

# HumanEcology

COLLEGE OF HUMAN ECOLOGY • CORNELL UNIVERSITY • VOLUME 45 • NUMBER 2 • FALL 2017



## **INSIDE: CHAMPIONING A MISSION**

A retrospective on the tenure of Alan D. Mathios  
The Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean



College of Human Ecology



# FASHION A LEGACY

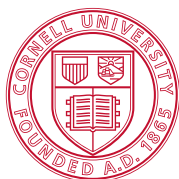
**Ollie McNamara '50** (lower right) loved fashion and crafted a career in haute couture. With gifts to Cornell's collections and a scholarship through her bequest, she created a legacy.

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Ollie McNamara with her colleagues in a dress design class.  
Photo provided by the Cornell Costume and Textile Collection.



Cornell University

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On the cover:



We honor the legacy of Alan Mathios as the Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean of the College of Human Ecology, capturing his reflections on the many joys that have comprised his two-term, and interim, leadership. Cover photo by Jason Koski



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## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Each fall and spring, I have the privilege, here, to introduce our latest issue of *Human Ecology* magazine. As usual, our editors have worked hard to bring you closer to what is happening inside the College as well as its impact on the world. The production of the magazine is always as difficult as it is exciting, simply because there is just so much news and activity within the College from which to choose. There is no way to include it all in an issue.

Today, I am more impressed than ever about the powerful work of the College of Human Ecology, our community and our extraordinary alumni network.

Inside this issue, you will read about the amazing work of our faculty, students and alumni within the multidisciplinary Human Ecology community. We feature cutting-edge research, including a collaboration in neuroscience between faculty and alumni leveraging the College's fMRI facility; the impactful work of our extension programs on youth development, driven forward by research and our land grant mission; the remarkable work of our students, both inside and outside of the classroom; and the diverse professional accomplishments of our alumni, as well as their generous support of the College of Human Ecology.

Writing this message now is also poignant because it is my final year as dean of the College. At the end of my tenure in June of next year, I will have served two five-year terms as dean, preceded by one year as interim dean and three years as associate dean. The College of Human Ecology will be in my heart and soul forever.

Cornell Provost Michael Kotlikoff will appoint an interim dean to serve a two-year term beginning on July 1, 2018, and we look forward to making an announcement about that appointment soon. I am confident that there are phenomenal candidates within the College to take on an interim dean role.

To say that I will miss my role and activities like this *Human Ecology* message from the Dean is an understatement. Sharing the College of Human Ecology story and experiencing people's excitement about the College is what I will actually miss the most. The College is on an exhilarating course, fueled by its enduring mission and committed, ever-growing community, and your ongoing engagement with us is what makes us so successful.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and please stay in touch.

Alan Mathios

Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean

IMPROVING LIVES BY  
EXPLORING AND SHAPING  
HUMAN CONNECTIONS TO  
NATURAL, SOCIAL, AND  
BUILT ENVIRONMENTS



# ENGAGEMENT

## 4-H event boosts youth confidence in future studies, careers

More than 400 middle and high school students from 45 New York state counties and extension programs made their way to Cornell's Ithaca campus in June. On their collective to-do list: investigate the mysteries of the cosmos, perform physical exams on small and large animals, understand the intricacies of food science, and learn to program robots.

Those were just a few of the many workshops taught by Cornell faculty, staff and graduate students during the annual 4-H Career Explorations conference.

"Our main purpose is to give young people a chance to get a feel for careers that they've never even heard of, or maybe never even considered for themselves," said Alexa Maille, conference coordinator and New York state 4-H science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension at the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, a research and outreach branch of the College of Human Ecology.

"This is the first college experience for a lot of our participants, and we receive a good amount of feedback from these youth, both during the conference and after, saying that they are now interested in pursuing future studies or a career in one of the subject areas that they were exposed to here first," Maille added.

The conference's 30 programs focused on healthy living, STEM, civic engagement and leadership, and were facilitated by the colleges of Human Ecology, Agriculture and Life Sciences, Arts and Sciences and Engineering and Information Science, as well as the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art and the Museum of the Earth. The event connected youth to academic fields including engineering,



animal science, astronomy, environmental science, food science, nanotechnology and human development.

A program titled "A Tour of Human Development across the Lifespan," organized by the Bronfenbrenner Center's Program for Research on Youth Development and Engagement (PRYDE), introduced human development to students with interests in sociology, psychology, neuroscience, medicine, education, public health, or social work.

Students heard from professors about their research and visited the fMRI lab to help understand how brain scans can provide insights into human behavior. They also participated in career-related activities including interviews and focus groups to better understand research methods.

Students also had opportunities to discuss academic directions and personal career pathways with graduate students, lab managers, program assistants and postdoctoral fellows, who shed light on the transition from high school to college to career.

— Stephen D'Angelo

## Davis-Manigaulte honored for NYC extension outreach



Jacqueline Davis-Manigaulte '72, recently received the 2017 National Urban Extension Leadership Award for her work with Cornell University Cooperative Extension-New York City (CUCENYC).

Davis-Manigaulte, a senior extension associate, leads Family and Youth Development programs and serves as director of community relations for CUCENYC, which often works in partnership with the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR) on research and program delivery. The award recognizes her excellence in urban extension programming and leadership.

Chris Watkins, director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, praised Davis-Manigaulte's contributions to urban extension in New York City, noting the unique demands of her role.

"Working in any urban setting, let alone New York City, presents great challenges," Watkins said. "Jackie has successfully turned these into opportunities to engage youth and the community in healthy eating and active living programs. I am proud of her work on behalf of Cornell University."

According to Jennifer Tiffany, CUCENYC executive director and BCTR director of outreach and community engagement, Davis-Manigaulte's "work promoting family and youth development, high-quality extension programming that is responsive to community needs and astute network development among agencies and community-based organizations is a model for urban extension."

Davis-Manigaulte has worked with a wide range of New York City, state and national organizations to provide youth and family programs that promote experiential learning, leadership development and educational attainment, and encourage healthy eating and active living. She is a principal investigator for the National 4-H Youth Mentoring Program/4-H Tech Wizards Program, an initiative focused on youth mentoring, community service and projects that incorporate science and technology.

— Sheri Hall

# HONORS

Professors and student receive awards for their passion, impact and legacy

## Kathleen Rasmussen honored for public service in nutrition



Kathleen M. Rasmussen, professor of Nutritional Sciences, was honored by the American Society for Nutrition on April 23 with the Conrad A. Elvehjem Award for Public Service in Nutrition.

The award recognized Rasmussen's distinguished service to the public through the science of nutrition and her service as president of the American Society for Nutritional Sciences in 2006. That year, she led the merger between the American Society for Clinical Nutrition and the Society for International Nutrition Research, which resulted in the American Society for Nutrition.

Rasmussen, the College of Human Ecology's Nancy Schlegel Meinig Professor of Maternal and Child Nutrition, primarily studies the relationship between maternal nutrition and short- and long-

term health outcomes for women and their children. Her work is internationally known.

Rasmussen has served on several expert committees at the Institute of Medicine, including as chair of its Committee on Re-examination of Pregnancy Weight Guidelines. Most recently, she chaired the Committee to Review WIC Food Packages, the sole program that specifically targets the nutritional needs of pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum women, infants and children younger than five years of age.

She directed two National Institutes of Health-sponsored training grants in maternal and child nutrition for more than 25 years, and has worked as the principal faculty member at the Dannon Nutrition Leadership Institute for almost two decades.

"Kathy's tireless efforts to improve the lives of mothers and their children through nutrition is the definition of excellence in scientific achievement and public service," said Patrick Stover, professor of nutritional sciences and director of the Division of Nutritional Sciences. "Her distinction in teaching, research and public engagement exemplifies the work we are undertaking to better human health and well-being across the world."

At Cornell, Rasmussen has served as director of graduate studies for the field of nutrition and associate dean and secretary of the university faculty. She was elected by the university faculty to be a member of Cornell's Board of Trustees from 2004 to 2008.

—Stephen D'Angelo

## Asanté Quintana '18 wins Elsie Van Buren Rice Award in Public Speaking



Asanté Quintana '18, credits an unexpected skill for his public speaking prowess: rapping.

Both rapping and public speaking form a relationship between performer and audience, Quintana explained, requiring the performer to tap into their understanding of the world and communicate it in a way that makes sense to others.

The judges of the Elsie Van Buren Rice Award in Public Speaking agreed. Quintana won the 2017 award for his presentation of research by Professor Patrick Stover, director of the Division of Nutritional Sciences, on the impacts of folate deficiency on cell metabolism.

Quintana, a pre-med senior in Human Biology, Health and

Society, has been rapping since middle school, and says that even his work in the recording studio – learning to make and produce music – has aided him in the process of research, discovery and dissemination he's learned at Cornell.

"With both, you think about what you want to do, how to implement it, get the results, publish them, and then you have to figure out how to get your research to the public," Quintana said.

Quintana spent the past summer at Weill Cornell Medical College as a Travelers Summer Research Fellow at the Dalio Institute of Cardiovascular Imaging. There, he worked with Dr. Jessica Peña on an ongoing pilot study of the effectiveness of several therapeutic techniques in preventing a second coronary artery disease (CAD) diagnosis in underserved patients who have been diagnosed with CAD for the first time.

Working with underserved populations is a goal for Quintana, who thinks he might end up in surgery like his older sister Amber. "With all the support I've received from my family, and especially throughout the different summer fellowships, I want to give back what was given to me."

These experiences created the desire to work with disadvantaged communities because not everyone is blessed enough to have had the opportunities I've had," Quintana said. "If you have the ability to offer something to someone, you have the responsibility to offer it whenever you can."

—E.C. Barrett





## Shepley receives Changemaker Award for health care design impact

Mardelle Shepley, professor of Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell's College of Human Ecology, has been named the 2017 Changemaker Award recipient by The Center for Health Design.

The annual award honors individuals or organizations that have demonstrated exceptional ability to change the way health care facilities are designed and built, and whose work has had broad impact on the advancement of health care design.

The Center for Health Design, a nonprofit organization, advances best practices and seeks to empower health care leaders with research that demonstrates the value of design to improve health outcomes, patient experience of care and provider and staff satisfaction and performance.

According to Shepley, her research focuses primarily on the intersection of human health and well-being with environmental sustainability – what she describes as an art and science that seeks to demonstrate the relationships between objective and outcome.

As a result, her research is characterized by its translational content, meaning it generates data that can be directly applied to built projects. Many of her studies involve rigorous pre- and post-occupancy evaluations, which is readily applicable to practice.

"Mardelle is most deserving of this lifetime achievement award recognizing all of her many contributions focused on bridging the gap between research, practice and teaching," said Sheila Danko, chair of the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis.

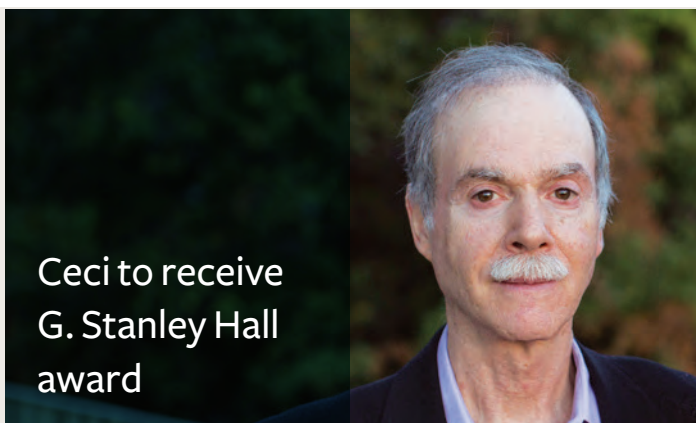
"Her evidence-based research approach to design links theoretical concepts with practical solutions and real-world implications and champions our goal to improve health and well-being for people and the planet by understanding how our daily lives are impacted by designed and built environments."

Believing that two critical components of education are interdisciplinary collaboration and interaction with the external community, Shepley encourages her students to engage in outside projects such as hands-on activities with Habitat for Humanity and conceptual design services for non-profit organizations, such as the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes.

Shepley's public engagement work includes her current role as associate director of the Cornell Institute for Health Futures, which combines hospitality, environmental design and health policy and management into a broad-based platform to improve service in health care, wellness and senior living.

"The impact that Mardelle has had on our industry, as a teacher, practitioner and author has provided so many with inspiration, direction and has launched many a career," said Frank Weinberg, M.S., the board chair of the Center for Health Design. "Her drive to meet social needs, in particular human health and environmental sustainability, is especially visible in her work."

—Stephen D'Angelo



## Ceci to receive G. Stanley Hall award

Stephen Ceci, Helen L. Carr Professor of Developmental Psychology in the Department of Human Development, has been selected to receive the American Psychological Association's (APA) 2018 G. Stanley Hall award for distinguished contributions to developmental science. The award will be presented at APA's 2018 meeting in San Francisco.

Known as the highest honor in the developmental psychology field, the G. Stanley Hall award is given to an individual or team that has made distinguished contributions to developmental psychology, including contributions in research, student training and other scholarly endeavors.

"Steve has made seminal contributions to the basic scientific research of the developing mind in young children and to the critical translation of research findings to real life settings," said Qi Wang, professor of Human Development and department chair.

"His work best exemplifies the integrative approaches that we take in the use of scientific theories and methods to vigorously study real-world problems in diverse populations."

The award is based on the scientific merit of the individual's work, the importance of this work for opening up new empirical or theoretical areas of development psychology and the importance of the individual's work in linking developmental psychology with issues confronting the larger society or with other disciplines.

Ceci has authored approximately 450 articles, books, commentaries, reviews and chapters. He has served on the Advisory Board of the National Science Foundation for seven years and was a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Board of Behavioral and Sensory Sciences for six years. Additionally, Ceci is past president of the Society for General Psychology and currently serves on 11 editorial boards, including *Scientific American Mind*. He is senior advisor to several journals.

Further career honors and scientific awards include the American Academy of Forensic Psychology's Lifetime Distinguished Contribution Award (2000); the American Psychological Association's Division of Developmental Psychology's Lifetime Award for Science and Society (2002); the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award for the Application of Psychology (2003); the Association for Psychological Science's highest scientific award, the James McKeen Cattell Award (2005); the Society for Research in Child Development's lifetime distinguished contribution award (2013) and the American Psychological Association's E. L. Thorndike Award for lifetime contribution to empirical and theoretical psychology (2015).

—Stephen D'Angelo





Anthony Ong

# MIXED FEELINGS

Why having a variety of positive emotions is good for your health

Proud. Relaxed. Cheerful. Enthusiastic. Determined. Amused. These are feelings anyone would welcome on a daily basis. Now, new research by Human Development Professor Anthony Ong demonstrates that experiencing a wide range of positive emotions every day – including these feelings and 10 others – can lead to improved health.

Ong, whose research focuses on emotion, cognition and health across the lifespan, published a study in the journal *Emotion* this summer that uses novel analytic approaches to make connections between “emodiversity” and inflammation in the body. The central idea of the study is to examine the benefits of experiencing a variety of emotions, instead of just a few, throughout the day.

The study followed 175 people ages 40 to 65 who reported their emotions on a daily survey for 30 days. At the end of each day, participants recorded whether they had experienced any of the survey’s 16 positive emotions that day, including interested, excited, inspired, alert and calm. They also recorded whether they experienced any of 16 negative emotions, including scared, afraid, upset, distressed, jittery, nervous and ashamed.

Six months later, participants underwent blood tests for three inflammation markers. The study focused on inflammation because you can measure it noninvasively through blood tests, and it is related to a wide range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and diseases of the bone and joints.

The study found that participants who experienced a broader range of positive emotions had lower levels of inflammation compared to those who experienced fewer positive emotions. The participants’ range of negative emotions – regardless of whether it was narrow or wide – had no effect on inflammation.

“It may be that experiencing a diversity of emotional states, in this case positive emotions, might strengthen one’s resilience by preventing an overabundance or prolonging of any one emotion from dominating an individual’s emotional life,” Ong explained.

Ong’s co-authors were Lizbeth Benson of Pennsylvania State University, the late Alex Zautra of Arizona State University and Nilam Ram of Pennsylvania State University and the German Institute for Economic Research. They received funding from the National Institutes of Health.

Ong first became interested in studying positive emotions while doing his graduate work in developmental psychology at the University of Southern California. “I wanted to understand why older adults tend to report being happier than younger adults, despite declines in cognitive and physical functioning,” he said. “It’s been a fun intellectual puzzle.”

