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HARVARD KENNETH C. GRIFFIN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES



Master of Happiness

Tal Ben-Shahar trains a new generation of leaders in the art and science of human flourishing

to note



Check out the new Harvard Griffin GSAS website!

The product of consultation with students, faculty, alumni, and administrators, the new Harvard Griffin GSAS website better reflects the needs of its community, improves navigation for all visitors, and provides a refreshed “digital front door” for prospective students interested in learning about the School.

●●● Explore it today at gsas.harvard.edu



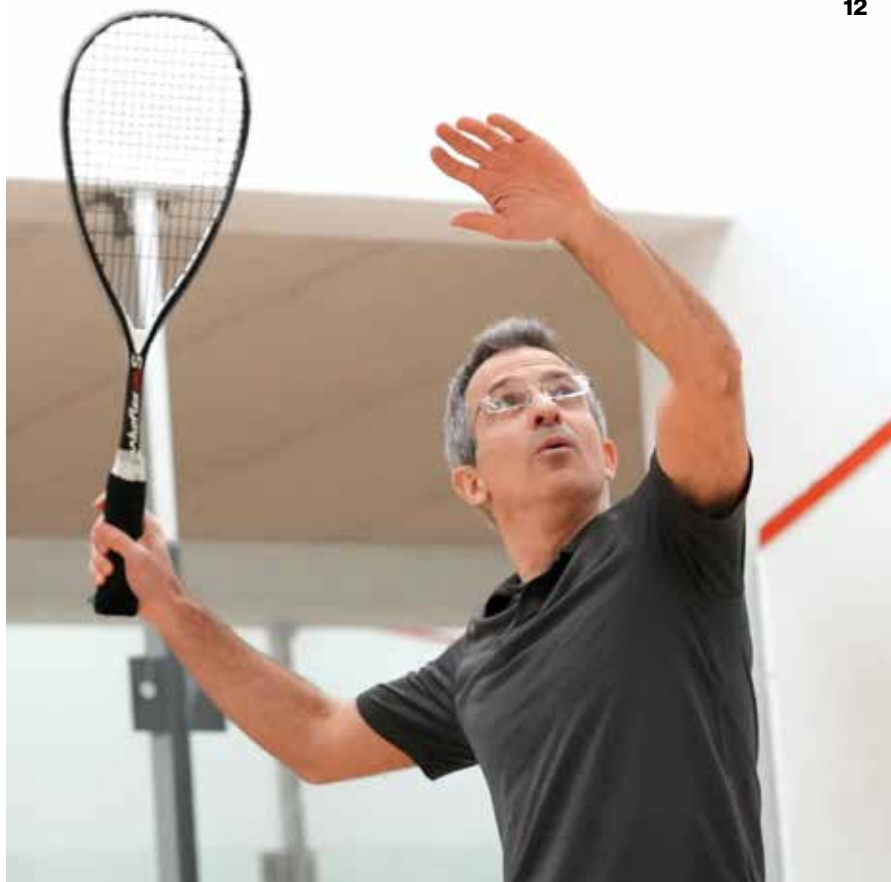
colloquy

SUMMER/FALL 2023

8 To Improve the Health of Children
Kellie Ann Jurado hopes to change the way scientists understand early-life immunity

12 Master of Happiness
Tal Ben-Shahar trains a new generation of professionals in the art and science of human flourishing

17 (Sesqui)centennial Medalists
Harvard Griffin GSAS loses out its anniversary celebration by honoring alums who epitomize the School's history of inquiry, innovation, and impact



3 Voices of Commencement
School's newest graduates reflect on their time at Harvard Griffin GSAS

4 Talking Points
Name change, new staff, FAS dean, and more

6 Conversation
Religion scholar Gary Anderson on debt and sin

24 Noteworthy
Alumni updates, recent publications, and educator Max Hunter on the literacy journeys of Black men

28 Connect
Save the date for these upcoming events!



WE'VE JUST CLOSED OUT A FANTASTIC yearlong celebration highlighting the School's 150-year history of inquiry, innovation, and impact. The occasion gave us the opportunity not only to reflect on our past, but also to imagine the future of Harvard Griffin GSAS.

Along those lines, the GSAS Admissions and Graduate Education working group, which I mentioned in the last issue of *Colloquy*, has released its final report and is currently in the last stages of review with faculty and students. Our recommendations on advising aim to promote more structure and clearer expectations on all sides creating a more effective relationship in which students can do their best work. Additional recommendations on employment outcomes encourage graduate programs to foster supportive and broad-ranging conversations about career options, urging them to provide students with access to advice on careers both inside and outside of academia. Sections on the scale and strength of the academic program and on equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging are also included.

The implementation of the report's recommendations will, we hope, enhance our students' academic experience and help them succeed in whatever their chosen profession may be. You can help us with these efforts by becoming a mentor in the Firsthand Advisers platform or through our Virtual Coffee Program. (Visit gsas.harvard.edu/alumni/volunteer to learn how.)

The alumni you will read about in this issue are emblematic of this forward thinking on education and on our next 150 years. They are pushing the boundaries of their fields and encouraging us to think more deeply about our belief systems. Above all, they are dedicated to human flourishing, whether they are asking us to think more positively, encouraging us to embrace our humanity, or upending scientific assumptions. These are just a sample of the many achievements on which we will look back in the years ahead. I'll be watching with pride and excitement as this future—shaped by Harvard Griffin GSAS's remarkable alumni in every field and discipline—unfolds.

—EMMA DENCH
DEAN

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Access current and back issues of *Colloquy*, as well as a range of other alumni services and information, at gsas.harvard.edu/alumni.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your feedback and ideas. Write to: *Colloquy*, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 350 Cambridge, MA 02138-3846; or email gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

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Over 550 students participated in Harvard Griffin GSAS's degree awarding ceremony in Sanders Theatre on Commencement Day, May 25, 2023. Here's what some of the School's newest graduates had to say about their time here.

AMAZING MENTORS

I've been fortunate to have several amazing mentors at Harvard: my advisor, (Gordon McKay Professor in Computer Science) Finale Doshi-Velez, as well as Margo Seltzer, (George F. Colony Professor of Computer Science) David Parkes, and (Director of Graduate Education) John Girash. These mentors have supported me in research as well as in trying to build a more inclusive and supportive culture at Harvard—one that challenges what we think a PhD should look like.

