on people already facing disparities. Other groups, including the National Academy of Medicine and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, released their own guidelines.

Roberts' team considered information from all three bodies to create the framework for Washington's vaccinations efforts. It was not an easy task, she says.

"What judgments and values do you use to decide who [gets the vaccine first]?" says Roberts. "Restaurant workers or farm workers? People who are pregnant, or have disabilities or older people who have the highest risk of death? These are the types of decisions we're trying to make every day."

As supply caught up to demand in each eligibility tier, the vaccine was made available to the next tier, until April 15—right as this issue was going to print—when Washington Governor Jay Inslee deemed anyone over the age of 16 years was eligible to be vaccinated. The goal is to have enough of the state's population vaccinated to meet

“The vaccine is really the way out of this pandemic. It’s the most powerful prevention tool we have.”

—MICHELE ROBERTS, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY HEALTH, WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Coming Soon?

At press time, there were three vaccines approved for emergency use in the United States: Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson, but Gregory Glenn, M.D., '77 is working to ensure another joins that list. As the president of research and development for Maryland-based Novavax, Glenn leads the pharmaceutical company's discovery, clinical and regulatory teams, and has been involved with the development of its COVID-19 vaccine from concept to late-stage clinical trials.

Vaccines use different methods to protect us from viruses. The Novavax candidate, NVX-CoV2373, is called a protein subunit vaccine. While the other vaccines introduce the genetic material coding for the viral spike protein, this type of vaccine delivers the modified spike protein directly. Once the vaccine is administered, the body recognizes the protein as foreign and builds antibodies and white blood cells that will remember how to fend off the actual virus if you later become infected. In Phase 3 trials in the United Kingdom, the Novavax vaccine was shown to be 89% effective one week after the second dose.

In a live event with The Washington Post, Glenn predicted that the coronavirus vaccine will become part of seasonal immunization, and confirmed that Novavax has investigated combining its coronavirus vaccine with the annual flu vaccine.

"I think, as we see in our data, the [COVID-19] virus will evolve. ... It's going to be important to try to match that up with the vaccines, and we have the technology to do that, very agilely."

the minimum requirements for herd immunity by the middle of summer.

"We've never done anything like that in our lifetime," Roberts says. "We do amazing things each year with getting kids immunized or getting flu shots out there, but it's never been 70% of the adult population within six or seven months."

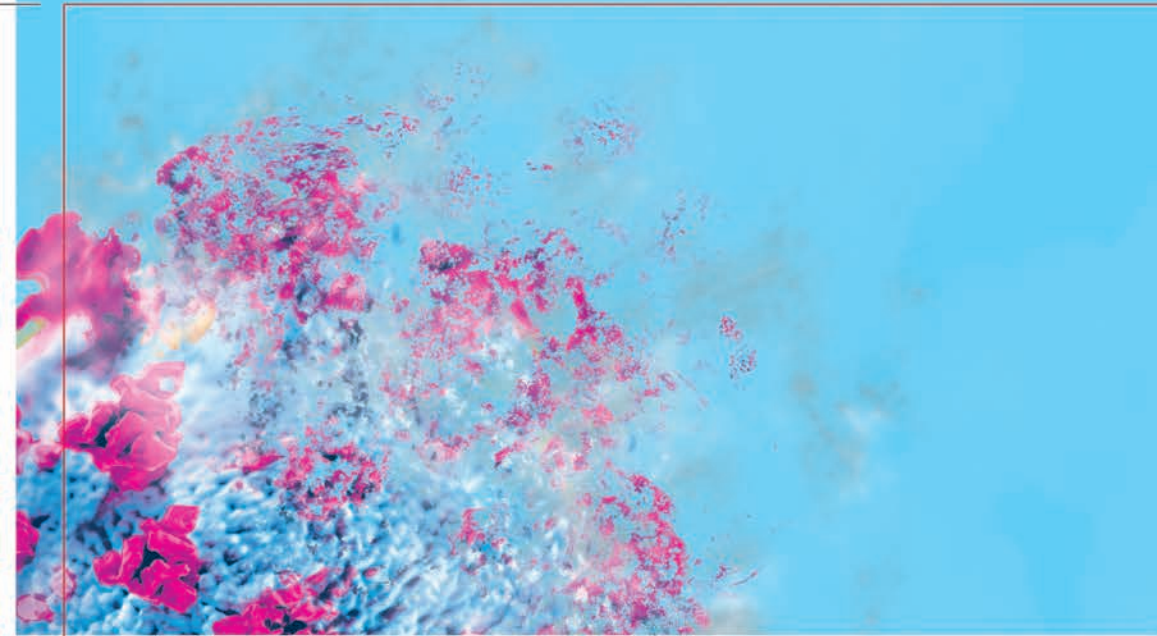
Building Trust

An adequate supply of the vaccine is only one part of the equation, though, says Maria Courogen '85 (French), director of systems transformation at the DOH.

"Having the vaccine does not mean you automatically have the path to vaccination—that takes staffing, and it takes resources from the states and the counties to be able to do that," she says. "And while a lot of money was poured into the development of the vaccine, we're still waiting to get adequate resources into the states and counties for them to be able to actually deliver them. Unless you can get shots into arms, they're not going to do what you need them to do."

In the early days of the pandemic, Courogen, who has a background in infectious disease, worked with her team to identify and offer the things residents needed in order to be able to quarantine and/or isolate.

"As we were putting together that body of work, we thought it was important to hire a workforce of folks



who were already familiar to and trusted by the community we needed to serve,” Courogen says.

The pilot site for this care coordination effort, which would soon spread out across the state, was in Yakima. The county had a high rate of COVID-19 infections early on and has a large population of agricultural workers, including many from the Latinx community who may be wary of interacting with government agencies. Courogen’s team used community-based organizations and health centers to get past these barriers to share information and let the community know they needn’t be afraid to accept government services.

“Once the word of mouth from people who received health care or services got out to the community, it built trust—not only for the purposes of our quarantine and isolation services work, but it makes people less afraid to go to a testing site or if they get a call from the health department about contact tracing.”

Roberts says the inroads Courogen’s team made with care coordination and empowering communities to lead local efforts have also been important to the organizing the vaccination.

“It’s our job to make sure we’re giving people equal access to vaccines and to figure out their questions and concerns,” Roberts says. “One of the major things we’ve done is funding the communities to do this work. Rather than just asking for feedback or input, we’re asking ‘Can you create

messages, materials and outreach for your communities if we give you the resources to do it?’”


She adds that another role community organizations have taken on is helping people make appointments for the vaccine through the state’s online Phasefinder tool. The DOH is also setting aside 30% of appointments at mass vaccination sites for phone-based scheduling. “We know that some populations don’t have access to technology in the same way others do.”

Looking Ahead

Although the coronavirus vaccine rollout offers progress and much-needed hope, there still is a lot of work ahead to meet the numbers needed for herd immunity.

There are many factors that could complicate the effort. Researchers don’t have definitive answers regarding how long immunity lasts after receiving the vaccine, or after recovering from sickness from the actual virus.

Roberts is also concerned that as more people start getting vaccinated, others could feel the virus isn’t as much of an immediate threat anymore and lower their guard around safety precautions or even decide not to get vaccinated themselves.

But overall, she’s cautiously optimistic: “Rather than feeling like taking one step forward and two steps back, now it feels like we’re taking two steps forward and one step back.” 



Fear Factor

There are plenty of obstacles and challenges to getting people vaccinated, including one that Tom Armstrong, professor of psychology at Whitman, thinks is often overlooked: hesitancy due to a fear of needles.