Ong’s early research led him to understand that strong social connections and a focus on the positive help older adults thrive through adversity.

“What do we know about human well-being? The answer is, surprisingly little, compared with what is known about human illness, dysfunction and disease,” Ong said. “But research has consistently shown that when our positive emotions are in ample supply, we take off and become generative, resilient versions of ourselves.

“The main contribution of this paper is that there are many kinds of happiness, and that experiencing an abundance of different types of positive emotions in daily life may be beneficial to health,” he said.

There is a simple way to put this into practice in your daily life, Ong said: notice when you are experiencing a positive emotion and tag or label it.

“When we make fine-grained distinctions among our positive emotions, we represent not only their meaning but also the contexts that elicit them. This causal understanding of our emotions and the social world, in turn, may facilitate more effective emotion regulation and increase resilience to stress.”

– Sheri Hall

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– Anthony Ong



# PALLIATIVE CARE RESEARCH

## Researchers identify strategies to improve end of life quality

Globally, 20 million people per year receive palliative care, and a new study by Cornell researchers has identified strategies that could help improve the quality of life for both recipients and their families.

The team surveyed 133 staff and volunteers who provide end-of-life care to patients in home and institutional settings for four organizations in two counties in upstate New York. The study points to improvements in end-of-life care through institutional policies, palliative care practices and facility design.

The findings are highlighted in “Strategies to Improve Quality of Life at the End of Life: Interdisciplinary Team Perspectives,” published in June in the *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine*. The authors are assistant professor Rana Zadeh, professor Paul Eshelman, postdoctoral associate Hessam Sadatsafavi (all from the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis), and Judith Setla, medical director of Hospice of Central New York.

“This ethnographic study... is intended to add to the sparse but growing literature promoting quality of life from a practical perspective and to act as a precursor to further research on designing and managing environments to improve both quality of life and end of life,” the researchers said.

Survey responses from physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, chaplains, administrators, and volunteers identified numerous areas to enhance in order to safeguard quality of life and end-of-life care.

These included organization philosophy and mission; organizational policies; caregivers’ behaviors and practices; symptom management; facility design, operation and management; and patient, family member and caregiver experiences.

The recommendations included family access to 24/7 visitation, patient mobility in the facility and access to the outdoors, staff access to stress relief programs and break times, and avoiding over sedation of patients while promoting spiritual care and counselling.

“The diverse list of identified strategies indicates that improving care to address the unique, complex, multilayered dimensions of quality of life at the end of life requires a multidisciplinary approach and consistency among care providers, including administration, clinical management, front-line caregivers and support staff,” the authors wrote. “One important implication of the data is that strategies should be applied in concert and tailored to the desires of the individual. When all of these strategies are used in harmony, quality of life in end-of-life care can truly be enhanced.”

For example, strategies that provide residents access to the outdoors need the support of the facility’s physical environment, staff commitment and regulations.

“The facility would need to have an accessible pathway as well as a pleasantly designed outdoor space protected from rain and wind,” Zadeh said. “Staff would need to ‘buy in’ to the idea of taking patients outside, and an organizational policy would be required that allows patients to spend time outdoors. If one of the three pillars is missing, the aim of healing and soothing patients through such a strategy won’t be accomplished.”

The research results are neither definitive nor universal to all care settings, the authors said. But seeking knowledge from multidisciplinary teams of end-of-life care providers demonstrates



Rana Zadeh



Paul Eshelman



Hessam Sadatsafavi

an investigative approach that helps fill gaps in current research. Similar investigations can help generate guidelines to reduce unnecessary suffering and optimize resource use.

Eshelman pointed to a “painfully compelling” finding from one of the study’s focus groups: Progressive loss of control, not only for the patient but also for their loved ones, marks the path toward the end of life.

“If one of the goals in the design of an end-of-life care setting was to accommodate the urge to maintain control, the concept of flexibility could have relevance and be appropriate for application in the design process,” Eshelman said. “A question that would be useful in informing the design process then would be, what is the nature of flexibility in an end-of-life care setting such that meaningful and manageable control actually will be realized by patients, family members and staff?”

Eshelman added that similar questions seeded by the present study have the potential to frame a substantive program of research for years to come.

— Stephen D’Angelo

# HISTORIC DONATION

Janet Reno '60 dress latest gift to costume, textile collection



Janet Reno '60

The Cornell Costume and Textile Collection has received a historic donation: a beautiful purple sheath dress with tailored jacket worn by the late Janet Reno '60, the first woman to serve as Attorney General of the United States.

Reno, an Arts & Sciences graduate who went from leading Cornell's Women's Student Government Association as a student to leading the U.S. Department of Justice as attorney general, served in the role for almost eight years during President Bill Clinton's administration, making her the longest-serving attorney general since before the civil war.

"I had the opportunity to meet Janet Reno and listen to her speak when I was an undergraduate student at Cornell in the early 2000s," said Denise Green, assistant professor of Fiber Science and Apparel Design (FSAD) and director of the Cornell Costume and Textile Collection.

"As a young girl coming of age in the 1990s, it was so important to see empowered, smart, intelligent women in politics. Janet Reno was an inspiration to me and to other women of my generation and beyond."

The costume and textile collection, maintained and managed by Human Ecology's FSAD department, is one of more than 10,000 items of apparel dating from the 18th century to the present, as well as a substantial collection of ethnographic textiles and costumes.

Used for teaching and research, the mission of the collection is to advance knowledge of the social, cultural, historical, economic, scientific, technological and aesthetic aspects of fashion, textiles and apparel design through exhibition, preservation, research and teaching.

Other historical pieces within the collection worn by influential women include Eleanor Roosevelt's 1937 Inaugural gown; court gowns of Helen Magill White, the first woman in the United States to receive a Ph.D.; a gown worn by Minnie Maddern Fiske, a ground-breaking stage actresses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries; and the inauguration dress worn by Elizabeth Garrett, the first female president of Cornell University.

— Stephen D'Angelo





# UNION MADE

## Exhibit showcases labor, fashion history

The College of Human Ecology's Cornell Costume and Textile Collection and the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives recently celebrated 20th-century fashion trends and the history of organized labor and union garment labeling through a joint exhibition, titled "Union-Made: Fashioning America in the 20th Century."

On display between Aug. 31 and Nov. 3, the exhibit featured 1900s American fashion and the role of organized labor and union labeling efforts in the U.S. textile and apparel industries.

The exhibition highlighted an often overlooked but critically important component of prêt-à-porter (ready-to-wear) fashion: laborers and the role that unionization played to improve working conditions, compensation and promotion of the U.S. fashion industry through designer awards, fashion shows, education and improvement of the quality of garments made in the U.S.

"The labor unions related to these industries really worked hard to bring about many things we take for granted today," said exhibit curator Denise Green '07, assistant professor of Fiber Science and Apparel Design and director of the Cornell Costume and Textile Collection.

"These include safety standards, benefits for employees, an eight-hour work day, the 40-hour work week – all of these were really spearheaded by labor unions in the early 20th century."

Co-curated by Patrizia Sione, research archivist at the Kheel Center, the multimedia and richly-visual exhibition features garments, accessories, photographs, banners, stories, event timelines, archival documents, rare film footage and unique artifacts to illustrate 20th-century American fashion trends and their production.

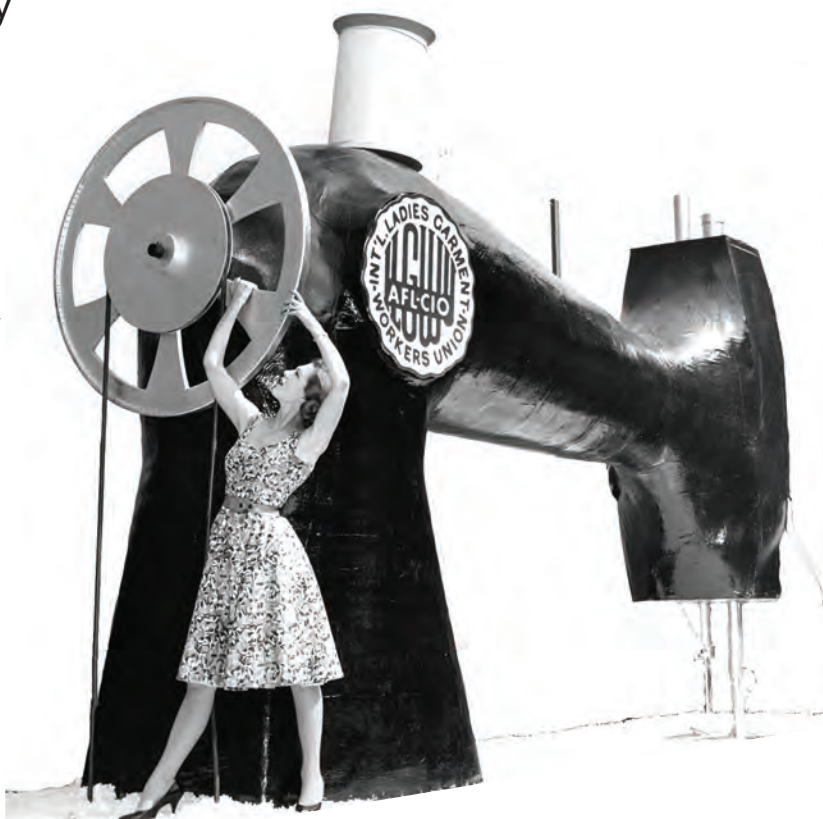
Some of the rare items on view include a funeral badge worn at the memorial for the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire victims, knives used for cutting cloak fabric at the turn of the century, a 1920s industrial chain stitch Wilcox & Gibbs sewing machine and a union-made faux-denim ensemble designed by Donna Karan in the mid-1970s.

"What we're doing here is looking at the history, and it's a pretty dramatic history within this 100-year period," Green said. "In 1960, 95 percent of an American's wardrobe was manufactured in the U.S. Today, that number is 2 percent."

"The Cornell Costume and Textile Collection has been around for 100 years and Kheel has, for many decades, housed impressive archival collections focused on garment laborers and unions," Green said. "These include the archives from the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, which were transferred to the archives in 1987."

"This is the first time we have had the opportunity to come together and celebrate the history of the U.S. fashion industry and apparel and textile production in the United States through the lens of the history of organized labor."

– Stephen D'Angelo







# NUTRITION INTERVENTION

Institute focuses on global nutrition policy impact

Patricia Cassano and Luis Gabriel

Cornell's Division of Nutritional Sciences (DNS), a shared unit of Cornell's College of Human Ecology and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, hosted the 4th annual WHO/Cochrane/Cornell University Summer Institute for Systematic Reviews in Nutrition for Global Policy-Making from July 24 to Aug. 4.

The conference-style institute brought together experts from the World Health Organization; Cochrane, a global independent network of researchers, professionals, patients, caregivers and people interested in health; and Cornell University.

The institute is designed for nutrition scientists and practitioners interested in applying scientific evidence in policy-making. They receive training in the methods for producing systematic reviews of nutrition interventions.

A systematic review provides a complete, exhaustive summary of current scientific literature relevant to a research question, in this case specific to nutrition. According to researchers, these reviews are essential for scientifically-grounded policy-making because they provide broad evidence on the effectiveness of interventions that can inform recommendations.

"This year, 29 participants from around the world and 10 faculty members from WHO, Cochrane and Cornell University, are working on systematic reviews that will provide evidence on important questions about the role of nutrition in health, many of which will be used in WHO guidelines on nutrition," said Patricia Cassano, professor and associate director of DNS, and director of the summer institute.

DNS Director Patrick Stover said the Institute brings together "three of the most prestigious and influential institutions in nutrition worldwide to advance science-based policies to address the most important public health problems globally."

The main purpose of this year's program was to update and develop technical skills and knowledge in systematic reviews of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions and build

understanding of global policy making, nutrition, and evidence assessment and its challenges.

This is crucial because all recommendations by WHO must comply with a set of rigorous procedures, including basing recommendations on a comprehensive assessment of the balance of an intervention's potential benefits and harms and explicit consideration of other relevant factors, such as equity and stakeholder values.

Lee Hooper, an editor for the Cochrane Heart Group, member of the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) and institute faculty member, points to the importance of systematic reviews because they, "help us understand where we are in nutrition today, and understand better how to go out and do the right thing to improve people's health through nutrition."

"What is lovely about this institute is that we see people picking up the skills to go out and answer really important questions where we haven't got, at the moment, a very good evidenced underpinning," she said. "This evidence is going to be taken forward by WHO; it will allow them to go out and actually run really good programs in the real world."

Pura Rayco-Solon, an epidemiologist with WHO's Department of Nutrition for Health Development and an institute faculty member, is already seeing the benefits of the institute and its training.

"This is the fourth year of this summer institute and we have already included systematic reviews designed and published by participants from past institutes in WHO guidelines, which is quite impressive," she said. "This is exactly what Dr. Juan Pablo Pena-Rosas, coordinator of the WHO Evidence and Programme Guidance, had in mind when he initiated this partnership."

"WHO's legitimacy and technical authority lies in its systematic use of evidence, meaning everything WHO recommends that has policy implications to Member States, has to be informed by evidence."

— Stephen D'Angelo



# GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

## Human Ecology students participate in new women's leadership program

Four Human Ecology students worked at internships across the globe this summer as part of the first-ever Global Cornell Women's Leadership Program, a joint project by the Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs and the President's Council of Cornell Women.

The program focuses on providing female students with meaningful international study and work experience to help them gain skills that will prepare them to work in a global society. The College of Human Ecology's four-woman contingent – three of whom study in the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs (CIPA) – accounted for half of the Cornell students who participated.

"The program empowers young women by introducing them to their peers in different disciplines – encouraging them to learn from one another and from expert mentors," says Laura Spitz, vice provost for international affairs. "We're not just funding students to travel abroad; we're also training our grantees to be more effective in their international work."

Ranissa Adityavarman '18, a CIPA graduate student, worked as an intern for the U.S. Department of State in the Political and Economic divisions of the U.S. Embassy in Canberra, Australia.

Adityavarman was interested in learning more about the geopolitical and economic importance of the Asia-Pacific region, and specifically Australia's strategic role in the area. She aspires to work in the U.S. Foreign Service. The internship provided an opportunity, she said, to experience "the ins and outs of embassy life and how diplomats carry out and manage foreign policy on a day-to-day level."

"I also learned about the importance of language on the international stage," she said. "Seemingly small quips in speeches or talks by politicians and diplomats alike can affect foreign policy and foreign relations in very serious tangible ways."

CIPA's Enkhzul Altangerel '18 worked in communications at the U.N. Development Program in the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States in Istanbul, Turkey.

Altangerel, who hopes to work in the international civil service, spent her summer developing an online campaign to promote sustainable development.

"While doing research, I learned so much about how our daily habits have a tremendous negative effect on the environment," she said. "This internship exposed me to a diverse set of issues that I normally wouldn't study and research, which helped me connect the dots and better understand the complexity of sustainable



Participants in the 2017 Global Cornell Women's Leadership Program



Enkhzul Altangerel '18



Heather Guetterman '18



Lillian Gabreski '18



Ranissa Adityavarman '18

development."

Lillian Gabreski '18, the third CIPA graduate student, worked on a corporate social responsibility project for Eventerprise, a global online platform for the event suppliers in Cape Town, South Africa. She is interested in the ways the private sector can create positive socio-economic change.

"I loved working with a start-up and in the private sector, especially when it came to working as a liaison with local educational institutions and other non-profits," Gabreski said. "I hope that this experience can help me work between the sectors to push positive change in the future."

Above all else, Gabreski said she learned that persistence is key.

"If you can't fit the puzzle piece into the puzzle, try turning it a different way," she said. "Sometimes you need to look at a problem from numerous perspectives and try a number of approaches before you create the right fit."

Persistence was also a key lesson for Heather Guetterman '18, a graduate student in the Division of Nutritional Sciences. Guetterman worked on a study of micronutrient deficiencies and other risk factors that result in adverse pregnancy outcomes in southern India.