YANIV YACOBY, PHD '23
Computer Science



INCOMPARABLE INDEPENDENCE

I think the part of my GSAS experience that will have the longest-lasting impact on me will probably be the relationship I have with my advisor, (Ellmore C. Patterson Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology and of Applied Mathematics) Sean Eddy. He gave me a pretty unusual and incomparable level of independence and ownership on my project—from the initial idea to writing the software to planning out and doing the analyses to running experiments and writing the paper. That really helped build my confidence as a researcher, and that's something that I'll carry with me for the rest of my career.

YEKATERINA SHULGINA, PHD '23
Systems Biology



A LIFE-CHANGING COMMUNITY

I remember a gathering during my first week on campus. I was just having a beer and chatting with a few other people about why we were here at Harvard and what kind of research we were doing. They came from so many different backgrounds and fields. One was a neuroscientist, another an economist, and another a psychologist. Even though we may not fully understand the work going on in different fields, and even though we come from very different educational backgrounds and parts of the world, we all get to come here to do something that we are passionate about, and that sense of community is life-changing.

BOHAO WU, PHD '23
History



GREAT SCIENTISTS, BETTER PEOPLE

[Graduation] wouldn't be possible without the support and guidance I received from my mentor and principal investigator, (John LaPorte Given Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases) Sarah Fortune. I appreciate how she entrusted me with compelling projects while also encouraging me to explore my personal scientific interests and creativity. The postdoctoral fellows in my lab, Xin Wang and Qingyun Liu, were also instrumental in my training and development. It was a wonderful experience working with such amazing scientists who happen to be even better people.

SYDNEY STANLEY, PHD '23
Biological Sciences in Public Health





College alumnus Kenneth C. Griffin and Harvard University President Claudine Gay, PhD '98

New Name for GSAS

On April 11, President Larry Bacow and Claudine Gay, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) and University president-elect, announced that Harvard would rename its Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) in honor of College alumnus Kenneth C. Griffin.

The move recognized Griffin's recent unrestricted gift of \$300 million to the FAS, part of a decades-long legacy of giving to the University that totals more than \$500 million. The funds provide essential resources to support every aspect of FAS's mission, particularly long-term excellence in teaching and research within and across its many fields and disciplines. The gift also underscores the power of graduate education, with graduate students and faculty creating new knowledge that enhances understanding across every area of study. "This investment in the Faculty of the Arts and Sciences cannot help but support our students as they engage in the inquiry and innovation that will ultimately lead to positive impact on the world," said Harvard Griffin GSAS Dean Emma Dench.

••• For complete coverage, visit the *Harvard Gazette* website: news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2023/04/kenneth-c-griffin-makes-gift-of-300-million-to-fas.

FROM THE COLLOQUY PODCAST

“I think that [college prep programs that target BIPOC students] are not making society more just. They’re playing into the existing stratification of society to make life better for a small subset of individuals from communities of color.”

— PHD STUDENT GARRY MITCHELL on “How Good Do Black Students Have to Be?” gsas.harvard.edu/news/colloquy-podcast-how-good-do-black-students-have-be

A SORT OF HOMECOMING



When **Bob Coughlin** joined Harvard Griffin GSAS in January 2023 as dean for admissions and financial aid, it was a homecoming of sorts. Although his previous position was director of

financial aid at Wesleyan University, Coughlin began his career at Harvard Griffin GSAS as a junior admissions and financial aid officer after working in Harvard's Office of General Counsel and the Department of History as a coordinator of graduate studies. Coughlin's 30 years of experience in admissions and financial aid include time at Harvard Divinity School, where he was associate director of financial aid, and Harvard Medical School, where he was director. In addition to overseeing Harvard Griffin GSAS's admissions process, Coughlin leads the Office of Financial Aid, which provides specialized assistance to master's and PhD students as they develop a plan to secure the resources necessary to pursue their graduate education.

A CHAMPION FOR STUDENTS



On March 10, Harvard Griffin GSAS Dean Emma Dench announced the appointment of **Bill Stackman** as the School's next dean of students, effective July 17. Formerly the vice chancellor

for student affairs and dean of students at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Stackman's career in higher education spans three decades with experience not only in student affairs but also in educational leadership and administration and in social work. Moreover, he has served students at a wide variety of institutions, from large state schools to top private institutions such as the University of Illinois, Oberlin College, Tufts University, and the University of Notre Dame. With credentials that include a master's degree in positive coaching and positive psychology as well as a doctorate in education, Stackman is passionate about improving the student experience, especially in the areas of mental health and emotional wellness.

New Horizons



Gbemisola Abiola, PhD '23, presents her research on the legacy of terrorism in Nigeria at the 2023 Harvard Horizons Symposium.

Nine scholars and scientists representing the extraordinary PhD students of Harvard Griffin GSAS presented their research to a rapt Sanders Theatre audience on April 11 at the annual Harvard Horizons Symposium. The group formed the tenth class of Horizons Scholars, a fellowship cohort that offers opportunities for long-lasting community, mentorship, and professional and academic growth. The students, who received

in-depth coaching on the art of effective presentation, gave talks on topics ranging from new ways to search for black holes to the health impacts of homelessness, reinventing air conditioning, the impact of childhood violence on bias, and more.

●●● Meet this year's scholars and view their presentations at gsas.harvard.edu/directory/horizon-scholars. (Filter by 2023.)

HOEKSTRA IS NEW DEAN OF FAS



On August 1, evolutionary geneticist **Hopi E. Hoekstra** became the new Edgerley Family Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). The C.Y. Chan Professor of Arts and Sciences, Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology in the Departments of Molecular and Cellular Biology and Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, and curator of mammals in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Hoekstra succeeds Claudine Gay, PhD '98, who became president of the University on July 1. "Hopi Hoekstra is a pathbreaking scholar with a highly interdisciplinary outlook and inclusive style, a devoted educator known for her engaging lectures and her generous mentoring of both undergraduate and graduate students, and an academic leader experienced in addressing a broad array of opportunities and challenges facing the FAS and the University," said Gay in a letter to the FAS community last June. "I am delighted at the prospect of her move to University Hall, and confident that she will lead the FAS with foresight, ambition, and wisdom." Harvard Griffin GSAS Dean Emma Dench served as interim dean of FAS during the month of July.



FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

GARY ANDERSON, PHD '85, STUMBLED ON THE RESEARCH THAT BECAME THE SUBJECT OF HIS MOST WELL-KNOWN BOOK, *SIN: A HISTORY*. POURING THROUGH THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES ON SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM, ANDERSON, THE HESBURGH PROFESSOR OF CATHOLIC THOUGHT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, DISCOVERED THAT THE CONCEPTION OF SIN CHANGED DRAMATICALLY ACROSS THE BIBLICAL ERA. HE SAYS THAT SIN HAD DEVELOPED VERY SPECIFIC ECONOMIC RESONANCES BY THE TIME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—RESONANCES THAT CONTINUE TO SHAPE HOW WE THINK ABOUT MONEY, DEBT, FORGIVENESS, AND CHARITY.

How is the idea of sin treated in the Bible?

In the Hebrew Bible proper, although there are a large variety of metaphors for sin, the metaphor that takes pride of place and that is used by far the most is that of sin as a burden that individuals bear on their backs. Forgiveness of sin, then, means removing the burden from the back of the person so afflicted. So, it's not by accident in the Hebrew Bible that the principal ritual for eliminating sin is the scapegoat, an animal that carries the burdens—literally the weights of ancient Israel—into the wilderness.

“Once we conceive of sin as a debt, this generates the notion that meritorious activity creates a corresponding credit.”

—GARY ANDERSON, PHD '85

When we move into the period of Second Temple Judaism—the period of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the rabbinic writings—that idiom gradually disappears from everyday speech. Of course, it's in the Bible, so it's not lost forever, but it's no longer a productive idiom. The idiom that replaces it is sin as a debt. And so, stories told about sin and the forgiveness of sin in this period increasingly revolve around individuals who owe money and are relieved of what they owe.

Does the New Testament make a more explicit economic connection by introducing the notion of sin as something remitted?

Oh, yes. The reason why Jesus tells stories about debtors and creditors is not just because he's making it up. This is the language of his day, describing human sinfulness in terms of debts remitted either to God or to your fellow man. Everybody knew what that meant.

Colossians chapter 2 verse 14 fits hand and glove there: “having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.” Why did this become one of the most cited New Testament texts by the early church theologians? Because they thought of sin as a debt. And here we have a text that says Jesus takes this bond of indebtedness and rips it in two on the cross. He nullifies it.

Once we conceive of sin as a debt, this generates the notion that meritorious activity creates a corresponding credit. These credits, in turn, were thought to collect in a heavenly treasury and could

be used to pay down the debt of one's sins. This concept defined the way both synagogue and church would understand sin and forgiveness. The Lord's Prayer is perhaps the best barometer: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

Wasn't that transactional, economic notion of sin and forgiveness what Martin Luther was so worked up about?

The notion that good deeds were recorded in a treasury in heaven became a point of major disagreement during the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic tradition of a treasury of merits was tied to the theology of indulgences that was rejected root and branch by Protestant reformers. They had great difficulty with biblical texts—both in the later texts of the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament—that addressed this treasury in heaven. So, you have Protestant thinkers working over time to deny what seems to be the simple sense of these texts because of its association with what they think is a terrible Catholic heresy. Of course, Catholics viewed the treasury of merits as deeply grounded in scripture and often compared this notion to the Jewish concept of the “merits of the fathers.”

Debt—particularly the national debt—has been much in the news in recent months.

How does this metaphor for sin continue to resonate today?

The issuance of a note of debt is grounded in trust and belief. Indeed, the term creditor comes from a Latin root meaning “to believe.” We don't usually reflect on the importance of this sort of faith for

CURRICULUM VITAE

University of Notre Dame

Hesburgh Professor of Catholic Thought, 2003-present

Harvard Divinity School

Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, 1995–2003

University of Virginia

Assistant/Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, 1985–1994

Harvard University

PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1985

Duke Divinity School

MDiv, 1981

Albion College

BA, 1977

the flourishing of our economy, but when a financial crisis hits, all of a sudden it confronts us head on: Will credit markets continue to operate? Will my money retain its value over time?

The Jewish and Christian traditions utilized this sort of economic anxiety to draw a compelling picture of another sort of “economic” market. The most secure investment one could make, they argued, was to donate one's money to the poor. Because God was the guarantor of such financial risks, one could be assured that radical generosity would be rewarded. Pope Leo the Great went so far as to say that refusing to give—to become a creditor—to the poor implied a lack of belief in God.

So, while I don't have any specific wisdom on the wrangling over the country's national debt, I think it's important to understand that these problems are grounded in trust and belief, which has been a challenge for humanity since the beginning of time. 🍷



TO IMPROVE THE
Health *of*
Children

by Paul
Massari

**KELLIE ANN JURADO
HOPES TO CHANGE THE
WAY SCIENTISTS UNDERSTAND
EARLY-LIFE IMMUNITY**

Photographs by John Soares



ELLIE ANN JURADO, PHD '15,

grew up on a New Mexico chili pepper farm that has been in her family for generations. Although her grandfather could neither read nor write, he understood the importance of education. So did Jurado's father, who went to college to study business and faithfully returned to the family farm he still manages today. For his daughters, though, he wanted something different.

"He really wanted to make sure that my sister and I had the opportunity to choose what we wanted to do for a career," Jurado says. "He constantly encouraged us to pursue what brought us fulfillment. So, in every step of my career, I've followed my interests and passions, because I recognize that it is a privilege to do so."

The passion that Jurado's father encouraged her to follow led her to some of the world's great research laboratories, the Harvard Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and an area of human biology that has long been understudied: early-life immunity. Today, as Presidential Assistant Professor in Microbiology at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, she and the team at Jurado Lab are shedding new light on fundamental immunobiology to discover and identify opportunities to improve the health of children.

Research: A Love Story

As an undergraduate at New Mexico State University, Jurado intended at first to study philosophy or psychology. It was through the latter that she first encountered the scientific method.

"I was in one of my intro to psychology courses," she remembers. "You could get

extra credit by participating in a research experiment. I did and I was like, 'Wow! This professor had an observation, and she's using me to see if it's right or wrong.' I asked if I could volunteer in her lab, just to try to get some exposure to this work, and I fell in love with research."

Jurado's professor, Laura Thompson, with whom she worked throughout her entire undergraduate career, taught her how to form hypotheses, test them, and analyze data. Still, she hungered for results that were more precise and biologically focused. Jurado connected with a professor of anthropology at New Mexico State, Wenda Trevathan, who helped her secure a summer research experience studying reproductive endocrinology in the primatology lab of the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, Germany.

"I pitched a naïve hypothesis to Professor Trevathan and she did not laugh but pointed me in the direction of readings and opportunity. That act of inclusion instead of laughing at my 'silly ideas' helped me get my foot in the door. I thought that maybe there was a place for me in science," she says.