Very few people meet the formal criteria for being clinically diagnosed with what’s known as blood-injection-injury phobia. “This is an extreme level of fear—some of these folks actually die because they will forgo lifesaving treatment to avoid injection/venipuncture,” says Armstrong. “Indeed, there is a saying that blood-injection-injury phobia is the only anxiety disorder that can kill you.”

However, although fairly few people meet formal diagnostic criteria, at least 10% of the population has a strong fear of injections and other medical procedures. And Armstrong surmises that even that level of injection fear could interact with other factors. “If you are really afraid of injections, then you might be inclined to adopt beliefs that justify avoidance. You might be more susceptible to anti-vaccine misinformation, for example.”

A YEAR



Zoom scholars. Students are seen Feb. 1, 2021, in Assistant Professor Jason Ralston's Behavioral Economics hybrid-class, where half the class alternates biweekly from online to in-person in Olin Auditorium.



LIKE NO OTHER

Last spring, COVID-19 forced Whitman College to take decisive actions to keep students, faculty and staff safe. A year into this new world of masks, quarantines and social distancing, the pandemic still isn't over. But with the rollout of vaccines and the return to (modified) in-person classes for the Spring 2021 semester signaling the beginning of a new phase, we take time to pause and reflect on this historic time. BY LARA HALE

COLLEGE IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

As COVID-19 began to spread around the world—and especially here in Washington—Whitman sprang into action to keep our community safe. As the pandemic raged on for weeks and then months—and state and national guidance shifted in unexpected ways—“unprecedented” became the word of 2020. Here, we take a look back at how the Whitman community responded to a year like no other.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2020

Dean of Students Kazi Joshua emails the first announcement on COVID-19. In addition to suggesting measures to help stop the spread of viruses, such as **washing hands and disinfecting surfaces**, and making recommendations against traveling to certain countries for spring break, the announcement also informs the community that certain **Off-Campus Studies (OCS)** programs, including the Whitman Crossroads faculty-led China course scheduled for the summer of 2020, have been canceled.



FIRST WEEK OF MARCH 2020

The college encourages students to reconsider any **travel plans for spring break** and reminds those who live on campus that they are welcome to remain on campus during the break.

Whitman's excused absence policy is modified to allow students who do not feel well to **stay home from class** without a note from a health care provider.

More safety measures are introduced on campus, including ramped-up cleaning and disinfecting schedules and the installation of **contactless card readers** in dining area registers.



PERSECA BEVERLUX



GET IT TO GO

Cleveland Commons, the go-to spot for meals, socializing or just grabbing coffee, is usually buzzing. When COVID-19 restrictions forced Cleveland to cancel on-site dining on March 16, 2020, Chef Jon Sodini and his team swung into action, creating boxed meals for students to take out. Launched in the spring of 2021, a new mobile app lets students order meals ahead on their phones, helping to reduce wait times and maintain social distancing. And on weekends, students can now order whole pies to be delivered right to their door by bike from the Whitman Pizzeria.



REBECCA PEREYAN

**TUESDAY, MARCH 9 –
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2020**

President Kathleen Murray strongly encourages students to cancel their spring break travel plans and stay in Walla Walla instead, warning: “The situation is changing rapidly and **there is a chance that if you leave campus you may be unable to return** due to travel restrictions.”

The coronavirus task force hosts in-person forums for the college community in Maxey Auditorium. The events are also **streamed online** for those who are unable to attend or uncomfortable doing so.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2020

The College announces that **classes will shift to an online learning model** after spring break. All college-sponsored travel and public events are canceled until further notice. The **athletic season** is suspended. Operational hours are limited for many campus facilities, including Penrose Library, Sherwood Athletic Center and Cleveland Commons.

Students in OCS programs in countries deemed high-risk by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are **urged to return home as soon as possible**—if it is safe to do so.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2020

President Murray announces that **classes will continue online** throughout the remainder of the semester, in line with Washington Governor Jay Inslee’s proclamation prohibiting in-person classes throughout the state.

SOOTHING STRINGS

On March 20, 2020, Rose Heising '20 lifted the mood on campus by playing her violin outside Hunter Conservatory. Heising decided to play "Amazing Grace" because it's a hymn that most people know and it doesn't carry any negative weight. She said she was feeling a little blue and told herself that "at noon tomorrow I will stand outside and play music for an hour."

Enjoy Heising's performance at whitman.edu/magazine.

REBECCA OBERHAUS



MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020

Cleveland Commons restricts food services, **offering only to-go options.**

Athletic and fitness facilities are closed.

Other campus facilities are accessible **only to students, faculty and staff**; family members are no longer allowed in campus buildings.



TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020

All staff members who are able to **work from home** are encouraged to do so.

Penrose Library is closed to students, faculty and most staff.

Reid Campus Center, Memorial Building and all academic buildings are **closed to students.**

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2020

The local department of community health reports the first **confirmed case of coronavirus in Walla Walla County.**



MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2020

Online classes begin.



MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020

Wearing a mask, President Murray addresses the community via video to urge everyone to heed the CDC's recommended safety measures.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2020

President Murray announces there will be **no in-person commencement ceremony** for the Class of 2020.

In anticipation of a statewide shelter-in-place order, students are **strongly encouraged to return home** unless travel restrictions or unsafe conditions prevent it.

MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2020

Governor Inslee issues a Stay Home, Stay Healthy order to help slow the spread of the virus. The Whitman community, along with all other Washington residents, are told to **stay in their homes or residence halls** unless they need to leave for something essential, such as food or health care services.

APRIL 4-10, 2020

The college hosts a **Virtual Admitted Students Week** to engage with the incoming Class of 2024. The event includes **virtual tours of campus**, a live-streamed Q&A with President Murray, and "Profs in the Wild," videos in which professors offer short lectures al fresco.

FIELD DAY

On May 5, 2020, Chloe Carothers-Liske '20 worked on her laptop while soaking up the sun on Ankeny Field. Although most students went home after spring break, the environmental studies major and her housemates chose to stay and make the most of their senior year. "When many of my extracurricular activities at Whitman got canceled or modified, I initially felt like I didn't know what to do with myself," says Carothers-Liske. "But with time, I became grateful for the extra hours in my day because they allowed me to have the time to really connect with my friends who remained on campus."



REBECCA DENEGALUX



**SUNDAY,
MAY 24, 2020**

Commencement for the Class of 2020 takes place online.

JUNE 2020

On June 2, Whitman withdraws approval for all **Fall 2020 study abroad** students due to ongoing health and safety issues as well as travel restrictions related to the pandemic.

Throughout the month, the college develops and communicates its plans **to open campus for in-person classes** in the Fall 2020 semester.



**FRIDAY,
JUNE 26, 2020**

Governor Inslee issues a statewide requirement to wear **face coverings**. Masks were already required on Whitman's campus ahead of the state mandate.

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020

After months of working to modify spaces, adapt courses for social distancing, reduce density in residence halls, and develop protocols for contact tracing and coronavirus testing on campus, Whitman announces that **remote learning will continue** through the Fall 2020 semester due to the increasingly rapid spread of the virus.

Incoming Class of 2024 students who don't want to start their first year fully remote are offered **gap semester and gap-year options**, along with a unique alternative: a single-course start that will allow students to enroll in only the first-year seminar so they can pursue gap-semester opportunities while staying connected to the Whitman community.

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020

Fall semester begins with **remote learning**.

AUGUST 19-20, 2020

Whitman runs its first **on-campus COVID-19 testing** event in a mobile lab.

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

The college reports the campus community's **first positive test result** for the coronavirus.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2020

President Murray announces the college will **welcome all students back to campus** for the Spring 2021 semester with a mix of in-person, hybrid and remote classes.