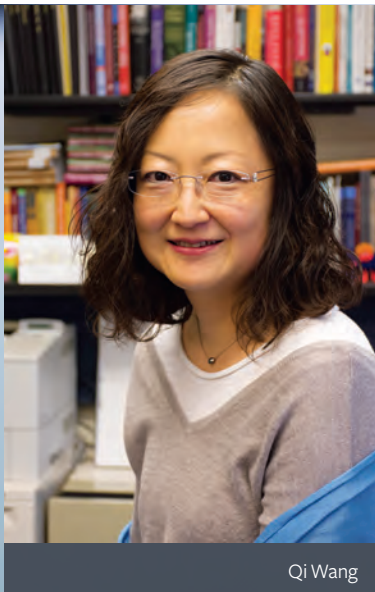
"I learned many aspects of setting up an epidemiological study and how to deal with the challenges of a different setting," she said. "The most important lesson I learned was to remain flexible and patient because few things ever work perfectly the way they were intended in the original timeline."

Guetterman hopes to continue studying epidemiology and nutrition as a doctorate student at Cornell.

"Being able to travel to our site in India and work with our collaborators was an invaluable opportunity to understand the context and form relationships with our field staff," she said. "I will be able to apply my knowledge from this experience to future projects as I continue my career in academia."

Learn more about the Global Cornell Women's Leadership Program at [global.cornell.edu/womens-leadership-program](http://global.cornell.edu/womens-leadership-program).

– Sheri Hall



Qi Wang



# SOCIAL SHAMING

Professor's research explores online actions

"It makes sense that believing the world is a just place would motivate people to engage in efforts to restore social order when there is a violation."

– Qi Wang

What does socioeconomic status have to do with online shaming? Plenty, according to research by Human Development Professor and Department Chair Qi Wang.

Wang teamed up with colleagues at Peking University and the University of Hong Kong to study an individual's willingness to engage in online social shaming, looking at the behavior through the lens of socioeconomic status (SES) and the belief in a just world (BJW). The results of the study were published earlier this year in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*.

To explore the topic, Wang and her collaborators leveraged a real-life event in which a BMW driver caused an accident by illegally parking her car. The driver then berated the police officer who arrived to resolve the incident at the scene.

The study involved 245 participants, residents of Nanjing, China, who read the posts and hostile comments in response to the driver's transgression and were asked to report their anger response, specifying how likely they were to repost the original post, follow event updates, or 'Like' the hostile comments of others.

While anger at the driver's perceived violation of social order was felt equally among different SES levels, the study found individuals with higher SES were more likely to endorse the expression of anger and abusive comments and were more likely to follow the conversation threads. The results were not unexpected for Wang and her collaborators.

They found that higher SES individuals tend to perceive themselves as having a greater level of autonomy, ability to impact the world and a willingness to intervene to restore the social order. Lower SES individuals tend to feel powerless to impact the world, have a higher tolerance of injustice and are less willing to participate in actions to restore or maintain the social order.

The study also found that a stronger belief in a just world – that is, the belief that the world follows logic and that people get what they deserve – increased the likelihood of engaging in online shaming, and that higher SES individuals are more likely to hold stronger BJW.

Therefore, according to Wang, this suggests higher SES individuals are more willing to engage in online shaming because they hold stronger BJW.

"It makes sense that believing the world is a just place would motivate people to engage in efforts to restore social order when there is a violation. And in fact, we found that to be true." According to data, lower SES individuals are less likely to believe the social order is just and less likely to attempt to restore it.

Online social shaming can serve an important social function, Wang pointed out, such as drawing attention to political and institutional corruption and abuses of power. Too often, though, online shaming turns into verbal abuse with real-world implications. "One reason online social shaming can be so detrimental is it tends to target an individual's character, rather than their actions, saying 'you're a bad person,' rather than 'you did a bad thing.'"

Wang explained that this could be due to the tendency of individuals with strong BJW to blame the victim when efforts to restore social order fail. "So, for example, if you try and fail to end homelessness, then a homeless person must have done something wrong to end up homeless, because, after all, the world is a just place," Wang said.

While Wang and her collaborators suggest that intervention programs designed to curb abusive online shaming should focus on people from higher SES levels, they believe more research is needed on the link between SES, BJW and online social shaming.

"The literature suggests BJW is not something that can be easily changed," Wang explained. "People hold onto that belief and intervention doesn't seem to work very well. Perhaps if we can educate people on the consequences of their abusive behavior [online] it will help encourage them to consider their online actions more carefully."

– E.C. Barrett



# TALK TACTICS

New NYC-based partnership hopes to give children a head start



Children building spatial skills and language acquisition

Cornell researchers are leveraging critical new connections with Head Start centers and day schools in New York City to promote the development of spatial skills and language acquisition in preschool children – both at school and in the home.

Marianella Casasola, associate professor of Human Development and a faculty fellow of the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, is leading these efforts.

“Working with children at Head Start in Harlem and through a partnership with the Audrey Johnson day school in Brooklyn allows us to focus on families from a variety of backgrounds and be able to target research on environmental factors within populations of various socioeconomic status,” said Casasola, who specializes in infant cognitive development and early word learning.

Focused on the emergence of spatial concepts, early acquisition of spatial language and the interplay between the two in preschoolers, Casasola is examining the benefits of constructive play, including building blocks, puzzles and shapes and how language through narration of activities impacts cognitive development and spatial skills.

With the goal of not only understanding how spatial and language skills develop, but also how best to promote that development, her hope is to leverage research findings to establish comprehensive programs in early childhood education, leading to new insights that would enable educators and parents to create ideal environments for the development of a child’s cognitive skills, no matter the demographic background.

“Designed for preschoolers from low income families, these programs would be constructed to establish environments for the early development of these skills and promote parent interaction within day-to-day activities, such as counting, simple math and reading,” she said.

Casasola and her team of students are collaborating with Weill Cornell Medicine to develop effective approaches to translate these findings in a way that families can easily adopt. Working closely with program coordinators at Weill’s Clinical and Translational Science Center, she and her students design and host monthly parent training

workshops at the Audrey Johnson day school to remind parents that even a little play and language can go a long way in promoting children’s learning.

According to Casasola, spatial skills are very trainable, and studies show that there are correlations between these skills and early math skills, with evidence pointing to the conclusion that individuals with better spatial skills are more likely to flourish in the science, technology, engineering or math fields as they age.

“The fascinating thing I discovered so far within these studies is that when adults take even 10 minutes to play with a child and explain what is happening as they interact, even once per week spread out over a month, we see significantly greater gains in those children’s spatial skills,” she said.

“It turns out those children who both interacted and were narrated to saw at least a 30 percent increase in spatial gains over the group that still interacted with the same sorts of activities and games, but did not have language incorporated into their play by an adult,” Casasola continued. “Both groups improved, but those who heard items being labeled and actions described showed significantly greater gains.”

Casasola said that it is astonishing how these inputs are very powerful over time in a child’s development. Even something as simple as narrating the pouring of cereal and milk into a bowl can make a difference over time.

“Many people are surprised to hear that talking to infants really matters,” she said. “Narrating what you’re doing, or talking about something, or even just naming something, really does have an important impact on infant learning, and not just language, but it really does reinforce the concepts.”

“[The] simple message is: remember to talk to your child. And have fun even for only a few minutes of play.”

– Stephen D’Angelo



“When adults take even 10 minutes to play with a child and explain what is happening as they interact, even once per week spread out over a month, we see significantly greater gains in those children’s spatial skills,”

– Marianella Casasola

# THE HIGH COSTS OF CHEAP FASHION

## Graduate student studies the market for ethical clothing

Clothing manufacturing and the fashion industry at-large have significant, devastating impacts on the environment, workers, and communities around garment factories, according to the experts. However, the movement to buy ethical fashion lags far behind other sustainable consumerism trends. After years of studying waste in the fashion industry, Sarah Portway, a fourth-year Ph.D. student in Fiber Science and Apparel Design, has turned her focus to the consumer-behavior side of the equation to ask why consumers are not “buying their values” when it comes to fashion.

As part of her dissertation research, Portway conducted a case study by interviewing 40 people three times over the course of six months. The participants were selected from the Human Ecology community, mostly graduate students and professionals, making the study sample one of highly-educated and relatively affluent individuals with a bias towards sustainability.

Portway asked the interviewees questions aimed at identifying their commitment to sustainability, what it means to them and how it impacts their consumer choices. Over the course of the three interviews, she infused their conversations with her enthusiasm for sustainable fashion and concerns for the human and environmental costs of clothing manufacturing. Participants were introduced to the website, [projectjust.com](http://projectjust.com), a tool for researching ethical clothing options, and asked whether or not they had used the site since the last interview.

Desirability bias alone should have skewed some of her participants toward saying ethical clothing was important to them in an attempt to make themselves look better to their interviewer, Portway explained.

After discussing sustainability behaviors in general for the initial twenty minutes of every interview – where many said they spent slightly more money to buy organic or local food – Portway switched subjects and asked participants “What do you look for when you shop for clothing?” She was surprised when only five participants mentioned any sustainability criteria given the line of questioning up to that point.

The combination of consumer demand for low-cost clothing and the absence of adequate environmental and labor protection laws in certain parts of the world has resulted not only in a loss of manufacturing jobs in the United States, but also environmental and labor abuses in the name of western consumers. Portway cites reports from earlier this year stating that big names in the industry source clothing material from factories in China, India and Indonesia that dump toxic effluent into nearby streams. Communities surrounding these factories experience major health implications among the general population and ecological impacts such as being unable to fish, swim in or farm near local streams.

Not only are workers in many of these clothing factories paid barely enough to stay alive, they work in dangerous conditions. Portway described denim factories where indigo powder hangs thick in the air while workers and the children accompanying them for lack of childcare do not have masks to protect their health.

Waste and excess in fashion have negative cultural impacts as well. In a lecture on the fashion industry’s waste streams, Portway spoke of companies sending bales of “dead stock” – clothing that did not sell by the end of the season – as tax deductible donations to refugee camps in Afghanistan. The clothing, culturally inappropriate for the refugees, could not be left out in the open where rain and rodents could breed diseases. To mitigate the health risks, the bales were stored in shelters originally intended to house refugees.

While the average consumer may not know the ins and outs of sustainability in the fashion industry, Portway thinks most know enough about the human and environmental costs of cheap fashion to change their purchasing habits. She points to the history and continued existence of sweatshops in the United States, as well as commonplace jokes about the poor quality of sweatshop clothing, as evidence that modern consumers know they should not buy that new \$10 dress or \$5 t-shirt. “We normalize modern slavery and participate in this horrible system without acknowledging or noticing that’s what we’re doing when we purchase and then joke about sweatshop clothing,” Portway said.

For those looking to prioritize ethical fashion purchases, in addition to resources such as [projectjust.com](http://projectjust.com), Portway recommends four simple strategies: “buy less, buy more enduring and durable clothing, buy from local clothing stores and buy thrift.”

– E.C. Barrett



Sarah Portway



# NEW HEIGHTS

## Human Development student pursues lifelong passion

It's morning at Cornell's Lindseth Climbing Center, and Sarah Aiken '18 is encouraging special education students from Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga Board of Cooperative Educational Services (TST BOCES), to keep going as they face and conquer Cornell's indoor climbing wall.

Her hopes for this experience are twofold: build students' confidence and help them realize that they can overcome many of life's challenges.

"When you think of career skills, you don't automatically think of a climbing wall," said Aiken, who is finishing a degree in Human Development and looking toward a career in special education. "But really, there's a lot of problem-solving and overcoming of fears, and we thought that this could be a nice way for them to see that in a safe and controlled environment, that they can do this, and then they can apply that to other aspects of their lives and careers."

In sixth grade, Aiken became friends with a student who had Downs Syndrome. That relationship ignited a lifelong passion, and Aiken has been involved in special education-related activities ever since. Aiken wanted to pursue her passion in college, but she was torn between occupational therapy and education as a way to reach that goal. When she heard of Human Ecology's Human Development major, she knew she'd found the right fit.

"It was the psychology focus," she said of her major. "The idea that Human Development is very psyche-based, and that you could take whatever direction you wanted with it was desirable."

"For me, I think the specific majors at Cornell are really what drives people here," she said. "I loved Cornell, but it was the uniqueness of the Human Development major that brought me to campus."

In her freshman year, Aiken was part of the club HEY, Healthy Exceptional Youth, which provides volunteers for the special education program at Ithaca High School. She also started taking disability studies classes at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, which introduced her to the college's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability (YTI). She was moved by the institute's mission to help ensure people with disabilities can fully participate at work, in their communities and in society.

Aiken would eventually become president of HEY, and, as a sophomore, she began doing research for YTI. During her sophomore year, HEY became involved with TST BOCES and Aiken jumped at the opportunity to work with BOCES students as well.

Aiken is also involved with the Public Service Scholars Program. The program based in the Cornell Public Service Center, is designed to promote scholarship and service that is responsive to the concerns of the community and contributes to the common good.

As part of the program, Aiken was required to develop her own project and combine it with research. This connected all of her work together, bringing the climbing wall program to fruition.

"When I was coming up with my project for the Public Service Scholar Program through the Public Service Center, it seemed like a natural fit to work with TST Boces and tie into working with YTI as well," she said. "I always wanted to connect the two, but there was never an opportunity."

In collaboration with YTI and Cornell Outdoor Education, the idea of leveraging the climbing wall as a learning opportunity and character shaping experience began to take shape. Aiken spearheaded the climbing program for TST BOCES students by securing a grant from a funding solicitation through YTI.

Now with the program a reality, Aiken watches the BOCES students climb and conquer the wall.

"I think a lot of students were very nervous and insecure about the wall at first," Aiken said. "But from these experiences, where they went from being super nervous to doing a great job, I think they can translate that to other things too."

– Stephen D'Angelo

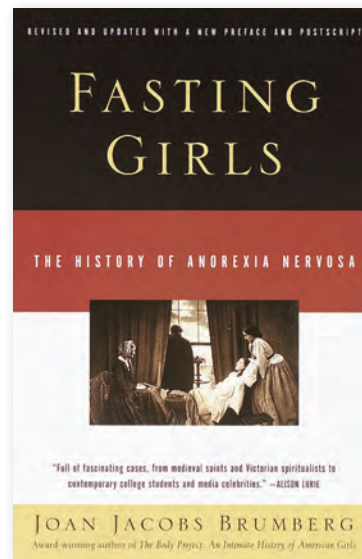


"I loved Cornell, but it was the uniqueness of the Human Development major that brought me to campus."

– Sarah Aiken '18

# FASTING GIRLS

Professor emerita's book on anorexia receives honor



Earlier this year, Book Riot named professor emerita Joan Jacobs Brumberg's acclaimed 1988 book "Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa" as one of its 100 Must-Read Books About the History of Medicine. Nearly 30 years after the book was published, the relationships that women and girls form with one another, with their bodies, and with society still piques Brumberg's curiosity.

Brumberg, the Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow, began her career at Cornell in 1979 as the only historian in the Department of Human Development. She became interested in the topic of anorexia early in her time at Cornell after she began noticing an increase in students self-reporting their struggle with eating disorders. She also recalled a pivotal conversation with a colleague who asked her, "Where does anorexia come from?" Although Brumberg replied that the disease had been around for a long time, citing Catholic saints who had fasted, she was not convinced it was the same thing and felt a responsibility to her students to uncover the truth.

To answer her own questions, Brumberg spent a year sifting through the Countway Library while a fellow at Harvard University's Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History.

"I was shocked. I discovered [anorexia nervosa] had been named and identified in the 1870s in France, the United States and in England," Brumberg said. "At the time I was doing this research there were a lot of claims that anorexia nervosa was to be blamed on skinny models like Twiggy and modern media, but here it was before modern media."

Brumberg says that although there is a lot more knowledge these days about eating disorders and available services, the numbers of those with the disease have not decreased significantly. Anorexia continues to have a very high death

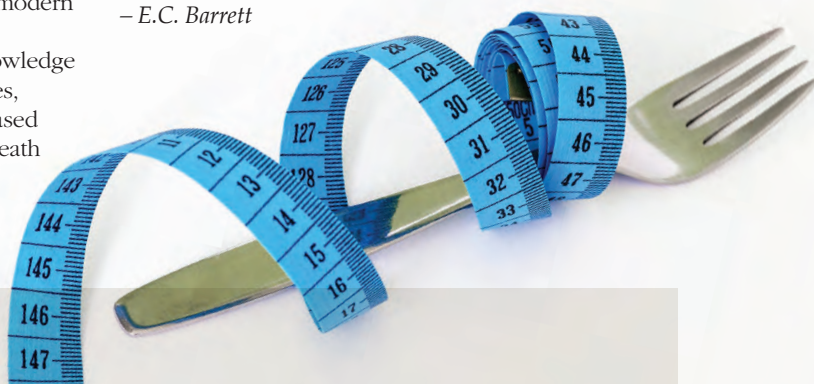
rate relative to other psychiatric disorders. "There's a certain kind of tolerance for thinness. We all want to be very thin so when a person is very, very thin we don't think about it as illness. We admire it," she explained. "A lot of parents are very tolerant because they think their girls are beautiful."