That summer study in endocrinology led to a course in virology—and to Jurado's true calling. "I found something of interest in any academic paper as long

as it had to do with viruses," she says. "I thought, 'I have to follow this path.'"

Follow it Jurado did, not only to more lab work and research—including some time at the National Institutes of Health—but also to spectacular academic success as class valedictorian at New Mexico State. In 2011, she was admitted to Harvard's PhD program in medical sciences to study virology under Professor Alan Engelman.

Jurado wrote her dissertation on how the viral protein integrase mediates replication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), studying allosteric integrase inhibitors (ALLINIs)—drugs designed to interfere with the virus's ability to reproduce itself. Engelman says that scientists previously thought that ALLINIs worked by preventing integrase from interacting with a part of human chromosomes called LEDGF. But Jurado's research told a different story.

"Kellie discovered that ALLINIs more potently inhibited the late stage of HIV replication, well after integration has occurred," Engelman says. "The drugs disrupt HIV's ability to enclose the viral ribonucleoprotein complex into the capsid core, which protects the genetic material and helps the virus maintain its integrity and ability to infect other cells. This exposes the essential 'heart' of the replication machine to cellular destruction during the ensuing round of HIV infection. ALLINIs remain the subject of intensive investigations in both academia and the pharmaceutical industry."

While it takes most PhD students in the sciences at least five years to earn their PhD from Harvard, Jurado did it in four, winning the International Uta Von Schwedler Prize for Outstanding Thesis from the University of Utah and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. After graduation, she joined the labs of professor Akiko Iwasaki at Yale University School of Medicine. There, she won several major grants and fellowships and began using emerging viruses to understand early-life immunity—the foundation of the work she does today. In 2019, Jurado's out-

standing work earned her a position at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) and a lab of her own.

Charting the Dance of Virus and Host

“Viruses are engaged in a tightly intertwined evolutionary dance with their hosts, which they need to exist,” Jurado says. “By studying their interactions, we can gain new insights into both.”

Jurado’s lab at UPenn focuses specifically on how the immune system responds and develops in early life, and how the body mounts resistance to viral infections during pregnancy as well as the long-term impacts of infection and inflammation on the developing fetus.



“Viruses are engaged in a tightly intertwined evolutionary dance with their hosts, which they need to exist. By studying their interactions, we can gain new insights into both.”

Using immune disruptors like the Zika virus in animal models, Jurado’s team studies early pregnancy responses and outcomes on the molecular level.

One of Jurado Lab’s many projects involves understanding the role that the cytokine IL-27 plays in fetal immunity. Cytokines are proteins that allow cells to communicate with each other and coordinate immune responses. IL-27 in particular helps fight pathogens through the regulation of T-cells and the suppression of inflammatory response. To understand the importance of IL-27 to immune response during pregnancy, Jurado’s team introduced the Zika virus into two groups of gestating mice—one in which the cytokine had been suppressed and one in which it hadn’t. The results were dramatic.

“We saw that when IL-27 signaling was disrupted, there was a huge increase in pathology,” Jurado says. “That strongly indicates that IL-27 is protective against congenital infection. Now we want to try to mechanistically understand exactly how it’s protective.”

Scientists are increasingly finding that early immune exposures can influence lifelong health. Jurado says understanding the mechanisms associated with fetal immune system responses and development may hold the key to stopping disease even before it starts.

“We are learning immunity is greatly influenced by events during pregnancy,” she says. “Our idea is that if we could learn how to strengthen neonatal immunity, it might allow us to better fight infections

later in life. Alternatively, we might learn a trigger that sensitizes the development of diseases like autoimmunity and figure out a way to prevent exposure to that trigger.”

As someone who thrives in community, Jurado has assembled a tight-knit and diverse team of researchers whom she credits for her lab’s success. Science is often thought of as a solo effort; however, Jurado maintains that it requires constant communication, not only with colleagues throughout the field but also locally at the group level. She notes that she’s garnered invaluable insights by working with lab members who have different backgrounds, experiences, and expertise.

“I am so proud of the incredible research team I have built,” she says. “We live our core values of inclusivity and

integrity while while conducting rigorous research. We have a wide breadth of projects that are all distinct but connected. We leverage our diverse ideas and experiences to grow together. We lift one another up with intention and move forward with purpose as a team.”

Great Promise

Michaela Gack, scientific director at the Cleveland Clinic Florida Research & Innovation Center, served on Jurado’s PhD advisory committee at Harvard Griffin GSAS. She says that her former advisee’s research on early-life immunity has the potential to be even more impressive—and impactful—than her doctoral work on HIV.

“Kellie’s current work as an independent investigator provides fundamental new insight into how immune responses are shaped early during life, during pregnancy, and as a newborn,” Gack says. “These early immune exposures are thought to influence an individual’s health later in life; therefore, deciphering early-life immunity at a molecular level holds great promise for the development of next-generation therapeutic approaches.”

Echoing Gack’s hope, Jurado believes that her work will lead to new interventions that treat or prevent disease. First, though, she and her team must expand their understanding of the mechanisms through which early-life immunity operates. Whereas other organ systems—the human gut, for instance—have advanced models to use for experimentation and analysis, researchers of the immune system during pregnancy are still developing theirs. But Jurado says the fluidity of this moment in science is precisely what makes her so excited—and hopeful—about the eventual impact of her work.

“It is a very momentous time in this field,” she says. There’s a long way to go, but the ultimate objective of our efforts is to describe fundamental immunobiology to discover and identify opportunities to make children healthier.”

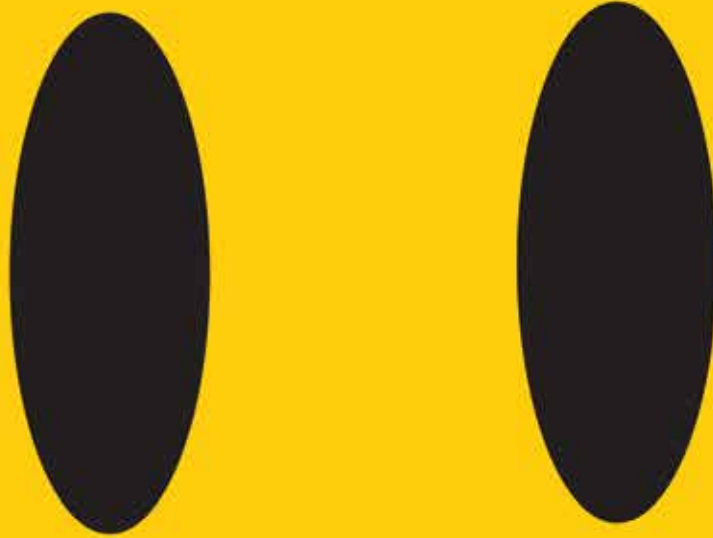
Master of Happiness

Tal Ben-Shahar trains a new

TAL BEN-SHAHAR, PHD '04, WAS 30,000 FEET OVER THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, caught in the uncomfortable, sleepless reverie for which airplane seats seem specifically designed. His mind drifted to his work in positive psychology, which had yielded two best-selling books and one of the most popular undergraduate courses in Harvard's history. He thought of all the fields of knowledge that contribute to happiness—psychology and neuroscience, yes, but also education, philosophy, economics, art, music, literature, and many others—and wondered: Why could students study all those subjects but not one that focused specifically on the goal toward which they all strived?