JANUARY 16-17, 2021

Students begin arriving on campus and start their **first week of quarantine**, which includes "quarantiation" activities for new-to-campus students.



MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021

Spring 2021 semester classes start as students begin their **second week of quarantine**.

Whitman launches **weekly COVID-19 testing** from a random sampling of the community (residential students, off-campus students, staff and faculty who are approved to access campus) with the goal of identifying asymptomatic cases and reducing the spread.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2021

Based on low numbers of COVID-19 cases, the college makes the decision to **open residence halls** to intercampus visitors. Students may host one student at a time from another residence hall in their private room while **wearing masks and maintaining social distancing**.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021

Nine positive COVID cases are detected in students living in Anderson Hall. All Anderson students are quarantined, testing frequency is increased, and those who test positive are moved to isolation.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

President Murray announces that the **commencement** ceremony for the Class of 2021 will take place **in person, but with restrictions**, on Sunday, May 23.

PHOTO BY F1 BLACK, JUNIOR FROM NEWARK, DELAWARE

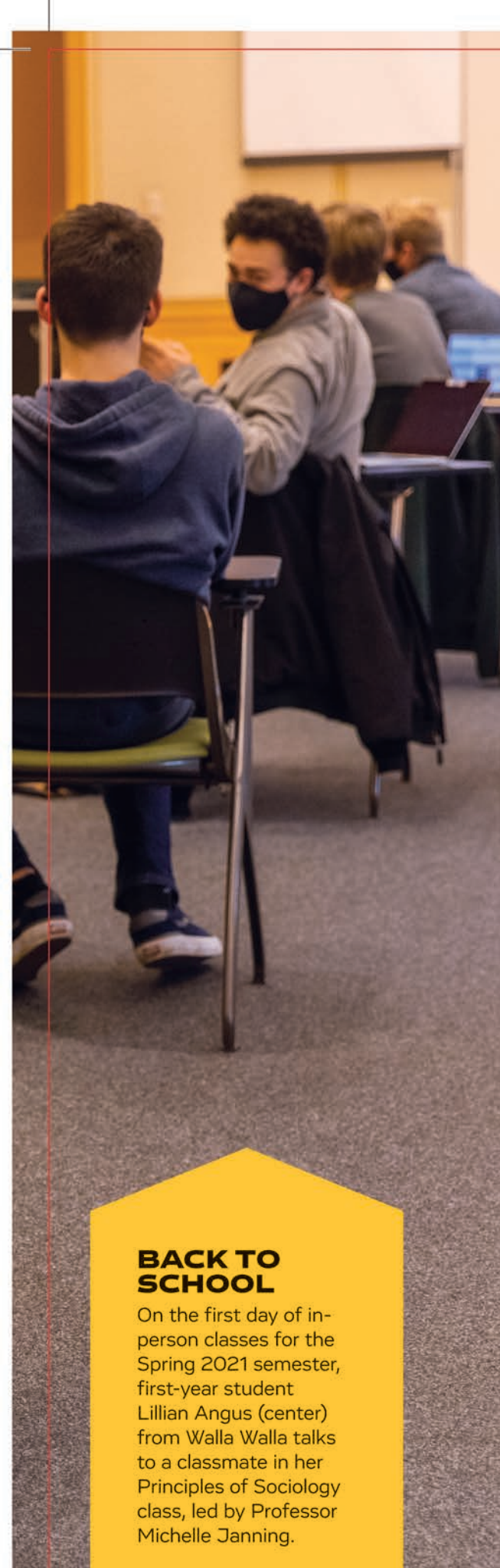


EMBRACING CHANGE

When junior Fi Black from Newark, Delaware, was instructed to create a "COVID-19 tool" as the final project for their sculpture class, Black knew it had to focus on touch: "It's just something you can't replace." Black created the temporary installation "Distintimacy," a wall of cellophane, to allow friends (like Jonathan Falk '20 and Helena Platt '19, pictured here) to be intimate while observing safety measures.



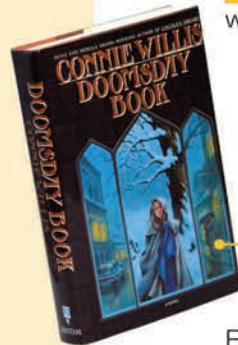
REBECCA M. BERTON



TIME CAPSULE

Items that will always remind us.

Whitman masks keep faces safely covered while putting your school spirit on show.



Reading helped Susan Weiler, senior research scientist in the biology department, while away the time in quarantine. She recommends a "fun book about past pestilence" like Connie Willis's **"The Domesday Book."**

From spring break vacations to commencement celebrations, so many of our plans have been canceled due to the pandemic. Jenny Stratton, administrative assistant in the Office of Fellowships and Grants, nominated **her family's whiteboard weekly calendar**, frozen from the first week of March 2020 as "a bittersweet reminder of the Before Times."



These status-sharing stickers are reminders of one of the few tests where we're all happy to get a negative result.

Molly Burchfield '19, Prentiss Hall resident director, says she'd add a **queen chess piece**: "I started playing (virtual) chess as a way to stay connected to friends after I watched 'The Queen's Gambit.'"



Antonia Keithahn, assistant director of academic resources for access and disability support, **made this ribbon** for close family members who were impacted directly by COVID-19 due to their jobs. "No matter what, we were all participants, whether we wanted to be or not. ... I wanted to honor the difficulties they were facing, but in a more lighthearted way." **W**



BACK TO SCHOOL

On the first day of in-person classes for the Spring 2021 semester, first-year student Lillian Angus (center) from Walla Walla talks to a classmate in her Principles of Sociology class, led by Professor Michelle Janning.



Character Studies

MIDDLE SCHOOL SPANISH TEACHER TIASHA GARCIA '96 FINDS BRINGING COSPLAY INTO THE CLASSROOM HELPS GET STUDENTS EXCITED ABOUT LEARNING.

BY WHITNEY RICH '20

ANDRII PHOTOGRAPHY

IT'S NOT A SURPRISE to Chilton Middle School sixth graders when they arrive for Spanish class and find that Wonder Woman has prepared a lesson for them. After all, they've also received lessons from the likes of Superman, Fred Jones from "Scooby Doo," Anakin Skywalker of "Star Wars," Katniss Everdeen from the "Hunger Games" series and a Mandalorian warrior.

As Wonder Woman—aka Tiasha Garcia '96—tells them a story in Spanish, the students quickly jump into the scene.

They'll ask Wonder Woman about her work as a superhero, their questions sprinkled with weekly vocabulary words and verb conjugations they've been working hard to perfect.

"Señora Garcia," as her students call her, combines her love for storytelling, cosplay and teaching every day in the classroom. She's

discovered through years of experience that an exciting, engaging classroom encourages students to explore and grow.

“Why would we want to read or learn something that is not as interesting as all the things going on in our lives and imaginations?” Garcia says.

Instead of long lists of vocabulary words and dull reading assignments, Garcia puts her pop culture knowledge and enthusiasm into the curriculum.

“I want kids to love reading, so I write short stories for my students every week. This year we started off with Anakin Skywalker and the Mandalorian. In the story, the Mandalorian meets somebody in Starbucks,” says Garcia. As her students acquaint themselves with the language, they love the familiar characters and references. They’ll announce: “¡Sra Garcia! ¡Estoy leyendo en español!” [Mrs. Garcia! I’m reading in Spanish!].

Garcia’s students progress quickly. The sixth graders learn Spanish as part of an elective class. They may begin with simple words and sentence constructions, but by the end of the three-month class they are writing their own comics and stories. A recent project that stirred up excitement among her students was creating their own superhero trading cards with Spanish words and phrases to describe the superpowers, sidekicks and more.