Fasting Girls is unique as it has won four book prizes in different fields: women's history, history of science, American Studies and medical anthropology. These include the Berkshire Book Prize, an annual award for best book in Women's History; the John Hope Franklin Prize, given annually for best book in American Studies; the Basker Memorial Prize, given by the Society for Medical Anthropology; and the Watson Davis Prize, provided by the History of Science for best book.

In addition to her research and publications, Brumberg gives yearly talks across the country during February's National Eating Disorder Month.

She also serves her local Ithaca community. She is the co-founder of Women Swimmin' for Hospicare, an annual swim across Cayuga Lake that raises money for hospice patients and their families. Since it began in 2004, the swim has raised more than \$4 million. She is also a member of End Abortion Stigma, a local group of women, many of whom have had legal or illegal abortions, who are open to talking about their experiences. This past May, Family and Children's Service of Ithaca presented Brumberg with the Agda Osborne Award to honor her outstanding service to her community.

—E.C. Barrett





# COHABITATION NATION

## Professor's book investigates pre-marriage living arrangements

More young unmarried Americans are living together than ever before, but not much is known about why couples decide to take on this romantic rite of passage and how socioeconomic status affects their decisions.

A new book by Cornell demographer Sharon Sassler, professor of Policy Analysis and Management, sets out to fill these gaps.

"Cohabitation Nation: Gender, Class, and the Remaking of Relationships" takes an intimate look inside the lives of more than 60 young couples. Sassler's co-author is Amanda Jayne Miller of the University of Indianapolis.

Although the authors have based the book on rigorous research, they've written it in an accessible, entertaining

style. The book draws on Sassler and Miller's research on social class and cohabitation in the United States.

From 2004 to 2006, they did in-depth interviews with 31 middle-class couples and 30 couples they labeled "service class." The service class couples worked in fields such as data entry, telemarketing, retail, and food service; their education encompassed a high school degree and, in some instances, college coursework. The middle-class couples had college degrees and worked in professions such as architecture, education, business, and health care.

The researchers gathered stories about their relationships, from when and how they started dating to what prompted them to move in together, how they share domestic chores, decisions about contraception, and how they see their future together.

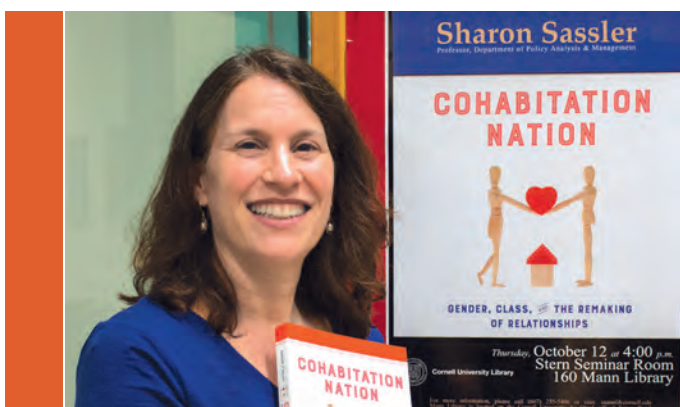
Sassler and Miller found that socio-economic forces shape how and why these relationships evolve.

For example, the service class couples moved in together more quickly, on average, than their middle-class peers, and often cited economic pressure as a reason for that decision.

When it came to having children, both sets of couples generally said "financial stability" was a prerequisite. But that meant different things for each group.

"A real understanding of the factors reshaping the American family requires a fuller awareness of not just how the highly educated meet, form intimate relationships and, ultimately, marry, but also how young adults who are located at different spots on the advantage curve fare," the authors write. "Illuminating those differences is the mission of this book."

— Susan Kelley



# LOVE THE JOURNEY

## Mother-daughter collaboration helps guide high schoolers on trek to college

As the daughter of a college counselor, Amanda Madenberg '20 has been visiting colleges for as long as she can remember – on family vacations, weekend road trips and school holidays.

"We'd go, we'd drive around, we'd talk to students, and this is when I was in elementary school or even younger," said Madenberg, a Human Development major and creative writing minor. "My mom explained a lot of [her] work to me and even let me sit in on conversations she had with students, who were high school seniors. I found the whole thing very intriguing."

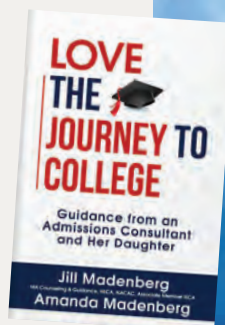
Madenberg, who has always loved to write, began reflecting on her own journey to college and how much she was actually going to miss it when she began her higher education.

"Compared to the experience I saw so many of my friends have, I had such a different story to tell because of my mom's whole mentality," she said.

With this in mind, she asked her mother if they could write a book on the process in an attempt to help teenagers and their parents who are on the road from high school to higher education, offering advice, wisdom and a unique window into how students and their parents navigate the a college admissions process.

"Love the Journey to College: Guidance from an Admissions Consultant and Her Daughter" draws upon Madenberg's personal stories of her journey through the college selection process, as well as the 20-plus years of counselling experience of her mother, Jill Madenberg.

"Our intention is to have my mom's perspective as a professional and my



perspective as a student play off as a dialogue between us to help inform people about the journey to college and how to do it with a smile," Madenberg said.

From the importance of treating high school as a time to grow to the importance of visiting campuses, the book lays the framework for both students and their parents to be strategic, realistic and maintain a positive attitude during what can be a stressful time.

"It's really important not to get caught up in what your friends are doing, what schools they are applying to," Madenberg said as an example. "You have to remember that there are over 4,000 colleges in this country, and you have so many options."

— Stephen D'Angelo

# ENDURING LEGACY

A retrospective on the tenure of Dean Alan Mathios

June 30, 2018 will mark the end of an era. It's the last day of the tenure of Alan Mathios as the Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean of the College of Human Ecology. During his time at the helm, Mathios has influenced, encouraged and uplifted countless students, faculty and staff.

He began his leadership as interim dean in 2007. He was so moved by the appointment that he wrote a letter to the college's alumni sharing that it was "an honor and privilege" to serve in this way. That sense of honor and privilege never left him. It's fueled his strong and thoughtful leadership, it's witnessed – and, indeed, sparked – an evolution that has profoundly shaped the faculty, broadly enhanced the student experience and elevated the reputation and status of the college on Cornell's campus and around the world.

Here, we honor the legacy of Dean Mathios, capturing his reflections on the many joys that have comprised his two-term leadership.



## FULL CYCLE



With Barbara Mandigo '37 at the 2017 Alumni Reunion Breakfast

"One of the amazing things about being dean is that you see the complete cycle of education," Mathios said. "I spend time talking to high school students who aspire to come to Cornell, working with current students making sure they have the best educational experience they can have and watching alumni of the college progress in their lives and careers."

Mathios has been a part of that cycle many times since beginning his tenure as interim dean in 2007. This connection, which brings the whole process together, allows him to see the quality of education the College provides.


"A lot of that comes from the motivation and inspiration I get from talking to the alums whose stories inspire me, and I can bring that back to the classroom, bring that back to the decisions we make here in the College, and focus on how important the years students spend here are to the rest of their lives."

Recently attending an alumna's 100th birthday party, Mathios says that, to this day, she talks about how Human Ecology – then the College of Home Economics – changed her life forever.

"Hearing that brings such excitement to me, and I tell those stories to our students all the time."







Donuts with the Dean: students chat with Mathios in the Human Ecology Commons.

## HEART OF THE COLLEGE

Mathios said that one of the special accomplishments during his deanship has been the opening of the Human Ecology Building and the Human Ecology Commons, the expansive interior linking the new building with historic Martha Van Rensselaer Hall. The Commons quickly became the heart of the college, he said.

"Prior to that, we really had no special space to come together as a community, and we really made the Human Ecology Commons about the students and their experiences – so we call it the living room of the college," he said. "It's the perfect community space we always needed."

Opening in 2011, Mathios saw the before and after aspects of the project. To this day, he continues to walk through the Commons with a big smile.

"I find myself saying 'It's actually here' and, to me, it still has that sense of newness even though it's been more than five years since it opened," he said. "I have this great feeling of accomplishment for what we've been able to provide for the students."

It is something, Mathios said, the students deserve. "What's wonderful about the students is that they

are hardworking, they're truly interested in learning, and they want to not only gain knowledge but they actually want to produce knowledge," he said. "Our students have truly embraced this notion of the triple integration of their undergraduate curriculum with our outreach and the research mission of the college."

According to recent data, between 70 and 80 percent of Human Ecology undergraduates work with faculty members on research projects, one of the highest proportion of any Cornell college.

According to Mathios, this is an amazing figure given how busy the students are and that it is voluntary rather than mandatory.

Further, he points to students also spending a lot of time working with Human Ecology's Cooperative Extension programs on initiatives that impact the world outside of the classroom.

"Again, [that's an example of] putting their knowledge to use and improving people's lives throughout New York state," he said. "We take our land grant mission very seriously, and I've loved seeing it in action through the work of our students."





## COLLABORATION MISSION

A second joy, Mathios said, has been in the cross-college collaborations he has fostered during his deanship and in watching those collaborations take root and grow.

Cross-disciplinary collaborations have always been important to him, even as interim dean. He made it his mission to encourage and facilitate the kinds of connections that create opportunities for faculty to learn from their peers in other fields.

As a result, the College became more deeply involved in multidisciplinary initiatives such as a cooperation with the College of Engineering and Weill Cornell Medical College on tissue engineering; a collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences and the Law School around psychology and the law; and a partnership on nutritional genomics with the broader University Life Science Initiative.

"I believe collaborations are where the major breakthroughs happen," he said. "Some are very big collaborations, others are narrower in their scope, but each of them has a real special appeal, and I think we help the students and the faculty and the staff actually come together across boundaries in new ways."

Under Mathios's leadership, the College expanded research and teaching collaborations between the Ithaca and Weill Cornell Medical College campuses; launched a dual Ph.D.-J.D. program in developmental psychology and law; established the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research; has grown the Cornell Population Center, a demography center that today includes approximately 120 faculty associates from across Cornell's colleges; and helped create the Institute for Healthy

Futures, a joint venture between Human Ecology and the Hotel School.

Mathios's leadership has seen the 2009 installation of the fMRI machine into what was, at the time, a newly renovated MVR building. The joint venture between the colleges of Human Ecology, Arts and Sciences, Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine, run by Human Ecology, has helped position Cornell and the College at the forefront of human behavior and neuroscience research.

"It's truly an epicenter of the University that connects the natural and social sciences together to advance knowledge," he said. "It's really an excellent collaborative tool for advancing the research of the entire University, and we're hoping that that level of involvement expands even further to more and more researchers."

According to Mathios, the types of problems and issues that society faces are inherently multidisciplinary, and Human Ecology is organized in a way that he believes brings great value to problem-solving. Because of this, the College is in a natural position to reach out to other colleges and build bridges across campus.

"In many ways you hear a lot of people talk about One Cornell, and I think we do that really well. That's part of our DNA, so what I hope is that we have set enough things in motion that they will take a life of their own and continue to be enhanced even more."



At the NY State Fair



With Irwin and Joan Jacobs '54, and Donald Kenkel, professor of Policy Analysis and Management





## A NEW ERA

Possibly the most impactful aspect of Mathios's legacy, and the future of the College, is how the faculty body has evolved under his leadership.

He calls it his third joy.

In 2007, approximately 600 faculty members across the Cornell campus were expected to retire within the following decade. Faculty recruitment became an opportunity not only at the university level, but at the College as well. Every Human Ecology department had active and open faculty searches during this exciting time.

Fast-forward to the present.

It is expected that about half of the current faculty of the College will have been hired during Mathios's tenure as dean when his term comes to an end in 2018.

"This transformation with faculty that we brought on board over these years is a sense of great hope for the future of the College and something that again brings me joy," he said. "An amazing group of researchers, scholars and leaders, my hope is that these new faculty members will be the core of our College far into the future."

**"I believe collaborations are where the major breakthroughs happen.**

Some are very big collaborations, others are more narrow in their scope, but each of them has a real special appeal, and I think we help the students and the faculty and the staff, actually, come together across boundaries in ways that wasn't always the case."

– Alan Mathios

## HUMAN ECOLOGY IS GORGES

Over his years in Ithaca and Tompkins County, Mathios has developed an analogy born from his time hiking through the gorge trails of the area, which sums up his work as dean of the College of Human Ecology.

"I see the natural beauty of Ithaca, what I would call the endowment of Ithaca, the waterfalls, the gorges – Ithaca is gorges," he said. "That's its endowment, and I feel similarly about what an endowment for a college does. You know it's going to be there, you know you can always depend on it. One of the most precious things any leader can have is that type of endowment support.

"Human Ecology's endowment allows us to be the best that we are, similar to the beauty of Ithaca allowing it to be what it is," Mathios said. "So it all comes back to the students, because the alums were students, creating students who are going to make a difference in the world and being able to see those differences later on by working with the alums is a true, true joy.

"It's that full-cycle feeling of seeing the whole production process of education and seeing how important the College was to people's lives - that joy of having people love the College and me getting to talk about the College," he said. "I think I will actually miss that aspect of the job the most."

– Stephen D'Angelo



Mathios hiking at the Cascadilla Gorge Trail



# THE VISUAL BRAIN

New research could help grow awareness, legitimacy of debilitating syndrome



## Search for Answers



Associate professors Adam Anderson and Eve De Rosa, from the Department of Human Development, are leveraging Human Ecology's fMRI capabilities to conduct innovative and potentially impactful research into Irlen Syndrome, a proposed perceptual processing disorder that impacts the brain's ability to interpret visual information.

"I've suffered debilitating effects since I was 14 years old," said Rebecca Chambers, referring to complex migraines that have put her in the emergency room and, at times, have caused her to completely lose her vision. "I saw every neurologist, I've been on every medication, I have done infusions I could do at home at the onset of a migraine and medications never helped."

Chambers is volunteering to have her brain scanned through Cornell's functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) lab for a study that focuses on a better understanding the condition, as well as methods of treatment.

The syndrome has been studied for a long time, but there is no consensus among researchers, scientists and doctors, many of whom are still unsure whether the syndrome exists or whether the symptoms usually attributed to it are best explained by other, better-understood problems. Currently, Irlen Syndrome is not embraced by any scientific or medical body.

"Because I've struggled with this pretty much my entire life, I hope it can get out there to the medical community that this is an actual thing," she said.

When suffering from Irlen Syndrome, an individual's brain has difficulty or an inability to process certain wavelengths of light, researchers say. In this way, light becomes a stressor on the brain, which in turn causes certain parts of the brain, such as the visual cortex, to become overactive.

It is this overactivity and inability to effectively process visual stimuli that creates a variety of visual, physical, cognitive, emotional and neurological symptoms, which can often be a lifetime barrier to learning and performance.

As a remedy, the Irlen Method was created 35 years ago by Helen L. Irlen '67, an internationally-recognized educator, researcher, therapist, scholar and expert in the area of visual-perceptual problems. Irlen also was an instructor and research assistant in psychology at Cornell, based in Human Ecology.

The method is non-invasive and uses colored overlays and filters in the form of glasses or contact lenses called Irlen Spectral Filters. These filters are said to improve the brain's ability to process visual information, reducing or eliminating perceptual processing difficulties.



Rebecca Chambers

After years of unsuccessful medical and psychological treatments, Chambers was lucky enough to see an ophthalmologist who met with her Irlen diagnostician. Both agreed that Chambers should be diagnosed with Irlen Syndrome. Chambers was prescribed the Irlen Spectral Filters and saw almost instantaneous results.

"There was almost an immediate change," she said. "I've been using the filters for more than two years now, and haven't had a single migraine since I got them."

For Chambers, it is a new lease on life. Not being able to concentrate previously, she can now read, something she hasn't been able to do for years. She is also now able to volunteer at her kids' school and coach her son's soccer team.

Irlen has been found to be hereditary, and Chambers was able to get help for three of her four children, now also diagnosed. Initially, her children's doctors thought ADHD, dyslexia or other behavioral issues were to blame for their symptoms, but Chambers said the Irlen method cleared up everything.