“There’s a lot we can learn about happiness from psychologists,” Ben-Shahar says. “But the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu also had a lot to say. So did the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe and the English novelist Mary Ann Evans as well as scores of historians, scientists, and economists. Why isn’t there an interdisciplinary field of study that brings together all of these thinkers and practitioners, integrates them, and teaches them so that we can better understand, pursue, and attain happiness?”

Before the plane’s wheels hit the ground in New York City, Ben-Shahar had resolved to make the creation of an entirely new field of education—happiness studies—his life’s work. In the eight years since his 2015 transatlantic epiphany, he has launched an online “academy” dedicated to training professionals in the field. Now, in partnership with Centenary University, Ben-Shahar has established the first fully accredited master’s degree program in happiness studies. If he has his way, it won’t be the last.



generation of professionals in the art and science of human flourishing | By Paul Massari



BEYOND 'QUIET DESPERATION'

It's easy to look at Tal Ben-Shahar and imagine that he never had an unhappy day in his life. He greets you with a broad smile and an intense, friendly gaze. His lean frame and confident manner imply the relaxed energy of a top athlete, which Ben-Shahar was in his youth. At the age of 16, he traveled from his home country of Israel to Great Britain, where he trained with world squash champion Jansher Khan, dreaming one day of emulating his mentor's achievement. Now and then, though, a disconcerting thought flitted through his mind: What would he do if he couldn't play?

"I thought, 'Well, I'll always have squash because when I retire at 30 or 35 after an illustrious career, I will become a coach and build a squash academy,'" Ben-Shahar remembers. "I could not think of my life without the game."

Five years later, while serving in the Israeli military, Ben-Shahar sat in a doctor's office, his future in jeopardy. The vertebrae in his lower spine were severely misaligned. Surgery was an option, but success was far from guaranteed. He decided to put his professional career on hold and enroll at Harvard, where he'd previously been recruited by squash coach Steve Piltch. Unhappy during much of his first two years of college, Ben-Shahar even considered dropping out. Then he decided to change his course of study from computer science to a joint concentration in philosophy and psychology, a move that altered both his undergraduate trajectory and his life.

MASTERFUL: Ben-Shahar was an elite squash player until back problems derailed his career—and kindled his interest in positive psychology.



"It was one of the best decisions I've ever made," he says. "I flourished in the departments of philosophy and psychology. I learned from faculty like J. Richard Hackman, who studied teamwork, the political philosopher Robert Nozick, and, above all, Philip Stone, who was a pioneer both in positive psychology and in seeing the potential for computers and technology in research. It opened up my world."

Ben-Shahar enrolled at Harvard Griffin GSAS and worked toward his PhD in organizational behavior, studying both in the Department of Psychology with professors Ellen Langer and Philip J. Stone III, PhD '60, and at Harvard Business School with professor Joshua Margolis, PhD '97. But he never published research in an academic journal and never set his sights on a tenure track position; instead, he pursued his love of teaching and his desire to bring positive psychology to a mass audience. He took over his mentor's undergraduate course, Positive Psychology, which became the largest class at Harvard. (Ben-Shahar's other course, Psychology of Leadership, ranked third.) His books, including *Happier* (2007) and *Being Happy* (2010), became international best sellers.



By the time of Ben-Shahar's transatlantic trip in 2015, however, happiness seemed very much on the wane—particularly among young people in high-income countries like the United States. He cites a 2019 study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* by a team of researchers led by San Diego State University psychology professor Jean Twenge. The group analyzed data from the US National Survey on Drug Use and Health and found that rates of depression, psychological distress, and suicidal thoughts all increased by more than 50 percent among adolescents and young adults between the mid- to late-2000s and 2017. The study's authors put the lion's share of the blame for the spike in mental illness on the advent of the smartphone and social media. Ben-Shahar agrees about the negative impact of these technologies but says the reasons for widespread unhappiness predate and go beyond them. They stem from society's misguided focus on "negative" emotions like depression, anger, and hatred to the exclusion of joy, love, strength, and happiness.

"Of course, it's important to study painful emotions," he says. "But just getting rid of depression or anxiety doesn't make you happy. As Henry David Thoreau wrote in the nineteenth century, 'The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.' You don't need to be depressed to be unhappy."



“OF COURSE, it’s important to study painful emotions. But just getting rid of depression or anxiety doesn’t make you happy.”

– TAL BEN-SHAHAR

What’s missing from psychology—and society—today, Ben-Shahar says, is a focus on cultivating a sense of meaning and purpose; on savoring, awe, and appreciation—the very things that make life worth living. “This is what the science of happiness focuses on. It’s not in place of, but in addition to what traditional psychology does now,” he says. “With a focus on these elements comes increased levels of well-being, greater resilience, and an expanded capacity to deal with life’s hardships and challenges.”

REAL TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE

In February 2022, Alla Klymenko was preparing for the World Happiness Summit (WOHASU) in Miami, Florida, at which the Ukrainian psychologist was scheduled to give a presentation on how to stay happy in a changing world. Then, just a few days before the conference, her husband called. Russia was on the verge of invading Ukraine. Their family needed to leave the country immediately. They got seats on the last flight to Miami. By the time they landed in the US, the war had started.

“All I could feel inside was anger,” she said during her WOHASU presentation. “It was aggression. And, of course, I have only one desire, just to wake up and understand that it all was a nightmare.”

A citizen of a country devastated by war may seem an odd candidate for a master’s degree in the study of happiness, but when Klymenko found out at WOHASU about the new program at Centenary, she immediately enrolled.