Many of Garcia’s students go on to earn a Seal of Biliteracy by their junior year of high school. “If I can give them the boost they need, then they’ll achieve it themselves,” Garcia says.

SETTING A NEW COURSE

Garcia loves everything about her work, but she didn’t always think she’d become a teacher. When she graduated from Whitman College in 1996, she was on track to become a lawyer. She started law school at Willamette University, but it wasn’t long before she found herself looking for other options.

“I realized that law school was not my calling. I liked it, but I was not passionate about it. So there I was with an English degree and my dad told me, ‘You know, they need teachers everywhere.’”

Such a big change might have frightened others, but for Garcia, she was ready to take on a completely new experience. And she credits her openness and confidence to everything she learned and did while a Whitman student.

“My eyes were opened to all the possibilities and new perspectives were unfolding daily,” says Garcia. “As an English major, a class I took on dinosaurs fundamentally changed my world view—about science, history and certainly ‘Jurassic Park.’”

Armed with an open mind, she decided to give teaching a try. She applied for a position at Merryhill Preparatory School in Sacramento, California, was hired, and began teaching in an English class on the same day.

“It was a ‘drop me in the boiling water’ kind of experience, but I knew I could do it and it’s how I discovered that I love teaching.”

It didn’t take long for Garcia’s love of storytelling to take center stage in her new job. Her students were reading “Jane Eyre” by Charlotte Brontë, a classic novel with a complex set of characters and settings. Garcia created “scenes” around the classroom and as they read together, the students moved popsicle stick characters from scene to scene. The students loved the interactive approach to reading and Garcia loved their enthusiasm. She was onto something—and this dynamic and delightful approach would come to define her teaching career.

Garcia held many different teaching jobs after Merryhill, and it was when she started teaching Spanish at Chilton Middle School in Roseville, California, that she found her favorite subject.

Garcia grew up speaking Spanish in the home of her maternal grandmother. She remembers the weekends spent playing with her cousins and speaking Spanish with her grandparents. She’s always been proud of her bilingualism. At Whitman, she was a founding member of Indo-Mestizo, the student group now called Club Latinx.

Garcia wants to provide the same encouragement for her students that she received while a student at Whitman.

“It was such a supportive environment. Whitman wants you to be a well-rounded person, they want you to become yourself,” says Garcia. “That was amazing for me because I didn’t know who I wanted to be and I think I’m still figuring it out. Whitman gave me all the tools to figure it out.”

MAKING MAGIC, WORD BY WORD

One day, as Garcia was storytelling with her students, they asked her: “Why don’t you publish a book?” It was an Aha! moment, she says.



Hola, friends! Tiasha Garcia '96 dresses as characters from popular comics and movies to engage students in her middle-school Spanish classes.

As she mulled over the idea, Garcia reached out to TPRS Books, a publishing company that specializes in materials for language classrooms with a focus on storytelling. The company is named after TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling), a language-teaching method developed by Spanish teacher Blaine Ray in the 1980s. When Garcia pitched a few of her favorite stories, TPRS Books loved her ideas and signed on to publish four of her books.

One of these books, “Amor y muerte en el tiempo de zombis” (“Love and Death in the Time of Zombies”) is set to be published this summer. Garcia is now not only bringing stories to life in her classroom, her creativity and passion for storytelling will reach students learning Spanish in classrooms across the United States.

Garcia wants to make learning to read in Spanish fun and relevant. Her stories take on many fantasies—like zombies, dragons, monsters and more—but she also works hard to represent her students’ daily lives. “I try to make sure the world in my books reflects the world I live in. I believe very strongly in equity and equal representation so that students can see themselves in these stories,” says Garcia.

“I loved the idea that I could start making the world [in the stories] they read look like the world, cultures and pop cultures that we live in. It’s like I have a tiny bit of superpower.” And when Garcia is in her classroom and writing her Spanish novels, she, like Wonder Woman, uses her superpowers to make the world a better place. **W**

Class Notes



No News is Bad News

Over the last 16 years, the United States has lost more than 2,100 newspapers, the majority of them local papers. Of those that are still around, many are "ghost newspapers," owned by giant chains that don't invest in reporting.

And that, says **Brier Dudley '88**, editor of The Seattle Times Save the Free Press Initiative, is a threat to democracy. The loss of local newspapers leads to reduced voter turnout, poorly informed voters and increased political polarization.

"As a voter, most of what you do as a citizen is local things. Of course we all talk about the presidency, but think about what's on the ballot: almost all of it is local issues and candidates," says Dudley. "Who's holding those local officials accountable? Who's providing information beyond the press releases? It's newspapers, by and large."

The initiative, launched at the end of 2019, calls for federal government intervention to stop newspaper job losses, enact reforms to address anti-competitive behavior by companies like Facebook and Google, and impose

regulations to control media consolidation. In his newly created role, Dudley covers the current local and national crisis in journalism, along with efforts to preserve the independence and sustainability of the nation's local free press system. His appointment was announced just a few weeks after the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, an event he says should be a turning point in the conversation.

"When you have tens of thousands of people who can't agree on basic facts like who won an election, that speaks to the loss of a comprehensive free press system."

Dudley's newspaper career began at the Whitman Pioneer, where his first story was a feature about Walla Walla record shop Hot Poop. He lives in Seattle with his wife, **Bonnie Peterson Dudley '89**. His daughter, **Eleanor Dudley '22**, is currently studying abroad at Oxford University. That makes the third generation of Dudleys at Whitman: his father, **Jim Dudley '61**, and mother, the late **Marcy Wilson Dudley '63**, were also Whitties.



1960s

Milt Markewitz '62 published "To Restore Earth's Balance: Awakening an Already Knowing" (Portal Center Press), an approach for addressing climate change by embodying the Earth-based principles of ecological balance and communal harmony that have been lived by Indigenous and Eastern cultures for millennia. Listening and learning from these people can help us understand and appreciate all life's emergent processes and interdependencies, and once again learn to flow with nature. Markewitz lives in Hood River, Oregon.



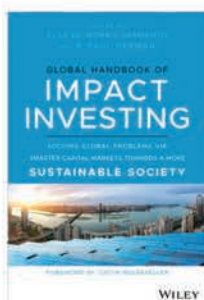
Jim Driscoll '65 published a new book, "How AIDS Activists Challenged America and Saved the FDA from Itself" (Academica Press), the story of how AIDS activists thwarted bureaucratic plans imposed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, saving HIV patients as well as rescuing the FDA itself from a self-inflicted public health catastrophe. The book made BookAuthority's list of 12 Best New AIDS Books To Read In 2021.

1970s

Lesley Johnson Farmer '71 published "Fake News in Context" (Rutledge), setting fake news within



a historical and international context and aiming to help readers become more skilled at detecting misinformation. Farmer is a professor of library media at California State University-Long Beach.



Lauryn Agnew '77 has published a chapter in the "Global Handbook of Impact Investing" (Wiley). Impact investing refers to investments made for social or environmental benefit as well as profit. Her chapter on Place-Based Impact Investing is based on her research as founder of the Bay Area Impact Investing Initiative. Agnew lives in Moss Beach, California.

Michael Benson '77 recently retired as the director of a commercial aircraft interiors group and is now a full-time jazz fan and long-distance cyclist planning a cross-country solo cycle venture in June. Benson lives in Yakima, Washington.

1980s

John Webber '80 started the year with a new role as Chief Technology Officer at Roadsurfer, a Munich, Germany, startup and European market leader in campervan rentals. He previously served as head of information technology for CHECK24, also headquartered in Munich.