## Studying the Irlen-Affected Brain

Anderson's and De Rosa's study is using the fMRI's capabilities to follow up on recent data examining how the primary visual cortex relays information to other regions of the brain. They also want to view the normalization of brain functioning through the Irlen method of treatment.

"A central component of Irlen Syndrome is visual stress, which is thought to originate in the brain rather than from the eyes," the researchers said. "This can manifest itself both as visual discomfort but also as difficulty with visual processing, including reading."

"Our study attempts to characterize how the visual brain is different in individuals with the syndrome while also assessing the role of prescribed color filters that successfully alleviate reported symptoms on visual brain activity patterns."

Anderson and De Rosa have been examining how the visual brain is influenced by sources of information beyond what comes in from the eyes. This includes subjective factors, such as emotions, and objective factors, like heartbeats.

"One of our takes on Irlen Syndrome is that it involves altered autonomic nervous system interactions with the visual brain. In addition to mapping out the visual brain of our participants, we simultaneously assessed patterns in the variability of heart rate, to examine heart-brain interactions," said the researchers.



Adam Anderson and Eve De Rosa



Sandra Tosta '98

Further, Anderson and De Rosa's research has been examining neural influences of color that go well beyond simple perception. They want to find out how it influences activity patterns throughout the brain to regulate how we feel, attend and learn.

"Because of this, it was natural for us to examine how colors may tune brain responses to help overcome visual stress," they said. "Indeed, in our work, we have found that people have unique brain responses to colors even outside of their color visual system."

"Some individuals are more tuned towards short wavelength, blue-green, and others to the long wavelength, red, end of the visible spectrum. This explains why one size, in this case color, may not fit all."

Anderson and De Rosa say that this work has theoretical implications for understanding human brain organization and the influence of development on the uniqueness of each brain. Beyond theory, this different view of how the brain works, which proposes a broader role for color than previously thought, should have implications for the translation of research into the real world.

"Whether it is optimizing work or a novel approach to treating disorders, the true test of these ideas is that they can change people's lives for the better," the researchers said.

Sandra Tosta '98, president of the Irlen Syndrome Foundation, and VP of Research Operations for the Irlen Institute, points to "one of the biggest issues is that people don't know Irlen exists, so raising awareness is a huge deal because it is estimated to affect a very large portion of the population, an estimated 12-14 percent where the

syndrome is extremely prevalent."

"This condition, as well as the solution, has been under scrutiny for 35 years even though there are three decades of research on the topic," Tosta added. "While there are 200 published studies [about Irlen], only very recently have they started to do research using brain imaging. What's nice about that, when it comes to this condition, is that it's an objective measurement of change."

"Up until brain imaging studies, researchers were relying on self-reporting from subjects, reading measures, and so forth, which are all notorious for skewed data because so many other elements come into play."

Tosta, Helen L. Irlen's daughter, is following in her mother's footsteps to bring light to this issue. "I always knew at some point I would probably go in this direction," she said. "I always had one foot in the door. I did my honors thesis at Cornell in Human Development on Irlen Syndrome." After Cornell, Tosta went on to receive a Ph.D. in educational psychology from UCLA.

## A Collaborative Approach

The Irlen Syndrome Foundation piqued the interest of professors Anderson and De Rosa through the organization's work and research within the military community. A Cornell development officer connected Tosta with the researchers, and a collaboration was born.

To ensure unbiased data, the organization's role is limited to simply informing Cornell researchers about their current work, then leaving the researchers to move forward with their study. Few researchers are experts on the condition, and previous research has not identified much more than a hyperactive brain and visual cortex, Tosta said.

"That alone shows the stress and strain on the brain when trying to make sense of this visual information as it uses every trick

in the book it has to try and process this information," Tosta said.

"When subjects put on their Irlen Spectral Filters, it normalizes brain function and takes away all of that hyperactivity and all of a sudden their brain looks like that of a typical person."

Tosta is hoping the research has a high impact on not only the medical community, but the lives of those who suffer with Irlen.

"When you get adults who finally after all these years have an explanation for their struggle and their pain, you would think they would be very happy," Tosta said. "Instead, we see a lot of anger: 'Why didn't anybody figure this out sooner?' For me, this really highlights the importance of awareness and making the public and the medical community more informed."

— Stephen D'Angelo



"Whether it is optimizing work or a novel approach to treating disorders, the true test of these ideas is that they can change people's lives for the better."

— Anderson and De Rosa



# HEAA PRESIDENT'S CORNER



**Did you know that as a graduate of Human Ecology, you are automatically a member of the Human Ecology Alumni Association (HEAA)? That's right!**

The HEAA Board is comprised of over thirty alumni volunteers from around the country who are working on your behalf to support the interests of our alumni association and the College.

The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank Dean Alan Mathios for his dynamic and visionary leadership during his tenure as dean. Alan has been a strong advocate for faculty, students and alumni. Throughout his tenure, he has worked closely with the HEAA Board to help us support you. He has been an ever-present speaker at our meetings, sharing his insights and updates on the state of the College. These presentations have left us informed and inspired. In addition, he has traveled across the country and world, meeting with alumni to keep us connected, engaged and informed. He hosted numerous alumni gatherings over his tenure, including the College's celebration of Cornell's Sesquicentennial at a dinner in 2014, where more than 200 alumni gathered in New York City to be recognized for their volunteer service.

Under Dean Mathios' tenure, among other things, the renovation of MVR began, and the funding is in place for the completion of the next phase of construction. We are all better and CHE is stronger because of his unique combination of exceptional academic standards, leadership and humanity. Under his leadership, CHE has expanded and maintained its reputation for distinction at Cornell and continues to find ways to enhance alumni support. We will certainly miss him. His legacy will endure for years to come!

As the academic year has just begun, we are planning our Board activities. You will be hearing from us about our initiatives throughout the year.

There are many ways for you to stay in touch with the College and keep abreast all of the amazing things going on with Human Ecology. In addition to our alumni magazine and the CHE website, the College has regular feeds on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. Links to all of these feeds can be found here: [human.cornell.edu/alumni](http://human.cornell.edu/alumni). You can also reach out to us directly at [heaad@cornell.edu](mailto:heaad@cornell.edu). We would love to hear from you about how you might like to get involved or about any insights or messages that you might want to share with current students and fellow alumni.

Finally, as you consider a gift to Cornell's Annual Fund, please do not forget to check the box for Human Ecology. When you earmark your contribution to Human Ecology, it provides the College with additional financial support that improves the undergraduate experience, strengthens its master's and doctorate programs and contributes to faculty excellence.

The HEAA Board thanks you for your loyalty and generosity in support of the College, its leadership, students, and faculty.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reg'.

Reginald H. White '80,  
President, Human Ecology  
Alumni Association Board  
[heaad@cornell.edu](mailto:heaad@cornell.edu)

A black fountain pen with gold-colored accents, including the clip and the tip of the nib.

*As a graduate of Human Ecology, you are a member of the College's Alumni Association. You are represented by our HEAA Board--volunteers from around the country who are working on your behalf to support the interests of our alumni association and the College.*



Human Ecology Alumni Association Board members

Provided



# IN MEMORIAM

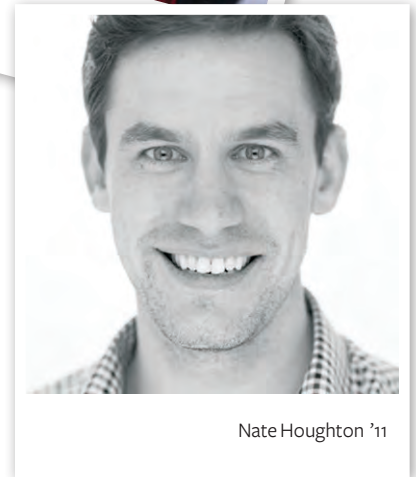
**Lucy M. Maltby '21**, Corning, NY  
**Norma (Phelps) Andrus '30**, Lake Worth, FL  
**Edna (Botsford) Hollis '34**, Georgetown, CO  
**Ruth Cornelius Weeks '36**, Troupsburg, NY  
**Ludmilla A. (Uher) Jenkins '37**, Honolulu, HI  
**Genevieve (Dziegiel) Dixon '38**, Cambridge, MA  
**Elizabeth (Reed) Lauckern '39**, Brooksville, FL  
**Dawn Rochow-Balden Seymour '39**, Rochester, NY  
**Ruth (Buffum) Schoenacker '40**, Dalton, NY  
**Ruth (Marshall) Kibbey '41**, Northport, AL  
**Virginia (Allen) Adams '42**, Watertown, NY  
**Dorothy (Hendrickson) Gant '44**, Orlando, FL  
**Doris (Holmes) Jenkins '44**, Catskill, NY  
**Sara (Storm) Shoemaker '44**, Pocomoke City, MD  
**Barbara Palmer Stewart '44**, Bath, NY  
**Eleanor (Harvey) Bradley '45**, Mount Airy, MD  
**Barbara (Birkland) Conger '45**, Warsaw, NY  
**A. Irene (Kinney) Conley '46**, Beaver Creek, OH  
**Dorothy (Hotchkiss) Haberl '46**, Wheatridge, Colorado  
**Elda (Barnum) Loomis '46**, Clymer, PA  
**Frederick I. Tsuji '46 (Arts & Sciences), MNS '48, PhD '50**, San Diego, CA  
**Carol (Slocum) Buschner '47**, Pocasset, MA  
**Therese (Driscoll) Elliott '47**, Interlaken, NY  
**Lillian "Lee" Gorton Spiece '47**, Tucson, AZ  
**Mary Lou (Anderson) Mason '48**, Skaneateles, NY  
**Claire (Girard) Peterson '48**, Santa Clara, CA  
**Doris (Welter) Pfuhler '48**, Sun City Center, FL  
**Elizabeth (Alden) Talpey '48**, Washington, NH  
**Barbara (Tarrant) Wiggans '48**, Dallas, TX  
**Virginia Elliot Besemer '49**, Liberty Lake, WA  
**Shirley (Thielker) De Forest '49**, Altus, OK  
**Joan (Delaney) Arcand '50**, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA  
**Arlene (Lebeau) Branch '50**, Saranac Lake, NY  
**Doris (Van Eps) Burton '50**, Schenectady, NY  
**Berta Mary (Hall) Chupp '50**, Binghamton, NY  
**Marvin G. Cline, MA '50, PhD '54**, Wolfeboro, NH  
**Viletta (Leite) Haddal, MS '50**, Lincoln, NE  
**Barbara (Beyrent) Bassett '51**, Fremont, NH  
**Barbara (Glick) Frankenbach '51**, Southampton, NY  
**Margaret (DeLong) Huckle '51**, Trumansburg, NY  
**Mary (Shear) Brennan '52**, Saranac Lake, NY  
**Florence S. Britting '52**, Phelps, NY  
**Mary-Jean D. (Lynn) Mollard MS '52**, Regina, SK, Canada  
**Martha (Schwardt) Baird '53**, Asheville, NC

**Dana (Furth) Castle '53**, Akron, OH  
**Sallie (Smith) Goodell '53**, Sacramento, CA  
**Joan Kanel Slomanson '53**, New York, NY  
**Elinor Price Hueston '54**, Wayne, PA  
**Sorscha (Brodsky) Meyer '54**, Rochester, NY  
**Mary Ann Meyer Adams '55**, Getzville, NY  
**Janet (Vanaken) Gauthey '55**, Burke, VA  
**James M. Harris, PhD '55**, Provo, Utah  
**Alexandra (Botwin) Lederer, PhD '55**, Sausalito, CA  
**Sandra (Chachkes) Temkin '55**, Rochester, NY  
**Jane (Pettem) Howard '56**, Arlington, VA  
**Jeanne (Niebel) Craig '57**, Milton, NJ  
**Barbara (Wilcox) Johnson, MS '57**, Phoenix, AZ  
**Edna (Carroll) Skoog '57**, Springfield, IL  
**Margaret (Giles) Buchanan '58**, Kill Devil Hills, NC  
**Robert E. Stetekluh, MFS '58**, Arlington, VA  
**Georgia (Watson) Willis '58**, Austin, TX  
**Sally Wheaton Gillan '59**, Pittsford, NY  
**Audrey G. Guthrie, MS '59**, Roanoke, VA  
**Audrey (Melkowitz) Kravarik, MS '59**, Naples, FL  
**Ellen (Deger) Michel '59**, Chesapeake, VA  
**Glenn A. Wesselmann, MBA '59**, Bethlehem, PA  
**Louise (Archbold) Bjorklund, MS '60**, Madison, WI  
**Joan (Broadcorens) Marsh, MS '60**, Dennis, MA  
**Bernice M. Belshaw, MS '61**, Newcastle, WA  
**Mary Jane (Quinby) Faust '61**, Niagara Falls, NY  
**Elizabeth A. Donald, PhD '62**, Red Deer, AB, Canada  
**Diane (Handy) Leach '62**, Schaghticoke, NY  
**Mary Lou (Collins) Miller '62**, Falls Church, VA  
**Janet (Stein) Davis '63**, Westport, CT  
**Mary Jane (Strattner) Gregory, PhD '63**, Hockessin, DE  
**Susan (Fogg) McLeod '63**, Henderson, NY  
**DeVeau (Hurley) Bissell '64**, Buffalo, NY  
**Nancy Dollar Frank '66**, Pocatello, ID  
**Robert I. McLaren, MPA '66**, Regina, SK, Canada  
**Sally A. Jacobsen, MS '70**, Croton on Hudson, NY  
**Nancy (Korba) Henion '71**, Ithaca, NY  
**Thomas Vick Fod, MA '73**, Los Angeles, CA  
**Karen (Mcchesney) Smith '73**, Moorestown, NJ  
**Phyllis A. Patrick, MPS '76**, Southport, NC  
**Karla (Stevens) Roof '81**, Westport, CT  
**Dorothy (Litz) Owen '82**, Skaneateles, NY  
**Mary C. Day '85**, Los Angeles, CA  
**Brian A. Kelly '93**, New York, NY

# YOUNG ALUMNI COUNCIL TURNS FIVE



Samantha Berg '09



Nate Houghton '11

This year, the Human Ecology Young Alumni Council (HEYA) celebrates its fifth anniversary as a voice for young alumni from the College of Human Ecology. HEYA, which was formed by the Human Ecology Alumni Affairs and Development Office, keeps the college's most recent graduates connected, engaged and involved during their first 10 years after graduation.

"The College of Human Ecology was a big part of the reason I initially decided to attend Cornell and my academic experience there was even more than I could have expected," said Nate Houghton '11, who currently serves as HEYA president. "Basically, I had a lot to thank Human Ecology for and wanted to find a way to stay connected."

Financially backed by Dean Alan Mathios, HEYA advocates for young alumni and has four main functions: it communicates the ideas and agendas of this group; it facilitates the implementation of relevant and meaningful programs that fulfill this mission; it fosters and sustains the active involvement of young alumni in the lifelong support of the alumni association and the college; and it develops the talents and resources of the college's most recent graduates.

"I'm very pleased with the quality, frequency and geographic spread of events that we've hosted," Houghton said. "We've welcomed hundreds of alums at dozens of events in Ithaca, New York, Boston, D.C., San Francisco, L.A., Chicago and other locations. It's amazing to be able to provide a way to keep alums in touch with what's happening on campus."

As a founding member of the council and now serving as its secretary, Samantha Berg '09, originally joined to help other alumni like herself find their place in the workforce after graduation and to give back all that Human Ecology had given to her.

"I thought HEYA could be a great way to do this – it gave me so many ways to connect with campus with students, and make a difference through those connections," she said.

In the years to come, Berg has set her sights on driving the mission of the Council forward, and engaging new alumni in different ways to unleash the amazing power that comes from this group.

"Giving is the traditional path for alumni, but in this day and age, I think most young alumni want to be more creative with their engagement and want to give in ways that don't translate strictly to dollars and cents," she said. "I think they want something more fulfilling and I hope we can give that to them."

Looking forward to the next five years of HEYA, Houghton said, "I think that all alums and future alums understand the importance of giving back and how central that attitude has been to Cornell and the College of Human Ecology since the beginning. I would emphasize the fact that my service on the Council has also been a ton of fun. I'd recommend it to anyone."

Berg reiterates this point, speaking directly to current and future young alumni. "Time only moves forward; we all move further away from campus, and we all age further away from our time there.

"If you want to keep those connections alive, if you want to ensure that others have as amazing of an experience as you had, if you want to ensure that HumEc continues to be a great school giving kids high quality opportunities – then what's stopping you from participating?"