“I am currently going through a difficult period in my life,” she says. “There is a war in my country, and I was forced to leave my home and former life in one day, taking only one suitcase. But the MA in happiness provides unique knowledge. It is about real transformation and change. This knowledge is necessary for people of any age and in any life circumstances.”

The two-year master of happiness studies program at New Jersey’s Centenary University draws students like Klymenko from around the world. Launched in the fall of 2022, the program is an outgrowth of Ben-Shahar’s Happiness Studies Academy, which offers a one-year online certificate and

enrolls thousands of students from 85 different countries around the globe.

Ben-Shahar says the Centenary program is grounded in the “science” of happiness. For example, among the many tools to which students are introduced is a gratitude journal. To the uninitiated, it may seem an unsophisticated, even naïve suggestion: Take some time each day to reflect on and record one’s blessings, no matter how challenging life may be. But, like most of the practices included in the program, the principles behind the gratitude journal are based on rigorous research. Ben-Shahar points to studies by psychologists Robert Emmons, Michael McCollough, Joann Tsang, and others that indicate keeping a journal and other gratitude practices correlate with increased positive emotions like joy, pleasure, and optimism; lower incidence of toxic emotions like resentment and envy; improved sleep; and even a strengthened immune response.

“The University of Pennsylvania professor Marty Seligman, one of the founders of the field of positive psychology, asked students in his class to write a gratitude letter to someone,” he says. “And then, if possible, he asked them to deliver that letter by reading it to the person. Seligman said that in his 40 years of teaching, he had never encountered anything with greater impact. So, he studied gratitude letters scientifically with the late Christopher Peterson, a professor at the University of Michigan. And they found that it was indeed the most powerful single intervention for happiness and well-being. And so, I bring this practice to my students at Centenary, just as I did when I taught at Harvard.”

The fact that the master of happiness studies is grounded in science—but not limited to it—is what draws many degree seekers to the program. Student James Schatzle, for instance, had seen life at its worst in his 30 years as an emergency medical technician and firefighter: acute illness and injury, violence, and grief. The president and founder of Team Life, a company that specializes in emergency health training and services, Schatzle was looking for an education that could help build resilience in himself and other healthcare workers while allowing him to reconnect with his own happiness. He considered degrees in business, neuroscience, psychology, and even philosophy, but could never decide on one. He en-



“THERE IS A WAR in my country, and I was forced to leave my home and former life in one day, taking only one suitcase. But the MA in happiness provides unique knowledge ... necessary for people of any age and in any life circumstances.”

— UKRAINIAN PSYCHOLOGIST AND HAPPINESS STUDIES STUDENT ALLA KLYMENKO (BELOW LEFT WITH TAL BEN-SHAHAR)



rolled in the master of happiness program because it covered all these topics.

“Our studies are centered on the elements of spiritual, physical, intellectual, relational, and emotional (SPIRE) well-being,” he says. “We are exposed to ancient philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, Epicurus, and more modern writers like Helen Keller, Will Durant, and many experts in psychology and business. All our lessons are science- and research-based, which I think is the difference between this master’s program and a self-help course. The program has been amazing so far. It’s opened up a whole new world of possibilities for me and my fellow students.”

JOY TO THE WORLD

As the master in happiness studies enters its second year, Centenary University President Dale Caldwell says the program has already exceeded expectations. Over 90 students

enrolled in the first cohort with more coming for the second this fall. With major corporations increasingly offering leadership training built around the core concepts of happiness studies, Caldwell says the university is planning to expand its degree programs in the field. “We’re in the process of creating a bachelor of arts and a doctorate to create a happiness studies academic continuum,” he says.

To ensure that happiness isn’t just for the privileged, Caldwell and Ben-Shahar want to reach out to traditionally underserved populations. Caldwell says he wants to address what he calls urban traumatic stress disorder (UTSD), “the continuous trauma that people experience in these communities.”

“I believe that universities need to do more to share their research expertise in economically challenged local communities in a way that improves the quality of life for residents,” he says. “Our happiness studies program and UTSD research will enable us to offer research-based solutions to the trauma that students, workers, and residents face in poor urban communities. Tal and I therefore hope to speak and offer happiness and emotional well-being training programs in those spaces to help participants move closer to post-traumatic growth.”

Ben-Shahar says that anyone who has responsibility for the productivity and wellness of others—from business leaders to teachers, healthcare professionals, and even parents—can be more effective with happiness training. That’s why he’s working to expand the program in the years ahead, drawing students from a wide range of professions and from around the world. If it does, maybe universities like Harvard will one day have their own department of happiness.

“My hope is that happiness studies will grow and that there will be more programs like Centenary’s,” Ben-Shahar says. “There are psychology departments, and neuroscience departments, and philosophy departments in thousands of universities and many different countries. Let’s bring those disciplines together now and build a healthier, happier world.” 🍷

(Sesqui)centennial Medalists

HARVARD GRIFFIN GSAS "CLOSES OUT ITS ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BY HONORING ALUMS WHO EPITOMIZE THE SCHOOL'S INQUIRY, INNOVATION, AND IMPACT" **BY ELIZABETH GEHRMAN | ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT COOK**



During the 2022–2023 academic year, the Harvard Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences marked the 150th anniversary of its founding. Throughout this time, the School celebrated the inquiry, innovation, and impact of its alumni and students across the disciplines and throughout the world. It was fitting, then, that Harvard Griffin GSAS brought this special year to a close last May by recognizing with its highest honor—the Centennial Medal—those who exemplify the contributions of the School’s graduates.

“This has been an extraordinary year,” says Dean Emma Dench. “The conversations we convened around the world and the stories we told on our many platforms have left me amazed by Harvard Griffin GSAS alumni, their accomplishments, and their dedication to creating new knowledge. I can think of no better representatives of the School’s remarkable alumni community—and their impact in the world—than our anniversary-year Centennial Medalists. Congratulations to them all!”

Although in recent years the Centennial Medal has been presented to four alumni, this year’s committee decided to honor six—both to mark the School’s anniversary and to replicate the number of medalists in 1989, the first year the award was given, says David Staines, PhD ’73, chair of the Graduate School Alumni Association Council’s Medals Committee. “That and we were so overwhelmed by the quality of graduates we had to choose from,” he says.

Given to graduates who have made outstanding contributions to society, rooted in their education at Harvard Griffin GSAS, the Centennial Medals are “the ultimate accolade,” according to Staines. “These nominees epitomize the top-flight of those who have gone on to have distinguished and elevated careers in their chosen fields.”

This year’s winners also embody the many fields of knowledge studied by the School’s students and graduates, from cell biology and physics to literature, music, and more.