A Study in Diplomacy

Ryan Crocker '71 received the 2020 Sylvanus Thayer Award from the West Point Academy Association of Graduates. The award is given to a U.S. citizen who is not a West Point graduate whose outstanding character, accomplishments and stature in the civilian community draw wholesome comparison to the qualities for which West Point strives, in keeping with its motto: "Duty, Honor, Country." Citing his distinguished career spanning more than 40 years, including six postings as U.S. ambassador, West Point Association of Graduates Board Chairman Lt. Gen. (USA, Ret.) Joseph E. DeFrancisco, said, "Without question, Ambassador Crocker's career stands as an exemplar of Duty, Honor, Country, making him a most worthy selection of our highest award." Crocker is a nonresident senior fellow in the Geoeconomics and Strategy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He lives in Spokane with his wife, Christine Barnes Crocker.



Crocker, next to a portrait of himself at Washington Hall, West Point, the site of the Thayer award banquet.



Crocker was honored with a "pass and review ceremony" on the parade field at West Point.

CLASS NOTES

Phil Boss '71, made a virtual return to campus in fall 2020 via an episode of a student-run podcast that tackles race issues on campus. On the show, Boss, who played a key role in founding Whitman's first Black Students Union (BSU) and served as president of the group from 1968 to 1971, spoke with Aliyah Fard, current BSU vice-president, and encouraged students navigating their roles as community activists, telling them: "The work you are doing is not work in vain. ... It's about planting a seed."

Pictured in the college's first BSU yearbook photo (circa 1969-1970): Back row, left to right, **John Mitchell '73**, Ernie Roberts (now **Fuasi Abdul-Khalid**) '72, **John Bibb '73**, **Floyd Gossett '72**, Valerie Simpson, **Harold Thompson '73**, **Arthur Mitchell '72**. Front row, left to right **Philip Boss '71** and **Fred Mitchell '72** (deceased).

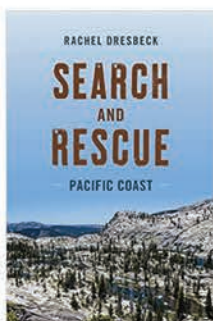


Akira "Ron" Takemoto, assistant professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Japanese, shared these photos from small Whittie reunions he and his wife, Maya Takemoto, attended on a 2019 trip to Japan.

Top: Kyoto, June 29, 2019. Front row: **Seanacey Pierce Yabe '07** and Noa; Akira Takemoto. Back row, left to right: Kei Sugiyama, 2014-2016 language assistant; **Sara Portesan '13**; **Jill Eiko Morita '09**; Maya Takemoto; **MaryAnne Bowen '14**; **Megan Olson Murayama '14**; Kazuto Kimura, 2004-2005 Doshisha University exchange student; Ayana Hatsuda, 2009-2010 Doshisha exchange student and 2012-2014 language assistant; Hina Morioka, 2009-2010 Doshisha exchange student.



Bottom: Tokyo, June 22, 2019. Front row, left to right: **Haruko Fusano Miyamoto '84**; Maya; Akira; Yasuha Miura, 2015-2016 Doshisha exchange student. Back row, left to right: Noriko Omoto, 2008-2010 language assistant; **Jessica Yoshihiro Martinez '09**; Takashi Aoki, 2007-2008 Doshisha exchange student; Yohta Mikawa; **Yuri Watanabe Otake '07**; **Mitsue Takeda Mikawa '92**; Hana Yamada Horii, 2004-2005 language assistant; Chiyo Yamamoto Goto, 2010-2011 language assistant.



Rachel Dresbeck '85 has published "Search and Rescue Pacific Coast" (Lyons Press). The Pacific Coast is home to a beautiful wonderland of recreation, but along with this natural beauty comes risk, even for the most well-prepared. Dresbeck has collected the stories of the mountaineers, rangers and ordinary volunteers who step in to help when the terrain and conditions show no mercy. Dresbeck lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband and their dog, Willa.

Rachel Brown-Chidsey '87 is still in Maine, teaching in the special education department at the University of Southern Maine campus in Portland. She is proud of the members of the COVID class of 2021 for their resilience, especially **Ellie Chidsey '21**.



1990s

R. Chris Reeder '93 has published his second novel, "The Trickster's Sister" (Black Rose Writing). A young adult fantasy novel that draws upon Welsh mythology to tell the tale of a family of goblins living in the American Midwest, this is a sequel to "The Changeling's Daughter," published in 2018. Reeder lives in Madison, Wisconsin, with his wife and two children.

2000s

Anna Taft '02 has been teaching remote short courses for Whitman students through the O'Donnell Visiting Educator program, bringing together local experts from Mali and Ecuador with Whitman students to discuss important issues like the pandemic and language revitalization. She also presented a paper at the annual conference of the Concerned Philosophers for Peace. Taft continues to lead The Tandana Foundation team in collaboration with communities in Mali and Ecuador, though this work has become even more remote than usual during the pandemic. She is currently based in Mancos, Colorado.



Phillip Chu '09 has joined Helsell Fetterman, a Seattle-based law firm, as part of the commercial litigation and medical malpractice groups. He is a former prosecutor with a combined seven years as a deputy prosecuting attorney with the King County Prosecuting Attorney's office and as an assistant city prosecutor with the Seattle City Attorney's office.



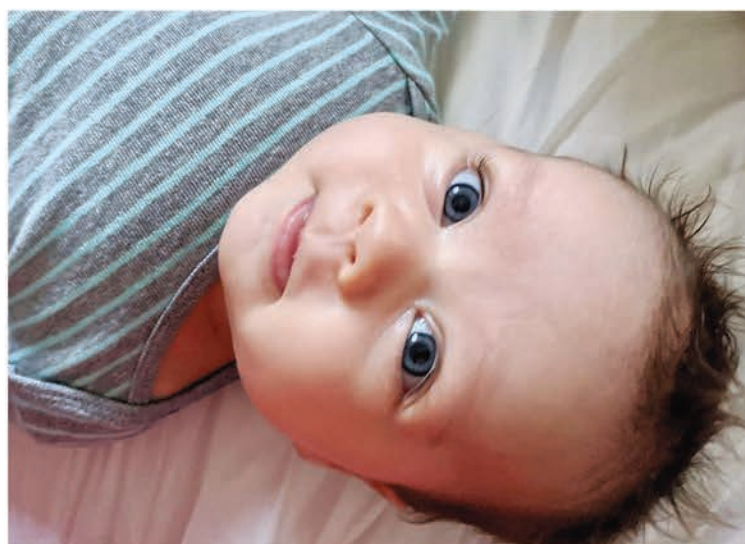
Rachel Alexander '13 was appointed managing editor of Salem Reporter in Salem, Oregon. She will oversee day-to-day news coverage for the web-based news organization. Alexander will also continue her coverage of education and nonprofits in the region.