Are you a young alum who wants to get involved in HEYA? Contact [terri.jackson@cornell.edu](mailto:terri.jackson@cornell.edu).

– Stephen D'Angelo





# ALUMNI GIFT MARKS MILESTONE



Tony '67 and Georgianna '67

Alumni Georgianna (Schuyler) Fernandes '67 and her husband, Tony, Hotel '67, recently marked a milestone in their lives in one of the most thoughtful ways possible: by making a generous gift of \$50,000 to the Human Ecology Annual Fund.

"Cornell was a really special and important part of my life; it brought [Tony and I] together," Fernandes said. Fernandes, who graduated from Human Ecology, met her husband, a Hotel School grad, when she was a senior at Cornell. "This gift represents our 50th year together and as Cornell graduates."

Fernandes said her gift to the Annual Fund came as a result of conversations she and her husband have had with Dean Alan Mathios, who told them about the importance of the Annual Fund.

"Personally, I might have designated this gift to a particular project, but I feel that the dean knows best where the needs are

greatest," Fernandes said. "Dean Mathios would often say, 'I wish more people would put money into the Annual Fund.'"

Fernandes, who majored in child development and family relations with a minor in textiles, said she was attracted to Human Ecology (then the School of Home Economics) because of the unique programs.

"I knew that if I didn't use child development and family relations in my professional life, I would certainly use all of its components in my everyday life," Fernandes said. She went on to work in the activities department of a nursing home for a number of years.

"I grew up only about 125 miles from campus, and even as a high school student, Cornell was the one school that I was really interested in."

Over the years, the Fernandeses have supported and taken part in the communities of Cornell as a whole and their individual colleges in unique ways. As an undergraduate student, and upon the

instruction of her faculty advisor, Fernandes served on the committee that changed the name of the college from Home Economics to Human Ecology.

Further, while living in Texas, California and Colorado, Georgianna volunteered with the Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network, meeting and interviewing prospective students and encouraging them to choose Cornell if they were accepted for admission.

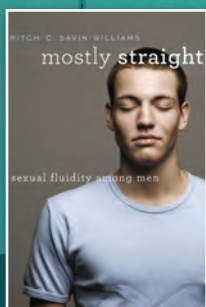
Since moving to Florida, she has been active with the southwest Florida Alumni Group. Her husband, who entered the business world upon graduation, has returned to campus on several occasions to give seminar lectures at both Human Ecology and the Hotel School.

"We both believe that supporting education is the best way that we can give back to society," Fernandes said. "Without a good education, your opportunities to succeed in this world are very limited."

— Stephen D'Angelo

## HUMEC READS

Selected works from Human Ecology faculty and alumni



**MOSTLY STRAIGHT:**  
SEXUAL FLUIDITY  
AMONG MEN  
**Ritch C. Savin-Williams**  
(Harvard University Press)

Most of us assume that sexuality is fixed: either you're straight, gay or bisexual. Yet an increasing number of young men today say that those categories are too rigid.



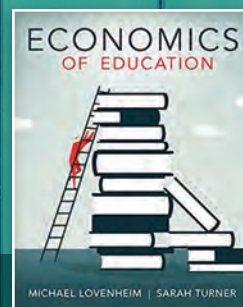
**STARTING YOUR  
CAREER IN ACADEMIC  
PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Robert J. Sternberg**  
(APA Books)

A systematic guide for jump-starting a career in academic psychology — from applying and interviewing for academic positions, to settling in at a new job, to maximizing success during the pre-tenure years.



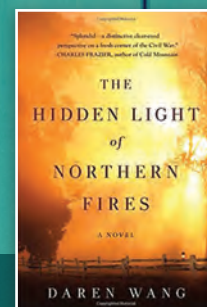
**DESIGN FOR MENTAL  
AND BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH**  
**Mardelle McCuskey  
Shepley, co-authored  
by Samira Pasha**  
(Taylor & Francis)

A review of design principles and design research for individuals who are intending to design new mental and behavioral health facilities and those evaluating the quality of their existing facilities.



**ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION**  
**Michael Lovenheim,  
co-authored by  
Sarah E. Turner**  
(Worth Publishers)

Serving as a foundation for broad-based courses on the economics of education, this publication provides an overview education research for students with limited knowledge of the underlying policies and the economic framework.



**THE HIDDEN LIGHT  
OF NORTHERN  
FIRES**  
**Darren Wang '88**  
(St. Martins Press)

This debut novel brings a little-known piece of the Civil War to vivid life, enriching readers with its clear-eyed understanding of both history and human nature.





Angel Khuu '17 (left) and Lindsay Dower '17 accepting their Outstanding Senior Awards

# HEAA ALUMNI AWARDS



Each year at Reunion, the College of Human Ecology Alumni Association (HEAA) honors a select group of students and alumni, recognizing their outstanding work and potential. We're pleased to announce this year's winners of the Helen Bull Vandervort Alumni Achievement Award, the Outstanding Senior Award and the Recent Alumni Award.

**The Helen Bull Vandervort Alumni Achievement Award**, established in 1983, is the highest honor bestowed upon alumni of the College of Human Ecology. The award is presented to those alumni who have demonstrated qualities exemplified by the late Helen Bull Vandervort '26, who have attained outstanding success and distinction in their chosen profession or life's work, and whose accomplishments reflect admirably on, or bring honor to the College.

**Neysa Etienne '94**, is this year's recipient of the achievement award. Etienne earned a bachelor's degree with honors in Human Development and Family Studies. Over the course of her career, she has worked for the Department of Corrections, the Department of Veteran's Affairs and, currently, the Department of Defense. She is a major in the United States Air Force, functioning as the primary European command survival psychologist.

In 2016, Etienne was distinguished as the Air Force Medical Services Officer of the Year and is the newly elected president of the Society for Air Force Psychologists. In accordance with the long term vision of the College of Human Ecology, she has routinely relied upon the knowledge, skills and abilities fostered during her time at Cornell as the foundation for her success. Of particular value, she said, is the College's emphasis on the complex relationships between human beings and their environments.



Etienne with her former college roommates



**Neysa Etienne '94**

## The Helen Bull Vandervort Alumni Achievement Award Recipient

Etienne was able to discuss and reflect on her time at Cornell, how it has influenced her life and how it feels to be recognized by the alumni association.

### **What made you want to come to Cornell and study at Human Ecology originally?**

My path to Cornell was not direct. I completed my freshman year at another academic institution in the area but repeatedly found myself drawn to the Cornell campus. I attended a variety of functions as a freshman, fell head over heels in love with Ezra and was intrigued by everything Cornell had to offer. I wondered if I would be a competitive candidate, so I submitted an application between freshman and sophomore year. I felt fairly confident I would end up in a helping profession and was immediately attracted to the Human Development and Family Studies degree in the College of Human Ecology.

### **Are there lessons you learned here that have stuck with you throughout your career so far, either in or outside of the classroom, or both?**

I hate sounding cliché, but I learned to take chances in life. I learned about hard work, perseverance, dreaming big, going for it and trying new things. I learned to love people from all different walks of life; and it was there, in the lives of professors, friends and fellow sojourners, I caught a glimpse of who I hoped to become. At Commencement, then President Frank H.T. Rhodes spoke about finding something to do, someone to love and something to hope for. I think about this triad often and make the effort to recalibrate whenever I feel out of balance.

**"For me, Cornell always feels like coming home and that makes me profoundly happy."**

**– Neysa Etienne '94**

### **How did Human Ecology provide you with the grounding to begin your work that has spanned across the globe?**

Cornell University and the College of Human Ecology provided me with my first real exposure to a world of cultural and intellectual diversity. The formative years spent in the College and on campus helped to expand my world view and planted a seed of curiosity about parts of this world that look, feel and function very differently. As graduation approached, many friends went directly to graduate school and some settled into careers, marriage and/or kids. I was like a child who could not sit still in church ... I just had to get up, get out and go.

### **Is there a specific faculty member or course that impacted you either in your college or career trajectory?**

Cornell had me at "Hello!" My very first class as a student was a 101 on relationships with Dr. Cindy Hazan. I wanted to be her ... I loved everything about the class. The social psychology was fascinating and her delivery of course content was exactly what one would expect from a reputable Ivy League institution. Dr. Hazan was awe inspiring, and I have been involved with the world of interpersonal relationships ever since.

### **How did it feel to come back and be honored with the Helen Bull Vandervort Alumni Achievement?**

It was truly an amazing event. I loved hearing from the recent grads being honored, as well as the faculty advisors and other award winners. It was wonderful to celebrate their accomplishments. I felt privileged to be part of the day. I love serving as a survival psychologist in the United States Air Force. The mission of personnel recovery is noble and just. I work daily with the silent heroes of our nation, helping to bring our people home. I was so grateful to the faculty, staff and alumni association for the honor and opportunity to share a piece of that story with the College of Human Ecology community. For me, Cornell always feels like coming home and that makes me profoundly happy.

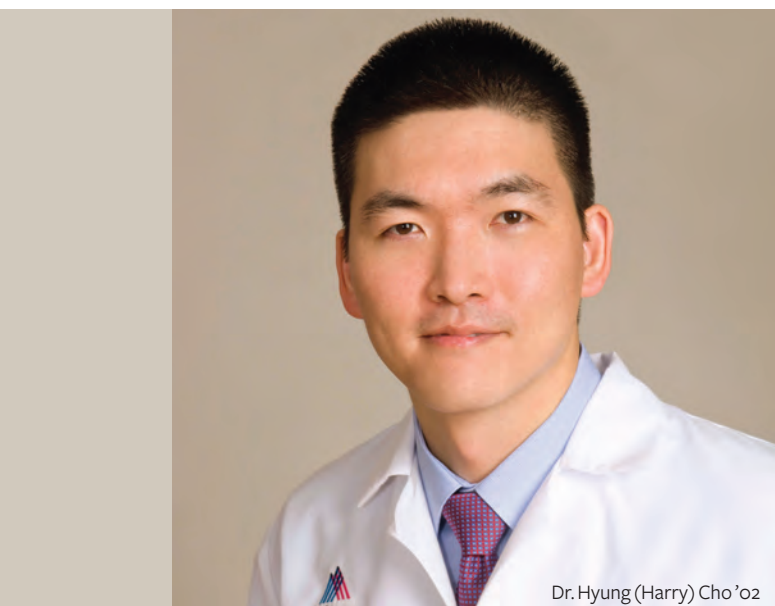




Lindsay Dower '17



Angel Khuu '17



Dr. Hyung (Harry) Cho '02

## Lindsay Dower '17, Angel Khuu '17

### 2017 Outstanding Senior Award

Two of the college's seniors were honored as part of the awards ceremony. The Outstanding Senior Award is presented to a graduating senior for outstanding student leadership, academic achievement, extraordinary service to the College and demonstrated potential as an alumni leader. The recipient of this award serves as an example for their peers and all alumni by demonstrating service, loyalty and commitment to the College, the Alumni Association, and their community. The 2017 winners were Lindsay Dower '17 and Angel Khuu '17.

**Dower** is working towards a career in health policy after completing a Human Development major and Policy Analysis and Management minor. As a freshman, she joined the Rational Decision Making lab and became Undergraduate Team Leader of the Health and Medical Decision-Making Team when she was a junior. Dower also served as a Cornell Cooperative Extension intern during her time at Human Ecology.

**Khuu** graduated with a degree in Policy Analysis and Management and minored in two fields: Business and Gerontology. She was a teaching assistant for Population Health and Science of Social Behavior, undertook research in the Social and Cognition Lab and tutored students on epidemiology models that helped them identify real-setting applications. Angel is also the recipient of the Kendal Scholarship and the Class of 2017 Award.

## Dr. Hyung (Harry) Cho '02

### 2017 Recent Alumni Award

The Human Ecology Alumni Association (HEAA) Recent Alumni Achievement Award is given to a Human Ecology alumnus who has graduated within the past fifteen years in recognition of a commitment to excellence in post-collegiate life and a significant or ongoing commitment to extraordinary work, research or volunteerism. The 2017 winner was Dr. Hyung (Harry) Cho '02.

**Cho** earned a bachelor's degree in Human Biology, Health and Society before obtaining his doctor of medicine from Temple University in 2008. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Yale University's School of Medicine in 2011. Cho is currently the director of Quality, Safety, and Value for Hospital Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City and a Senior Fellow at the Lown Institute.



# YOU HAVE IT MADE

## Krieger '88 nabs James Beard Foundation Award

Ellie Krieger '88, TV host and national expert on healthy eating, earned a prestigious James Beard Foundation Award this year for her new cookbook "You Have It Made: Delicious, Healthy, Do-Ahead Meals." The book features healthy meals you can prepare ahead of time such as creamy tomato soup, chicken enchilada pie and smoky smothered pork chops.

"It was a tremendous honor just to be in the room with all of these food journalists whom I admire and whom inspire me, and then it was a shock to hear my name called," she said about her experience at the award ceremony. "I think the message that healthy eating should be delicious and sumptuous is really important, and I am so appreciative for another opportunity to communicate that."

The James Beard Foundation Awards – known as the Oscars of the food world – honor the nation's top food and beverage professionals including chefs and restaurateurs, cookbook authors and food journalists, restaurant designers and architects and more. Krieger won another James Beard Award in 2009 for her first cookbook "The Food You Crave."

Krieger is known for her work as a TV personality on The Food Network and Cooking Channel as the host of "Healthy Appetite." She has published six cookbooks on healthy eating. This fall, she is launching the second season of her new TV show on PBS called "Ellie's Real Good Food." In each episode, she meets with people with real-life food dilemmas and helps them come up with a solution.

"I've talked to people who need ideas for quick, healthy breakfasts," she said. "I met with one couple where the husband liked meat and potatoes and the wife was a vegetarian. The show is all about showcasing real food and recipes. I may help guests in their kitchen, take them to a market or invite them to cook in my kitchen."

You can find out more about "Ellie's Real Good Food" at [elliesrealgoodfood.com](http://elliesrealgoodfood.com).

– Sheri Hall



Ellie Krieger '88

# STAY IN TOUCH.



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## A BIG RED FAMILY

Having not joined a sorority or received a good housing lottery number, Gail Sherman '82, a Design and Environmental Analysis undergraduate at the time, decided to move into a friend's Collegetown rental after her freshman year.

"I moved in along with another girl and our housemates decided to host a party to welcome us," she said. "One of the girls was dating a guy from the Hotel School, and he brought his roommate, Eric [80], who later became my husband."

Gail and Eric, now married for 29 years, live in Crofton, Maryland, about 30 minutes outside of the nation's capital. Never mind the literal distance – Cornell is just as close as it has ever been. This is because their three daughters – Molly, Paige and Emma – are Cornellians too.

Eldest Molly Sherman Berger '13, MHA '18, received a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources from College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and is currently working on completing her master's degree from the Sloan Program, while middle daughter, Paige Sherman Berger '15, MHA '17, obtained a bachelor's in Human Biology, Health, and Society from Human Ecology and also a master's degree from Sloan. Youngest daughter, Emma Sherman Berger '19, is currently working towards her bachelor's degree in Policy Analysis and Management.

"Eric and I are extremely low key about Cornell," Gail said. "When they were young we did take them to reunions. I remember walking into [Martha Van Rensselaer Hall] and showing them a mural of pencils in a stairway that I always loved when I walked to my design lab and then I got to share it with them."

"We would take the kids to those special places that had meaning to us," she said. "Our faces would light up when we shared a memory. The campus is gorgeous, I think anyone would fall in love with it. And of course without Cornell they wouldn't be here – perhaps that's the loyalty."

According to Emma, Cornell was always an option, but there was no pressure from her parents to follow in their footsteps. "Before my sister Molly went to Cornell, our parents were never pushing Go Big Red or telling us that we should go to Cornell," said Emma. "It only really became a discussion when Molly went, then Paige and finally

me. Our parents were supportive of any school, but deep down their blood ran Big Red."

For herself and each of her sisters, Emma said that the draw of Cornell was based on its own merits. "I think it's Cornell's unique majors, the beauty and professors that lures in students and parents alike," she said. "I am so happy to be at Cornell with my sisters and reminiscing with my parents of their days on the hill. Cornell is like a second home now."

Gail, when originally looking at colleges as a high school student, said it was her mother who suggested she obtain a course catalog from Cornell. "She was the one who actually found the Design and Environmental Analysis program and thought it would be a good fit for me," Gail said. "I was an artistic kid, working in jewelry making, pottery, stained glass, silk screening, so a design program was appealing to me."