Mina Bissell, PhD '69

“CHOOSE WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO AND PERSIST,” Mina Bissell wrote in a 2016 essay for the American Society for Cell Biology. And persist she did as a female PhD candidate in bacteriology in the 1960s—despite, as she wrote in a 2017 essay for *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, “some amazingly bad behavior from a number of men in charge,” despite “a lot of skepticism” about her ideas, despite being told she would never finish her thesis because she was pregnant with her first child. She changed minds, she says, “by just doing it. I was born like that, you know? It was me plus my environment.”

Bissell, who grew up in Iran, credits her parents and extended family—which included lawyers, judges, doctors, and PhDs, many of whom were women—for their positive influence. “They encouraged me to pursue higher education and be independent,” she says.

So perhaps it's not surprising that after getting her bachelor's degree in chemistry at Radcliffe and her advanced degree at Harvard Medical School, she made a connection that had been overlooked up to that point. “Everyone was studying DNA because it was new and exciting,” she says of her years at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, where she started as a postdoc and eventually rose to head of life sciences. “But I

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—DR. CYRUS GHAJAR, FRED HUTCHINSON CANCER CENTER

asked, if every cell in your body has the same DNA, how does your nose become your nose and not your elbow? And if you have trillions of cells in your body, how can a single cell be sufficient to cause cancer?”

The answer to both questions: environment. Bissell was the first scientist to propose “dynamic reciprocity” between cells and the extracellular matrix (ECM), a network of proteins and other molecules that surrounds them. She proved over and over that the ECM affects changes in gene expression and cell behavior, despite being “teased and laughed at” by colleagues.

No one's laughing now. Bissell has changed science forever, leading to advances in immunotherapies, wider adoption of the 3D modeling necessary for organoid development, and acceptance of the idea that phenotype can dominate over genotype. According to David Lyden, a professor of pediatrics at Cornell University who first met Bissell at a conference in 2006, her presence and personal magnetism also helped bring her peers around.

“She's inventive and original and she thinks outside the box,” Lyden says. “When she's giving a talk, she has star power, almost like an actress on stage. She draws people in so they pay attention to what she's saying. Without that, her work may have been overlooked.”

Above all, Bissell has succeeded because of her brilliance and the rigor of her work. “She looked at her hypothesis from every angle and it kept turning out to be true,” says Cyrus Ghajar, a biology and public health professor at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle who trained in Bissell's lab. “She saw the big picture at a time when it was difficult for women to make a mark in science. What she was doing was very much counter to what everyone believed. She saw the holes in the dogma.”

Catherine Cesarsky, PhD '72

WHEN CATHERINE CESARSKY was growing up in Argentina, she says she knew nobody who was involved in science. Everyone in her family who had moved from France after World War II when her father took a diplomatic position in Buenos Aires leaned more toward the arts.

“I liked two things: mathematics and nature,” Cesarsky shares. “I liked to look at the stars and the flowers and the sea, and I liked to think that all this was influenced by the principles and laws of chemistry and physics that I learned in school. I found it fantastic that those two things could be brought together.”

In her third year of college at the University of Buenos Aires, where she received her bachelor’s degree in physical sciences, “a professor arrived who was Argentinian but had studied at Harvard,” Cesarsky says. Through a grant from the Carnegie Foundation, Carlos Varsavsky, the first astrophysics teacher the University hired, brought the pieces of a radio telescope to Argentina and asked Catherine Gattegno, her soon-to-be-husband Diego Cesarsky, and a few other students to help him assemble it. He also encouraged Catherine and Diego to apply to his alma mater.

“We both filled out applications for Harvard but didn’t really think it would happen,” Cesarsky recalls. “It seemed a totally unobtainable dream. But on the day of our wedding party, Carlos came and told us we’d both been accepted.” She calls it the best wedding present they could have imagined.

The theoretical work on cosmic rays in Cesarsky’s PhD thesis and in the early years of her career earned her scientific recognition. She eventually led a team of 3,000 scientists as director of the department of physical sciences in France’s Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), served as director general of the European Southern Observatory, and became the first female president of the International Astronomical Union. Her more recent work in infrared astronomy, in particular, made significant contributions to the study of galaxy evolution and helped pave the way for the construction of the James Webb Space Telescope, which launched in 2021.

Despite these lofty positions, Cesarsky always took time to mentor young scientists, according to Pierre-Olivier Lagage, a senior astrophysicist at CEA, where Cesarsky advised him on his thesis. “Even with her huge responsibilities, she was always very kind,” Lagage says. “She spent time with everybody and was interested in everything, and she could encourage you in such a natural way you didn’t even realize you were being encouraged, but you always went away feeling better. So she made great contributions not only in her own observations, but by passing down her wisdom to the next generation.”

Which is more important than ever, Cesarsky agrees, especially now that technology has brought the world to what she calls a “golden age” of astronomy. “The universe is full of marvelous secrets,” she says. “It’s absolutely amazing how much we’ve learned in just one lifetime. It gives you a different outlook on life.”



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John Dower, PhD '72

JOHN DOWER'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH JAPAN took place in 1958, when he spent the summer there with a group of American undergraduates. He looks back on this as a “decidedly early postwar experience.” The group’s sponsors believed that bringing together people from different countries, including the recent World War II enemies, could help prevent future conflict. “Japan was still recovering from the trauma and destruction of the war,” Dower recalls. “The so-called economic miracle had not yet taken place.”

“That serendipitous summer is when it all started,” he says of his stay in Kanazawa, a former feudal capital on the west coast of the main island that miraculously escaped US bombing. After graduating from Amherst College in 1959, Dower earned an AM in East Asian studies at Harvard in 1961; worked as a teacher, editor, and book designer in Japan for several years; returned to Harvard in 1965 to pursue a PhD in Japanese literature; and in 1967 switched to history and Far Eastern languages. “The Vietnam War was the trigger for the change,” he says. “I wanted to use Japan and US–Japan rela-

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tions as a way of comprehending grand issues such as war and peace and race and culture—and to do so at a broadly comparative and interdisciplinary level.”

“John is not shy about taking on challenges,” says Philip Khoury, PhD '80, a historian and the associate provost at MIT, where Dower is an emeritus professor of history. “Even when he was an untenured professor he challenged his mentors on their methods, their uses of philology, and their supremacist views of other cultures. He’s a hero among many historians for doing that.”