Marriages/Unions

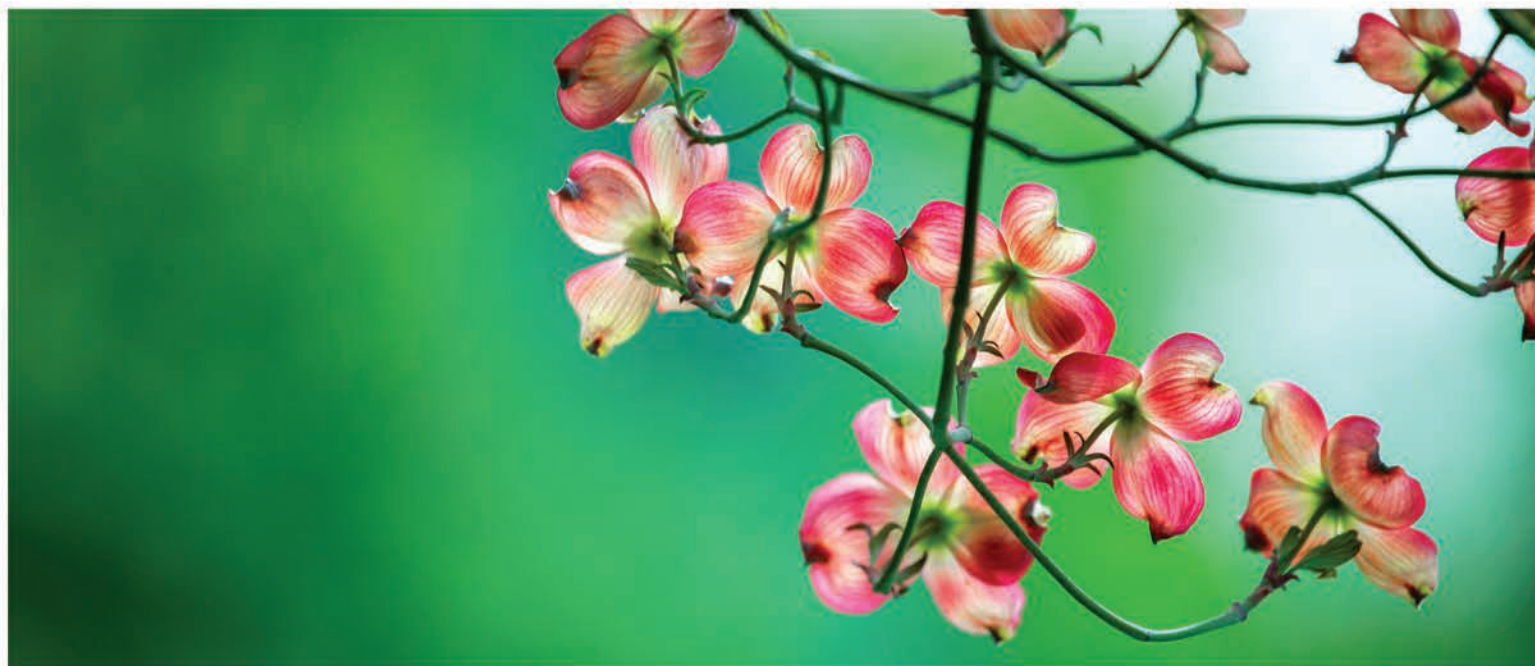


Michelle Mathieu '92 to Jim Hutton, Dec. 12, 2020, in Seattle. The ceremony was officiated by the Honorable Judge **James Robart '69**. Pictured, left to right: Mathieu, Robart, Hutton.

Births/Adoptions



To **Gillian Frew '11** and **Alex Ponnaz '11**, a son, Simon Esfandiar Frew-Ponnaz, born Oct. 13, 2020.



In Memoriam

Stella Reid Bowers '47, Dec. 29, 2020, in New Orleans, Louisiana. After Whitman, she married Cyril Bowers in 1948; together they raised three children. The family settled in New Orleans. Predeceased by her husband of 72 years, her survivors include a daughter and two sons.

Maurine Elliott Williams '47, Jan. 6, 2021, in Carson City, Nevada. She married **Rene Williams '55** in 1949 and they had three children. Williams earned her teaching certificate at the University of Nevada, Reno, and taught elementary school in the same city for 30 years. The couple traveled extensively, visiting more than 30 countries. Predeceased by her husband and a daughter, her survivors include two sons and four grandchildren.

Jean Barker Drummond '48, Dec. 1, 2020, in Portland, Oregon. After Whitman, she married Robert Drummond in

1950; they raised three children and later divorced. Drummond worked in the social work field for many years, eventually earning a master's degree with a focus on gerontology from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1983.

1950s

Joyce Larson Blessinger '50, Oct. 9, 2019, in Bellingham, Washington. She was a registered nurse and served in the U.S. Army during WWII. She married **Doug Blessinger '48** in 1946 and together they raised two children. She was predeceased by her husband in 1991.

Lee Fisher '50, Oct. 28, 2020, in Kirkland, Washington. He married **Shirley Brown '50** in 1950 and they had two daughters. He earned a master's degree in English from the University of Washington in

Seattle. Fisher worked in the paper industry early in his career, then worked in government relations and lobbying for banking. Survivors include his daughters, Jennifer Fisher Sutton and **Gail Fisher Joyce '80**.

Shirley Brown Fisher '50, July 30, 2020, in Kirkland, Washington. After Whitman, she married **Lee Fisher '50** and together raised two daughters. Fisher earned her teaching certificate in speech pathology from the University of Washington in Seattle, teaching in both the Auburn and Spokane school districts. Survivors include her daughters, Jennifer Fisher Sutton and **Gail Fisher Joyce '80**.

Bruce Norton '50, Nov. 28, 2020, in Seneca, South Carolina. He served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. After Whitman, he married Marilyn Clark in 1957; together they raised three children. Norton earned his M.B.A. from the University of Denver, and the family settled in Seneca, where he was general manager of the Jantzen Southern plant until his retirement in 1985. Norton

is survived by his wife, three children and five grandchildren.

Wesley Stone '50, Jan. 2, 2021, in Spokane, Washington. He served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. After Whitman, he attended dental school at the University of Washington in Seattle and established his practice in Spokane. Married twice, he had two children and adopted a third from China. He retired to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Survivors include his wife, a son, two daughters and three granddaughters.

John "Dick" Turbak '50, May 18, 2020, in Eatonville, Washington. After Whitman, he earned a master's degree in finance and banking from the University of Washington in Seattle. Turbak married Irma Lincoln in 1950; together they raised three children. Following his wife's death in 1997, he married Marilyn Hoehne. He retired as senior vice-president and chair of Puget Sound National Bank in 1999. Turbak served as a class representative for the office of Annual Giving.

Raymond "Ray" Haman '51, Oct. 1, 2020, in Langley,

Washington. He married Phyllis Garrett in 1948 and they raised two children. Haman earned his J.D. from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, and was a partner in Lane Powell Spears Lubersky in Seattle for his entire career. Haman served as an associate class representative and class representative for the Annual Giving office. Predeceased by his wife of more than 58 years, a son and a grandson, his survivors include a daughter and two grandsons.

David Rand '51, Dec. 5, 2020, in Portland, Oregon. After Whitman, he earned a B.A. and B.S. in pharmacy from Oregon State College in Corvallis. He married Arlene Rufener in 1956 and had two daughters. After an early career as a pharmacist, Rand and his wife owned and managed rental properties.

Maureen "Connie" Roberts Conniff '52, Oct. 23, 2020, in Port Angeles, Washington. After Whitman, she earned her master's degree in education with a focus in vocational rehabilitation counseling at the University of Washington in Seattle. Conniff worked as

a counselor for the State of Washington, retiring in 1999. She was predeceased by a brother, **Richard Conniff '44**.

Ann Coey Houston '52, Jan. 31, 2021, in Missoula, Montana. She married Stanley Houston in 1954 and lived the life of a military spouse, including a two-year post in the Philippines. Houston earned her M.S.W. from Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, in 1971, and worked as a social worker in five states. The couple retired in 1979, splitting time between the Dominican Republic, the location of her husband's last military post, and Missoula. Houston was predeceased by her husband.

Jack Howay '52, May 11, 2020, in Saratoga, California. He had a 27-year career in the U.S. Air Force, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. Howay became a Boy Scout leader, camp director and camp inspector and was presented the Silver Beaver Award for distinguished service to youth. Howay married Nancy Clawson in 1955; they were together 43 years, until her death in 1998. In 1951, Howay was a founder of the Interfraternity Council at Whitman, an organization that still operates today. Survivors include three children, six grandchildren and cousin **John Howay '56**.