"Human Ecology exposed me to a multidiscipline and world-view approach to problem solving," she said.

Gail said that her girls ended up in Human Ecology because the College's mission resonated for them, as it did for her. Emma concurred.

"Human Ecology allows students to be creative, vocal and curious which is something not all colleges allow," Emma said. "In addition to my core PAM classes, I'm encouraged to take classes in all of the majors offered within the College, which are unique because all of the majors are interrelated in some way. I like the values of Human Ecology and am very happy to be a part of this college."

The next chapters in the lives of the Sherman-Berger sisters are looking bright, Gail said, and their accomplishments so far have made their parents very proud.

"Paige is going into health care consulting in the fall and Molly is pursuing a career in health policy consulting," she said. "Emma, who spent the summer in China, is hoping to combine her skill set learning Mandarin into a career in business and management."

"I know that each of them are driven and hardworking, and I am excited to see how they move forward," Gail said. "Eric and I are both extremely proud and thought this year, with all of them at Cornell, was a tremendous gift."

– Stephen D'Angelo



# ON A MISSION

James Pitaro '91 focuses on the everyday magic of Disney

James Pitaro '91 chairman of Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media (DCPI), is a man on a mission.

"At DCPI, it's our mission to bring the magic of Disney into the daily lives of families and fans around the world," said Pitaro, who oversees the The Walt Disney Company's creation of physical and digital experiences across more than 100 categories.

"We're [Disney] fans' everyday connection to their favorite stories and characters, which is a huge responsibility and honor."

That honor, and indeed DCPI's function, is to bring to life the characters and stories of four iconic brands – Disney, Pixar, Star Wars and Marvel – serving as the world's largest licensing business across toys, apparel and home goods; a leading children's book publisher; a robust digital game slate including mobile and console experiences; 300-plus Disney Store locations around the world; and a digital network that reaches 1 billion people.

Pitaro's journey to Disney all started at Cornell's College of Human Ecology.

"Between the opportunity to play football and the incredible academics, there really was no question," said Pitaro, who reminisced about falling in love with Cornell during the football recruiting process. "I had no idea what I wanted to do when I graduated, but was really attracted to the variety of academic options at Cornell."

"I knew I would get all the benefits of a medium to large university, but also have the intimacy I was so accustomed to from high school through the College of Human Ecology – and I was right," he added. "I formed some very close relationships with my teachers during my four years and, actually, in my senior year, became a teacher's assistant within the College."

During his junior year, Pitaro had a life-changing experience while in the Cornell in Washington program. He interned by day and attended classes by night, including one titled The Holocaust and Jurisprudence.

"After one of the classes, my professor came up to me and said that I'd make a good lawyer," he recalled. "I really didn't know what I wanted to do with my life at that time, but I really respected and admired this professor and decided right then and there to become a lawyer."

"Obviously my career has twisted and turned, but I would not be



James Pitaro '91

where I am without that moment."

Upon graduation from Cornell, Pitaro went on to study law at St. John's Law School in New York City and after receiving his Juris Doctor degree, practiced law at several firms in the city.

Following his wife's career to the West Coast, he got a job as legal counsel for a start-up called Launch.com. A little over a year later, the start-up was bought by Yahoo! and through the acquisition, Pitaro joined the company, working in business affairs for Yahoo! Media Group.

He was then made general manager of Yahoo! Sports, and as a sports fan and someone who was looking to run a business, Pitaro says it was a dream opportunity.

"Then, in 2010, Sheryl Sandberg, who is on Disney's board, recommended I meet with Disney CEO Bob Iger about an opening leading what was then the Disney Interactive Media Group," Pitaro said. "I met with Bob and I quickly knew I wanted to work for him and for Disney."

Pitaro and his DCPI team are focused on infusing technology into Disney's physical products and fully leveraging digital experiences to immerse fans into their favorite stories in new ways – something he says is exciting.

This includes new approaches to some of Disney's longest-running franchises, such as turning Minnie Mouse into a fashion icon, and pioneering in the digital space to bring the new Club Mickey Mouse series to Facebook and creating the BB-8 app enabled droid toy based on the Star Wars character

"Technological change is the most transformative force in the industry," he said. "Looking ahead, we're focused on cutting edge tech, like artificial intelligence, machine learning and augmented and virtual reality to create next-generation experiences."

"Too often, innovation gets confused with technology, but really, innovation is all about mindset, not 1s and 0s," Pitaro said. "Bob Iger often talks about the most important attributes of an executive and at the top of his list is always curiosity. The point being that it's not enough to be smart and talented – you have to be curious."

Decades later, his time at Cornell is something that he still holds close today.

"I have a sign outside my office with advice I received from one of my mentors, and it reads: 'Work Hard and Be Nice to People,'" Pitaro said. "I was inspired and challenged all the way through Cornell, and there was no cruising. I bring that work ethic with me every day."

– Stephen D'Angelo

# PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

## A background in science and a Cornell Ph.D. help Susan Mayne '87 excel at FDA

Susan Mayne '87 knows the importance of getting the puzzle pieces to fit together. Take, for instance, a staff of nearly 1,000 employees and a budget of \$300 million. Then throw in programs and policies responsible for nothing less than the safety, healthfulness and labeling of the majority of the U.S.'s imported and domestic food supply.

As the director of the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), Mayne's job is a big one: to lock those pieces together.

But Mayne did not start out working on policy. First and foremost, she is a scientist. She came to Cornell as a Ph.D. student with a background in chemistry and biochemistry and an interest in health promotion and disease prevention. At Cornell, she concentrated on nutritional biochemistry, "which was the way to marry my hard science background with my passion for food nutrition and disease prevention," she said.

Mayne took a wide range of classes and minored in toxicology, enabling her to better understand the toxins in food, an area central to FDA's work. Her time at Cornell also sparked a new interest – epidemiology – and she decided to pursue further training. After graduating from Cornell, Mayne set off for Yale and a one-year fellowship to study epidemiology and biostatistics.

One year at Yale turned into introducing and teaching a course on nutrition and disease prevention, which turned into a tenure-track position in the School of Public Health, which turned into 27 years on the faculty, teaching, doing research and leading research teams. She eventually took the chair role of the Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology.

Mayne says her time at Yale "was an opportunity to bring together all the things I was interested in, which were human research, hard science, health promotion, disease prevention and toxicology."

The FDA approached Mayne in 2014, and offered her the opportunity to lead CFSAN. As she considered the move, Mayne



Susan Mayne '87

says that one of the things that attracted her to the FDA was "getting to work across the enormous breadth of ongoing research that's really relevant to FDA's overall mission." She was quickly convinced that working for the FDA was an "amazing opportunity to apply all of [her previous] work in a policy setting."

In her current role, she works to shape policies that people can understand and follow. A big part of that work is getting information from stakeholders. She and her team listen to the priorities and wishes of consumer groups, public health and health professional groups, industry and Congress – to name just a few. Then, that information is put through "the filter of being a science-based public health regulatory agency." She says her team is always working to be "cognizant of the impacts of the policy and regulatory decisions we are making on various stakeholder groups and take that into account as we are making decisions."

Mayne's current work takes her back to her hard science background and collaborative research related to population genomics. CFSAN scientists are using scientific techniques, including next generation sequencing that Mayne remembers from her research days to look at pathogen genomics and study food contamination situations such as salmonella outbreaks. With detailed gene sequencing, the salmonella molecular "fingerprint" from contaminated food can be identified and linked to the same fingerprint for human cases of salmonella infection. CFSAN partners with other organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and uses the pathogen identification to help determine the source of an outbreak. This collaboration is key in helping protect people from foodborne illness.

It's been two and a half years since Mayne joined CFSAN, and she says that everything she's done on the road to her current job – her time at Cornell, her research at Yale and her understanding of food policy and law – has had a lasting effect.

"[It enabled me to be] a better leader and move forward on the things I care deeply about: food safety, nutrition and policy aimed at public health impact."

– Amanda K. Jaros







# MATÉ FAN

Kelsey Sklar '17 conducts research on the road

In early 2016, Kelsey Sklar '17 did something she'd never done before: she took her research skills on the road.

Sklar spent the spring semester in Argentina through the School for International Training's Public Health in Urban Environments program. With a focus on experiential learning, this program offers public health coursework, educational excursions around the host country and an independent research project.

"Having participated in research since high school, I was thrilled to be able to use my qualitative research skills abroad," she said.

Sklar's experience was completely immersive; she lived in a homestay with a host mom who did not speak any English and all of her classes and research were conducted in Spanish.

"By the end of the semester I had written a 40-page research report completely in Spanish and spoke with fluency," she said.

Having been at Cornell for a few years, Sklar felt the need to step outside of the campus bubble. In her search for opportunities to do that, she found the Public Health in Urban Environments program and was attracted to its research focus. The program connects students with local professionals in their field of interest, who supervise their independent study project.

"As a pre-med student in the College of Human Ecology, I chose this program because it was an amazing way to learn more about social determinants of health and health systems and to shadow doctors," she says.

Sklar's independent study allowed her to participate in and contribute to ongoing research on women's health issues. Sklar interviewed health professionals in Buenos Aires to gather their opinions about the use of Misoprostol, a drug used to induce abortion in a relatively safe, effective and quick way. Local access to the drug in Argentina is limited by law, cost, availability and the social stigma around abortion. Abortion is currently illegal in the country unless the life or health of the mother is at risk or the pregnancy is the result of sexual violence.

"The health professionals I interviewed spoke highly of the use of this drug to induce an abortion," Sklar said. "A woman can consume the drug in a pill form in

"As a pre-med student in the College of Human Ecology, I chose this program because it was an amazing way to learn more about social determinants of health and health systems, and to shadow doctors,"

– Kelsey Sklar '17

Kelsey Sklar '17

the comfort of her home." According to Sklar, interviewees identified several next steps to research in terms of the drug's use including the need to develop a protocol for pain management associated with the medication, to regulate the cost of the drug and to expand its legality in Argentina.

"No country is perfect," she says. "It was important for me not only to learn about the United States from the perspective of Argentina, but also to live in Argentina and see first-hand the successes and challenges of that country."

In her free time, Sklar described her activities as "sipping on yerba maté, eating facturas and taking yoga classes – taught in Spanish!" Yerba maté is a bitter, loose-leaf tea drunk out of a gourd with a metal straw; it is often accompanied by facturas, or pastries. "Friendship in Argentina is a serious concept, and the bonds between people are strong because they spend hours talking together over maté," Sklar said.

The value of spending time with friends, Sklar said, is one of her main takeaways from her time abroad. Upon returning to Cornell, Sklar said she made more of an effort to enjoy that type of camaraderie on campus. "Even though my friends in Ithaca could not handle the bitter taste of maté, I still feel like I'm hanging out with them significantly more," she said.

Sklar acknowledged that although she was apprehensive about going to Argentina, in hindsight she realized that her experience there was incredible. "Learning to speak another language has opened up a world of opportunity for me," she said.

Sklar now plans to spend time after Cornell working in health disparities research with immigrant populations. "I am hoping that my knowledge of Spanish and my broader understanding of the intricacies of Latin culture will be useful in my future career," she said.

– Linda Copman





# EMPOWERING PARENTS

## Alumna's bracelet design helps save lives

A simple bracelet designed by Lauren Braun '11 is saving the lives of children across the globe.

Braun developed the idea of a bracelet to remind parents to vaccinate their children during a 2009 summer internship at a public health clinic in Cusco, Peru. She went on to launch a non-profit organization called Alma Sana Inc. to put her idea into action.

This summer, Alma Sana received a share of a \$1 million grant from GlaxoSmithKline and Save the Children to roll-out the bracelets in Nigeria, where vaccine-preventable diseases account for about 30 percent of deaths of children under age five. Alma Sana has subsequently been selected, by popular vote of more than 1,000 GlaxoSmithKline and Save the Children employees, to receive the Employee Choice Award, which grants Alma Sana an additional \$25,000.

"We chose to expand to Nigeria because of its poor vaccination rates and large population, which make it an ideal place to scale up," Braun said. "The bracelets empower parents by helping them understand and remember their child's vaccination schedule."

Alma Sana was one of four non-profits selected from 171 submissions for the GlaxoSmithKline award, which is designed to help organizations expand innovations that are making a tangible difference to children's health.

Alma Sana previously worked with public health clinics in Peru and Ecuador to study the bracelet's effectiveness. In the company's initial study, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 91 percent of mothers said the bracelets helped remind them of their children's vaccination dates.

The bracelets are made of flexible silicone, like the yellow Livestrong bands popular in the early 2000s, and sized to fit around a newborn's ankle. Each

bracelet is marked with symbols and numbers to represent children's ages and necessary vaccines. When a child receives a vaccine, a nurse punches a hole in the bracelet to record it. When every mark on the bracelet is punched, the child is fully vaccinated.

"Mothers understand vaccines are important for their children's health, but they don't understand how a vaccine works or why it's important to come back on time," Braun said. "Our bracelet offers a way to better understand vaccines, how they work and why they're important. And it enables moms to easily remember the dates of their children's vaccinations, so more children are immunized and in a timely manner."

You can learn more about Alma Sana at [www.almasanaproject.org](http://www.almasanaproject.org).

— Sheri Hall



"The bracelets  
empower parents  
by helping them  
understand and  
remember their child's  
vaccination schedule."

— Lauren Braun '11





# COMPREHENSIVE VISION

Architect Lori Kupfer '86 puts people first



Examples of Kupfer's work



"The foundation of my design perspective and philosophy was provided by Human Ecology."

– Lori Kupfer '86

Whether she is designing facilities for universities, re-envisioning a restaurant or renovating a private residence, you can be sure of one thing: Lori Kupfer '86 is always thinking about "textures, color, lighting and to connect spaces to a greater social, historical or exterior context."

Kupfer, as a New York City-based architect, says her goal for each of her projects is to create "a comprehensive vision... that is distinctive and creates a supportive and inspired environment."

Plenty of people enjoy her approach – and the outcomes. Kupfer has worked on a variety of large-scale projects for clients that include Marymount Manhattan College, Nyack College, Metropolitan College of New York, Peninsula Hotel New York and Tavern on the Green. She knows that every project is comprised of a team of people working together to create something valuable. In both her work relationships and in her designs, she aims to "respect everybody involved in bringing a project to life."

Before enrolling as an undergraduate at Cornell, Kupfer participated in one of the university's summer programs for high school seniors. She took a drawing class with artist Zevi Blum, who took her under his wing and helped her find her direction. Kupfer says she "didn't know how to take my love of art and drawing and sculpture and turn it into something professional." Blum introduced her to the fields of interior design and architecture, and opened her mind to a world of possibility.

With Blum's encouragement, Kupfer enrolled in the College of Human Ecology with a focus on interior design. What she found was an environment that was challenging, but also supportive. And she began to explore a college that molded her from a kid who loved art into a designer. Kupfer found her love of architecture at Cornell, but



Lori Kupfer '86

was advised to stay focused on interior design as an undergraduate, a recommendation she now appreciates. Advisors noted that she'd "never learn these things again. [She needed to] appreciate starting from the human scale, [working] from the inside out," which was the core of the interior design program. Kupfer knows that the wide range of classes she took during those years gave her a broader view of the world.

After graduating from Cornell, Kupfer went on to earn a master's degree in architecture from Carnegie Mellon University, then entered the professional world at a small architectural firm in Pittsburgh. After several years there, she returned to New York City to work with two large firms on projects across the U.S. and in Shanghai. Finally after more than 14 years of working for others, Kupfer founded her own practice.

Kupfer's firm flourishes as one client recommends her to the next. She attributes much of her understanding and ideals of her work to her time at Cornell. "The foundation of my design perspective and philosophy was provided by Human Ecology," she said. "All of the values and concerns of putting the human being first are what inspired me to keep going in my design education and... create [projects] for the benefit and welfare of human life."

– Amanda K. Jaros

# ROOTS IN SERVICE

## George Ferrari '84 defines dedication to community

George Ferrari '84, who earned his undergraduate degree in Human Development and Family Studies, began his academic life at Cornell in a place that could not have been more different from the Human Ecology program: The School of Engineering.

"I took one of those personality tests and when I saw the results I thought, 'What in the world am I doing in engineering?'" he recalled.

He changed his major, but his work today reflects a particular kind of engineering – the engineering of community.

Ferrari is the chief executive officer of the Community Foundation of Tompkins County, an organization that provides philanthropic support and community engagement opportunities that enhance the lives of those who live and work in Tompkins County.