Robert "Beau" Yancey '53, Dec. 14, 2020, in Sandpoint, Idaho. Following Whitman, he began graduate work at Harvard School of Business in Cambridge, Massachusetts, before enlisting in the U.S. Army. Yancey returned to Harvard to complete his M.B.A. in 1957, and began a career as a financial operations manager with the Raytheon Corporation in Massachusetts. He married Joan O'Brien in 1961 and they

raised three sons. Yancey retired in 1992, and moved to Sandpoint in 2005 to be closer to family. Predeceased by his parents, **Ruth Yenney Yancey '21** and **George Yancey '21**, and his wife, his survivors include his sons, two grandchildren, and brother **Richard Yancey '49**.

Margaret "Peg" Harrison Vielbig '53, Jan. 15, 2021, in Grass Valley, California. She married **Joseph Vielbig '52** in 1953 and raised two sons. While her husband worked as a chemist (including being part of the development of the polio vaccine), she earned her teaching certificate at California State University in Fresno, teaching special education in Clovis, California. Predeceased by a son in 1992 and her husband in 2020, Vielbig's survivors include a son and grandson.

Sidney Aronson '54, Jan. 10, 2021, in San Jose, California. He served in the U.S. Army and taught school at the U.S. Air Base in Toul, France. There, he met and married his wife, Catherine. They moved to San Jose, and Aronson earned his master's degree in education administration from San Jose State University. He worked as a school principal and retired after 37 years at the Union School District. Aronson was predeceased by a brother, **Noel '57**; survivors include his wife, six children and six grandchildren.

Don Parker '54, Feb. 3, 2021, in Surprise, Arizona. His college years were interrupted when he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Upon his return to Whitman he met **CarolJean Ronald '57**; they were married in 1957. The two began their married life as teachers in Bakersfield, California, and returned to the

Walla Walla Valley in 1964, when Parker started as a teacher and head coach of the varsity basketball team in Milton-Freewater, Oregon. He was hired as the head men's basketball coach at Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) in 1969. His success led to his induction into the Northwest Athletic Conference Hall of Fame in 2009. Parker left coaching in 1976, remaining at WWCC as the plant facilities manager. In 1980 he started his own roofing and environmental liner company, retiring in 1995. The couple moved to Arizona in 2013. Parker served as chair of his 5th, 10th and 15th reunions. Survivors include his wife, two daughters, a son and seven grandchildren.

Joanne Planting Parker '54, April 20, 2020, in Edmonds, Washington. She married Richard Parker in 1953. They settled in Richmond Beach, Washington, and raised three daughters. Parker worked as an executive secretary and bank account manager and sold real estate. She worked in the office and taught Sunday school at Richmond Beach First Lutheran Church. Predeceased by her husband, survivors include her daughters, five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Sally Maxon Harris '56, Dec. 21, 2020, in Walla Walla. She met **R. Everett Harris '53** at Whitman and they married in 1954. They had a son and settled in Anchorage, Alaska. They later divorced. Harris returned to Washington state and earned a master's degree in speech pathology and audiology, then working for the Shoreline School District. She eventually returned to Walla Walla to care for her mother. Harris is survived by her son, two granddaughters and five great-grandchildren.

Nancy Allen Silvernale '56, Dec. 15, 2020, in Moscow, Idaho. She married **Grant Silvernale '50** in 1961; together they raised three children in Kirkland, Washington. Silvernale was a dedicated community volunteer for the Creative Arts League, the Kirkland Courier and the Kirkland Performance Center. She also served Whitman as co-chair for her 35th and 50th reunions and as a class representative for the Annual Giving office. The generosity of the Silvernales, along with **Nat '55** and Dorothy "Poo" Allen Penrose, established the William M. Allen-Boeing Lectureship and Student Investment Endowment, which provides funds for distinguished individuals in industry, finance, technology and manufacturing to visit campus. The endowment is managed by a student-run group, the Whitman Investment Company, giving students practical experience in finance. Predeceased by her husband, Silvernale is survived by two sons, a daughter, seven grandchildren and two stepgrandchildren.

Leila Beard Heislein '59, Dec. 9, 2020, in Roseburg, Oregon. She married Harry Heislein in 1957, eventually settling in Roseburg and raising two daughters. Heislein worked at The News-Review as the librarian for more than 15 years, volunteered at Mercy Medical Center as a buyer for the auxiliary gift shop for more than 45 years, and served on the Roseburg Parks and Recreation Commission for 28 years. Predeceased by her husband, she is survived by two daughters and a granddaughter.

Mary Salling Miller '59, Dec. 20, 2020, in Bellingham, Washington. After Whitman, she married **John Miller '59**; together they raised two

children. Miller taught school in Eugene, Oregon, and for a pre-school television program, "Romper Room." The family settled in Northwest Washington, and she worked as a secretary for the Point Roberts Water Board and was among the first Immigration Officers for the U.S. Miller volunteered at Oregon Medical Hospital and led an urban 4H program. Survivors include her husband, two daughters and one grandchild.

C. Ward Morris '59, Jan. 1, 2121, in Falls Church, Virginia. Following graduation, he served in the U.S. Navy for 31 years, retiring in 1991 as Captain. He met Barbara Bradlyn when they both were stationed in Hawaii; they married in 1964. Morris volunteered for the Washington National Opera for 26 years and joined the cast of a few productions as a supernumerary, or extra. Predeceased by his father and mother, **Isla May Ward Morris '34**, survivors include his wife, two nieces, a nephew and a cousin, **Linda Morris Fletcher '67**.

1960s

Jean Wallace Donaldson '60, Jan. 4, 2021, in Port Moody, British Columbia. She earned her master's in psychology and Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Washington in Seattle, then emigrated to Canada. She was a professor at McMaster University's School of Medicine in Hamilton, Ontario, when she met Tom Donaldson; they married in 1980. Donaldson practiced clinical psychology at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton. The couple retired to British



Thaddas Lee Alston, Jan. 25, 2021, in Lake Forest Park, Washington. He married **Karen E. "Kari" Glover '72** in 1979, and together they raised two daughters, Samantha and Evan. During Glover's tenure on the Whitman College Board of Trustees (1998 to 2015), they supported several scholarships and key initiatives, including making a gift that would make possible the Glover Alston Center—a space designed to create opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds and interests to explore, reflect, discuss and engage. Alston was predeceased by his parents and two siblings and is survived by his wife, daughters, two siblings and a nephew.

Columbia, where she advocated for senior housing and public accessibility for disabled citizens. Predeceased by her husband, survivors include a stepson and granddaughter.

Donald Shields '61, Dec. 15, 2020, in San Luis Obispo, California. After Whitman, he served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed around the world. After retiring as director of security, Shields worked for American Protective Services, eventually retiring as regional manager for the San Joaquin Valley in 1996. He married Barbara Church in 1957 and together they raised two children. Predeceased by his parents, **Kenneth '31** and **Elizabeth Holling Shields '33**, survivors include his wife; a son; daughter, **Eileen Shields Fields '83**; son-in-law **Thomas Fields '81**; and two grandchildren.

Randy Jacobs, Jr. '66, Jan. 16, 2021, in Billings, Montana. After Whitman, he earned his J.D. from the law school at the University of Montana. Jacobs began his banking career at United California Bank in San Francisco. He married Stacey Needham in 1976 and the

couple settled in Billings, where they raised two sons. Jacobs helped open and became the president of Montana Bank of Billings; in 1989 he joined the law firm of Felt and Martin and retired as a partner. He served on the boards of the Yellowstone Art Museum and the Boys and Girls Club Endowment Foundation. Jacobs' service to Whitman included serving as vice president and then president of the Alumni Association Board; co-chair of his 35th and 40th reunions; volunteering for the Admission office; and serving as a class representative for the Annual Giving office. Survivors include his wife, his sons and three grandchildren.