"I love my job," he said. "We provide the tools and relationships to help people engage in philanthropy as they see fit, to manifest their values. Money is not the only tool – we do it with information about our communities, and with social capital."

Ferrari grew up in Binghamton, N.Y., and was the second person in his family to attend college. He began his non-profit work in 1983, when he took a field work assignment

in the Ithaca community at Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service.

"I grew up influenced by Catholic social teaching," he explained. "I took it as a personal obligation that I should be of service to others. We all live in a context, a community, and we all need to act in solidarity with others."

"At Cornell, I learned that it wasn't just about knowledge – it was about the application of knowledge, putting knowledge to work in the service of addressing the needs of people," he said. "I learned how important it is to seek to achieve greater justice and integrity in not only the work we do, but in how we do it."

Those lessons have served Ferrari – and the Tompkins County community – well over the past 37 years. He began his work at the Community Foundation in 2005, but his position there is the tip of the iceberg. He's served as the executive director of Catholic Charities of Tompkins and Tioga Counties; worked as the crisis line manager at Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service; was the founding executive director of AIDS WORK of Tompkins County, and also worked at Head Start and in residence life at Cornell University.



George Ferrari '84

Off the clock, he's just as active. He's a part of NY Funders Alliance and is involved in creating a community dialogue through his work facilitating the Tompkins County Human Service Coalition's monthly meetings. He sits on the boards of directors at the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, the Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County, and Kendal at Ithaca, and serves on the Cornell University Council.

"I have always had the privilege of doing work that is important to me," Ferrari said, "of being able to build a broader and broader tent to include people in the discovery of what they want to do, and how it can benefit our community."

– Wendy Hinkle

Provided

# DRIVERLESS FUTURE

## Auto plan earns final four spot at international competition



Professor Denise Ramzy's Disruptive Design Competition Studio often asks students to think outside of the box. Last spring, Lily Shi '17 M.S. '18, Yodai Yasunaga '17 and Jiaming Zhang '17 M.S. '18 did not just step beyond their right-angled confines – they turned the whole thing upside down.

As part of Ramzy's studio, the students entered a competition to develop a strategy for densely populated urban landscapes to embrace a driverless future. The challenge was specific to New York City, and the competition received entries from more than 25 countries. Shi, Yasunaga and Zhang's idea finished among the final four.

The students' idea, called "Urban Oasis," used driverless technology to address a critical issue: "food deserts" in densely populated and underserved areas. Their concept developed a way to route fresh, high-quality food from farm to table by utilizing a fleet of green, autonomous and trackable vehicles.



Before settling on "Urban Oasis," the students toyed with other concepts, including how to best utilize a driverless future's newly empty parking lots or how to use autonomous cars to connect modes of transport. Both things that competitors focused on.

"Our students thought of all of those ideas and then decided that what was really interesting was to say, 'Let's make sure that it doesn't alienate people. Let's make sure this is human-centered,'" said Ramzy of the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis. "It was a lovely way of turning the

brief on its head."

And it was a lovely way, too, of honoring DEA's mission to craft a built environment that improves people's lives. For Yasunaga, that was the best part of the project.

"My favorite part about 'Urban Oasis' is that it takes a human-centered approach to something so inhuman as autonomous cars," he said. "I think what makes 'Urban Oasis' special is that it's not about the autonomous cars, it's about the benefits we are bringing to all of



# ONE UNIVERSITY

## Evan Cagner '95 gives CIFI students a boost

Fashion students are getting a big boost from a seemingly unlikely source: Evan Cagner '95, who earned his bachelor's from Cornell in economics with a minor in computer science.

Cagner and his wife Michele established the Evan Cagner and Michele Cagner Fund to support the Careers in the Fashion Industry (CIFI), a student-run organization that helps cultivate relationships and make connections between fashion students and industry professionals. And though his degree is from the College of Arts and Sciences, he's been working in the fashion industry for the past 16 years.

Cagner is the president and CEO of Synclaire Brands, which specializes in children's fashion footwear. After graduating from Cornell, he worked in the insurance, apparel and entertainment industries, where his work dealt primarily with computer systems and technology. The combination of his education and his work experience gave him the tools for success at Synclaire.

"I could sit with people on the business side and understand what the objectives were, and then I either knew or knew how to figure out what the right types of technology were to bring in for the solution," Cagner said of his early employment. "So when I came here to our footwear company, for about the first two years, all I did was really kind of move around into all the different areas of the company to see how we were doing, what we were doing. With that information, I built a business operating system that we still use today."

Like many alumni, Cagner runs into other Cornellians through the years, but it was a chance encounter at a recent industry event that prompted his gift to CIFI. He'd been giving some thought to how he could give back, but hadn't settled on an exact plan. Then he ran into someone whose daughters had gone to Cornell.

"He was talking about Cornell almost like he went there, and then he started telling me some of the things that he did to help out," Cagner said. "So I thought, 'Okay this is meant to be. I've been thinking about it, and now we're talking about it and now I've got to do something.'"

Cagner chose to make a gift to CIFI because he understands how important the relationships between alumni and students are, not just in terms of career advancement, but in terms of connecting a college education to the real world. He said he's happy his gift will go toward supporting CIFI's events, which give students practical ideas about what career path to explore. He said he's also looking to get involved by providing internships at his company.

Cagner said, too, that in the discussions he had with CIFI students as he was developing his gift, he urged them to broaden their education and work deliberately toward being as well-rounded as possible – a trait he believes is essential to success.

"I see it all the time: people who are so talented in design but you ask them to look at the shoes from a commercial standpoint, think about how we're going to put this into production, and they don't have anything to offer."

Cagner values the time he spent at Cornell, particularly the opportunities he had to "venture off" into programs, schools and departments that were outside of his major field of study.

"The best thing about Cornell University is when you graduate, you get a degree from Cornell University," he said. "It happens to be broken down in these colleges, but to me back then – and to me now – it's one university."

– Wendy Hankle



Evan Cagner '95 and Michele Cagner

the stakeholders in the 'Urban Oasis' ecosystem."

Shi, who is in her final year of the DEA 4+1 master's program, comes from an interior design background. She said she appreciated learning the unexpected skills and benefitting from her peers' – and Ramzy's – insights.

"I signed up for the studio because I wanted to experience a variety of projects and to apply the design process for different types of projects," Shi said. "In the end, I received everything I asked for: a variety of very interesting design prompts from product packaging design to strategies on how to prepare for an autonomous vehicle dominated future."

Though "Urban Oasis" did not take the top prize, Ramzy said the students' accomplishment of making it to the final four is absolutely a win. As a finalist, the students had an opportunity to present to an audience of about 500 people in New York City, and the winner was announced live at the event. In addition to the visibility and the bragging rights, all three students received a year's membership to New Lab, an innovative design, prototyping and manufacturing space in Brooklyn that caters to entrepreneurs working in advanced technologies.

"These are real competitions, most of them are open and international competitions, and our students are competing with professional firms and with other students all of over the world," Ramzy said. "This makes it all the more remarkable when students are recognized for their work."

– Wendy Hankle

# MVR BUILDING

## Redesign and Renovation



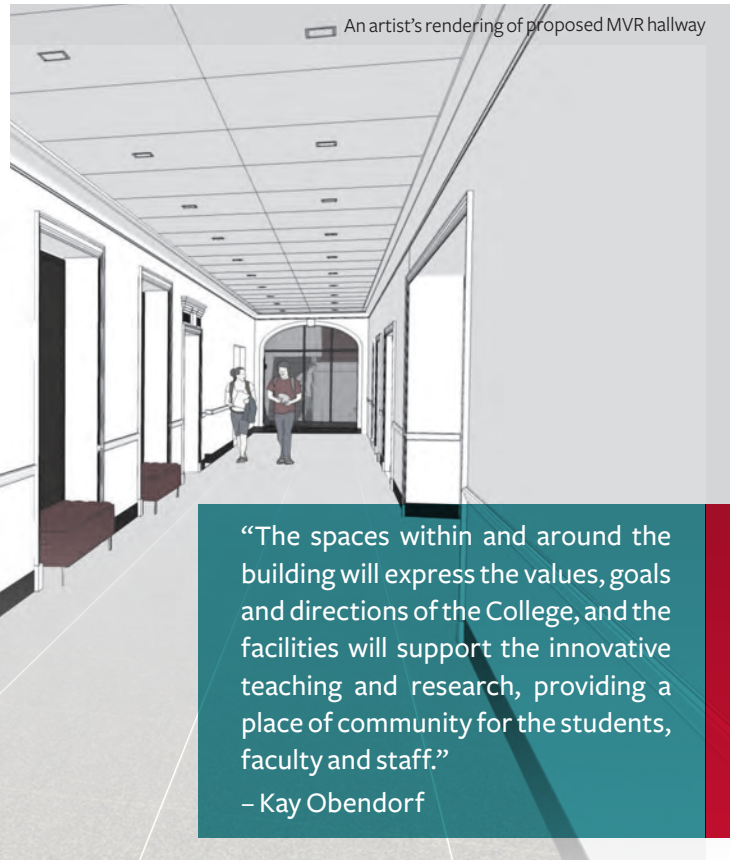
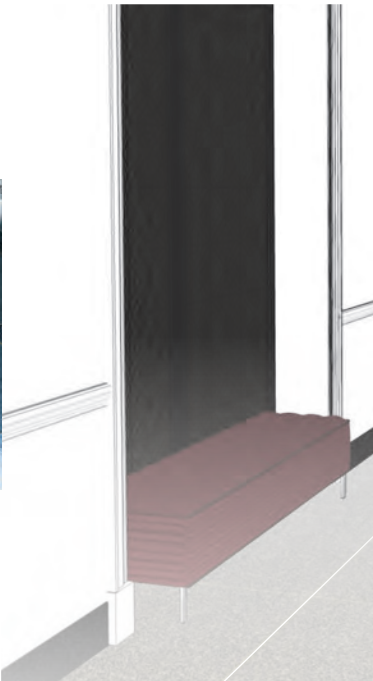
The 1933 auditorium



Kay Obendorf and Kristine Mahoney

Because the building has seen no major upgrades since its original construction, “we are doing a rehabilitation of the basic building systems and infrastructure,” Mahoney said. This includes upgrading many utility and code compliance features, such as electrical, plumbing and fire safety systems. Given the demolition required for the renovation, the project provides an opportunity for repartitioning and an upgrade to the interior aesthetic.

One goal is to create “teaching and learning spaces that are more representative of what [students and faculty] need now, versus what they needed in 1933,” Mahoney said. This means building more collaborative and flexible spaces where people can gather and interact. Instead of a long corridor with classrooms or offices on either side, the new building will pull spaces together to create suites, with the goal of giving each of the six main academic units in the College its own administrative support hub.



An artist's rendering of proposed MVR hallway

“The spaces within and around the building will express the values, goals and directions of the College, and the facilities will support the innovative teaching and research, providing a place of community for the students, faculty and staff.”

– Kay Obendorf

Beginning in the summer of 2018, the College of Human Ecology building complex will enter the third and final phase of a multi-year renovation project. The Martha Van Rensselaer (MVR) building, originally built in 1933, will begin a \$48 million redesign and renovation.

Capital funding has now been granted from New York state, thanks to the dedicated work of many, including Kay Obendorf, Professor Emerita at the College of Human Ecology, and Kristine Mahoney, director of Facilities and Operations at the College.

Another goal is to make the College a seamless complex. The updated MVR building will be connected to other buildings, and navigation will be simplified. Additionally, the project has had a strong focus on sustainable design. “So far, all phases of this project have achieved LEED gold [rating],” Mahoney said. “We’re planning to meet or beat that rating.”

According to Obendorf, “MVR Hall has a rich history rooted in the progressive work of Martha Van Rensselaer and Eleanor Roosevelt with much of the funding for construction coming from New York state when FDR was governor.”

Because of this, she said that designers will respect original architectural features and plan to restore many special aspects of the classic building throughout the renovation process. The 1933 auditorium, the tea room and checkerboard square will all retain their original detailing and be restored and highlighted within the new aesthetic.

During the renovations, which will extend through summer 2020, offices and classes will be spread out to other locations on campus. Faculty and students will face the challenge of staying connected, with the two remaining lecture halls in MVR holding significant importance as spaces where the community can interact and work together.

In the end, Obendorf said, the updated MVR building will not only reflect the rich history of the College, but communicate its vibrant and innovative future.

“The programming for the renovation of the building is drawn from the academic programs and mission of the college,” she said. “The spaces within and around the building will express the values, goals and directions of the College, and the facilities will support the innovative teaching and research, providing a place of community for the students, faculty and staff.”

– Amanda K. Jaros





Kevin Charlotten '94,  
MD, FAAFP

**DEGREE:** Bachelor of Science,  
Nutritional Sciences

**POSITION:** Physician,  
Q-Care Affordable Medical Care

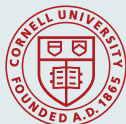


College of Human Ecology

HUMAN ECOLOGY HELPED SHAPE  
MY VIEW OF THE WORLD—THINKING  
ABOUT HOW SCIENCE, BIOLOGY, AND  
TECHNOLOGY INTERACT WITH HUMANS.

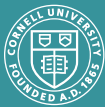
It's important to be able to understand how all of these  
factors impact our ability to live. Family medicine looks  
at a health problem in much the same way, using the  
bio-psycho-social perspective.

i am *treating the health of my community.*  
human ecology



College of Human Ecology

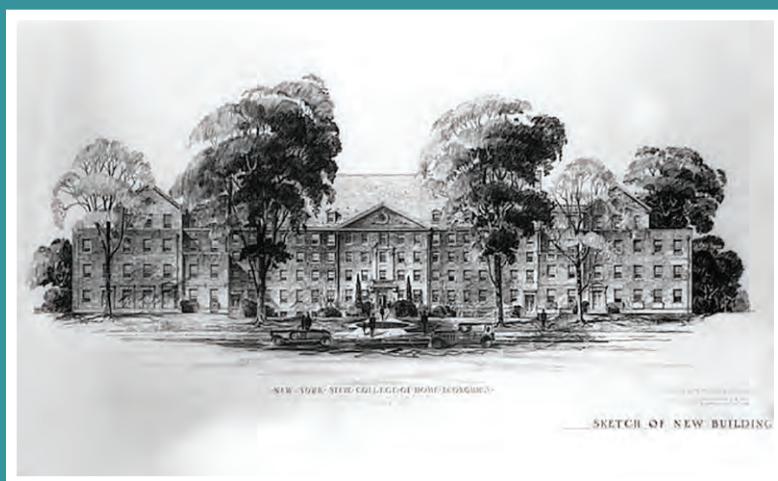
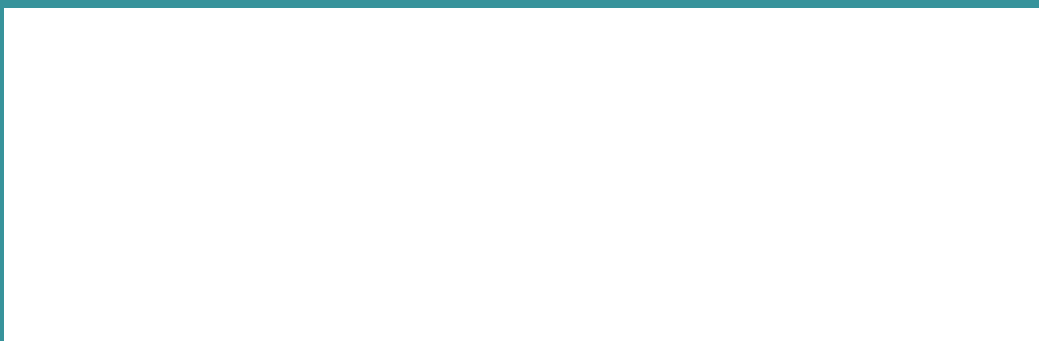
Learn more about the College of Human Ecology at [human.cornell.edu](http://human.cornell.edu)



# College of Human Ecology

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*“Martha Van Rensselaer conceived of home economics education as a means by which women’s minds could be trained, their capacities released, and their deepest desires satisfied through growth in understanding. As we lay the cornerstone of this great building, it is not its material expression in brick and stone and steel that I would have you consider. Rather it is to its significance as a symbol of new and vital forces arising to meet strenuous modern problems.”*

– Flora Rose, co-director of the New York State College of Home Economics, in personal correspondence to Eleanor Roosevelt, June 8, 1932