Tom Kelly '66, Jan. 14, 2021, in Eugene, Oregon. He married **Marilyn Styrwold '66** and they joined the Peace Corps, spending three years in Tanzania and Uganda. Upon their return to the U.S., the family settled in Eugene, where Kelly started a graphic design firm and later joined the advertising agency of Cappelli Miles Wiltz. His logo designs can still be seen around town. After a divorce in 1980, Kelly married Kathy Wiltz. Survivors include his wife, two children and four grandchildren.

Edward Carr '68, Jan. 8, 2021, in Walla Walla. He married **Elizabeth Hartley '70** in 1969; together they raised two sons. Carr earned his Ph.D. in philosophy (aesthetics) from the University of Chicago in 1975. The family settled on Orcas Island, Washington, where he trained as a carpenter and built his family's first home. After earning a master's degree in architecture from the University of Washington, Carr started his own architecture firm in Seattle, focusing on waterfront homes. The couple retired to Walla Walla in 2012. Carr served on the Campus Life Cycle committee and was a member of his 50th reunion committee. Survivors include his wife of 51 years, two sons, three grandchildren and five siblings, including sister, **Karen Carr Lindner '66**.

1970s

Timothy Sullivan '74, Jan. 5, 2021, in Walla Walla. He had a career in real estate appraisal and was a long-serving member of the Whitman College Life Cycle Committee. His survivors include three children and a grandson.

Class Notes Policy

Whitman College is happy to highlight the achievements and milestones of our alumni. To have your item appear in Class Notes, fill out the form at whitman.edu/classnotes, email alumni@whitman.edu or mail a note to Whitman College, Office of Alumni Relations, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362. Class Note submissions are limited to 50 words and should include updates from the past calendar year. Class Note submissions may include career updates; publications; honors, awards or appointments; or other significant life changes

you would like to share with the Whitman community. Any photographic submissions for Class Notes, marriages/unions or births/adoptions should include the identities of all people pictured, as well as alumni relatives for births/adoptions. It is the responsibility of the submitter to obtain consent from others pictured or mentioned in the submission.

For In Memoriams, Whitman College runs the name of the deceased, their graduate year and major, and the date and place of death; when available,

we will include career information, survivors and other highlights of their life, including recorded service to the college or honors received from the college. Photographs for obituaries are run at the discretion of the Office of Alumni Relations for those designated "Whitman Leaders." The college makes a good faith effort to confirm the information submitted with the concerned parties. All submissions are subject to editing for style, content, length and clarity. Address questions to Jennifer Dilworth Northam '91, Class Notes editor, at northajl@whitman.edu or call 509-526-4794.

Streaming Now

Virtual Whitman for Alumni

A year we never imagined brought us unique ways to connect and share, including online alumni events on fascinating topics. Check out our Alumni Virtual Events playlist at whitman.edu/alumni-playlist.



FEATURED EVENT

Whitman College, National Security and America's Long Wars [Parts 1 and 2]

A discussion with Ryan Crocker, Gary Robbins and Clifford Brown, all Class of 1971 and Danielle Garbe Reser, Class of 1997



FEATURED EVENT

Why Are Toxic Chemicals Everywhere?

A talk by Whitman College Associate Professor of Sociology Alissa Cordner



Refer a Future Whittie

Know a stellar high school student who may be a great fit for Whitman College?

Our Admission team would love to make a connection. If the student you recommend accepts our invitation to receive information from the college, they'll get our newly designed Whitman scarf.

Refer a future Whittie at whitman.edu/refer-a-student

ES 305

Water in the West

4 CREDITS | PERSICO

The Backy

Unique to this course, The Backy—Persico’s slang for a “back of the envelope” calculation—counts for

15% of the grade.

For this exercise, students work with a partner to think creatively about how to put numbers on a complicated environmental issue. For instance: Which requires more water to produce,

a gallon of almond milk or



a gallon of cows’ milk?

Given the complexities of the issue and variables involved, there will be no one correct answer.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The West’s tangled history with water, climate, landscapes and people sits at the center of this environmental studies course, designed to foster the exploration of human-landscape interactions and encourage the contemplation of strategies to create a sustainable path forward. The curriculum uses a diverse suite of case studies to highlight western water issues, including water resource management, power generation, water law, water economics and climate change.

“STUDENTS TODAY ALREADY HAVE AN AWARENESS OF WATER BEING A PRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN. WHAT THIS COURSE DOES IS PROVIDE THEM WITH THE BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF HOW WE GOT WHERE WE ARE.”

—LYMAN PERSICO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

On the Reading List

“Cadillac Desert”

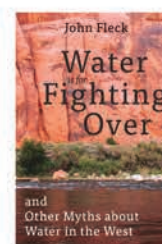
by Marc Reisner, a classic text on western water issues.

“The Winemaker’s Daughter”

by Timothy Egan, a novel centered around a water-rights crisis.

High Country News

an independent magazine that focuses on the complexities of life in the West.



“Water Is for Fighting Over”

by Whitman grad **John Fleck ’81**, former science journalist and current director of the University of New Mexico’s graduate program in sustainable

water use and management. The book takes an optimistic view, highlighting the collaboration and cooperation between communities to share water in the Colorado River Basin that contradict the old adage: “Whiskey’s for drinking, water’s for fighting over.”

PROFESSOR BIO:

Assistant Professor Lyman Persico credits his experience as an undergrad researcher working on a project to measure erosion rates of Mojave Desert hillslopes as his first step toward becoming a professor.



After earning his B.S. from the University of Vermont and an M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Mexico, he joined the faculty of Whitman College, where he strives to give his students opportunities in field research. Persico has joint appointments in the environmental studies and geology programs. “That means I like thinking about rocks, dirt and water and how people interact with rocks, dirt and water.”

Your Gifts. Their Stories.

“The Whitman Internship Grant allowed me to do meaningful work and develop my career without the burden of doing work without pay.”

— **Elea Besse** is a sophomore rhetoric, writing and public discourse major from Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Elea's Story

In a time when in-person internships weren't an option, Elea Besse found an opportunity that gave her valuable experience and made lives better. Besse was a social media and design intern for Body Politic, a NYC organization that promotes wellness for marginalized communities. Besse helped Body Politic facilitate a support group for those coping with COVID-19.

Internships are one of five giving opportunities through The Whitman Fund.

Be Part of the Story

Support students like Elea with a gift to The Whitman Fund. Give by June 30 to be counted in for this year.

PHOTO BY CALIAY BOIRE-SHEED
JUNIOR FROM PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON

give.whitman.edu • 509-527-5189

THE WHITMAN FUND >>



WHITMAN COLLEGE

345 Boyer Avenue
Walla Walla WA 99362

Periodicals
Postage
PAID
USPS
968620

If recipient has moved, contact Sarah Jones at jonesst@whitman.edu.



Whitman Stories



WORKING TOGETHER FOR INCLUSION

WHERE EVERYONE IS WELCOME We're pleased to introduce Whitman College's first class of Inclusion Fellows, student leaders who work together to support the mission and goals of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Intercultural Center while individually promoting programs and progress across campus. Meet five of these dedicated Whitties who want every voice heard. Watch the video at whitman.edu/magazine.

 [youtube.com/whitmancollege](https://www.youtube.com/whitmancollege)

 [facebook.com/whitmancollege](https://www.facebook.com/whitmancollege)

 twitter.com/whitmancollege

 [instagram.com/whitmancollege](https://www.instagram.com/whitmancollege)