“He shaped how other academics understood Japan,” says Andrew Gordon, PhD '81, a Japanologist and the Lee and Juliet Folger Fund Professor of History. “But because his writing is so beautiful and so accessible, his books—especially *War without Mercy* and *Embracing Defeat*, for which he won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer—reached beyond the academy and had an impact on a wider readership. He humanized Asian cultures by giving people a sense of ordinary life in them.”

In 2000, Dower took on a new challenge when MIT linguistics professor Shigeru Miyagawa asked for his input on a multimedia open online course platform called Visualizing Cultures. “For years, John had been bringing intellectual credibility to images and to pop culture,” Miyagawa says. “I thought this institute-wide platform would be a great place to showcase that kind of history.” The site has since become a prize-winning resource for scholars and a standard reference for visuals in the historical record.

“John’s amazing strength is his persistence when he focuses on a topic,” Miyagawa says. “He keeps digging until he’s satisfied he’s done and he’s written about it in a way that he likes. He really wants to get to the core of the truth of whatever he’s looking at.”

“He’s a major figure in the profession,” Khoury adds, “and just a splendid person. There’s not an honor I can think of he shouldn’t have.”

Du Yun, PhD '06

DU YUN “STUMBLED INTO MUSIC” as a kindergartener in Shanghai when she became fascinated with the pump organ her teacher played. “The other kids would go out for recess, and I would stay inside with this amazing instrument,” she says. Her parents, factory workers whose schooling was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution, bought her a piano and impressed upon her that it was not a toy. “If we get it you have to practice,” they told her.

Yun took that suggestion to the next level, spending eight hours a day training at an age when most kids can't even tie their shoes. “When I was four, the goal was to get into the Shanghai Conservatory primary school,” she says. “It made getting into Harvard seem easy.” She started out number one in the country's national ranking and her first four years at the conservatory were “very, very intense.” When Yun slipped to third, she says her teacher became adamant that she not study music. “But I was already dedicated. I had a mind for it and wouldn't let other people say no to me. So I changed to composition and it felt so liberating. By eight or nine, I realized I wanted to be a bona fide composer who could outgrow the age confinement of the protégé label often given to young musicians.”

After getting her bachelor's degree in music at Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio, Yun applied to Harvard on the advice of a friend from Oberlin, Erik Spangler, PhD '04. “I wasn't even aware Harvard had a composition department,” she says. Yun got a full scholarship as well as a stipend and grants to attend music festivals abroad. “I really have to thank Harvard for that,” she adds. “Not having to worry about basic financial needs gave me the freedom to go places and get my music heard as a young artist.” She wrote *Zolle*, her first opera, while at the University. “That was the piece that made me confident of who I could be as an artist,” Yun says. “It freed me not just as a composer but also as a performer and storyteller.” Subsequent work has garnered her a Guggenheim fellowship, a Grammy nomination, and a Pulitzer Prize, among many other honors.

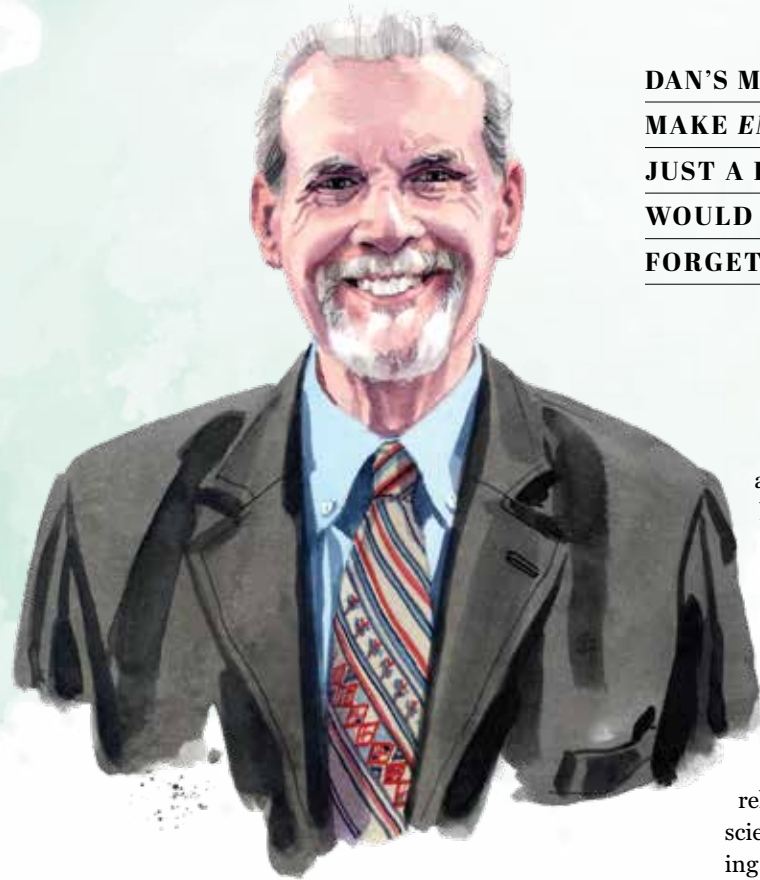
“In a field in which there's a lot of categorizations,” says Vimbayi Kaziboni, artistic advisor to the Boston Lyric Opera and an assistant professor at the Boston Conservatory, “where people are put into this box or that box, she has somehow made it her voice to exemplify eclecticism. In one moment, her work will feature an aria, then in the next a punk song, then screaming, then praying—she always finds the best aesthetic for the moment. She's a very open-minded artist who embraces everything in her work. She has significantly changed the field by making experimentation okay and allowing for anything to happen.”



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Daniel Goleman, PhD '74

CARY CHERNISS, A PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, remembers being at a conference with Daniel Goleman, author and science journalist, when one of the speakers got bad news about a family member. “The rest of us were standing around and didn’t know what to do,” Cherniss recalls, “and Dan, without even thinking about it, put his arm around the speaker and walked away from the group to talk and listen to her. The empathy he showed struck all of us as really walking the talk on emotional intelligence.”

In 1995, the phrase “emotional intelligence” was known only to a handful of academics, having been introduced in a paper Goleman had come across in his work writing about science for the *New York Times*. Today, a search on the phrase yields 250 million results.

Goleman’s book on the topic, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*, distilled that paper, by psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey, along with a lot of other scientific research about emotion, introducing to a broader

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DAN’S MISSION FROM THE BEGINNING WAS TO MAKE *EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE* MORE THAN JUST A BEST-SELLING BOOK THAT PEOPLE WOULD TALK ABOUT FOR A WHILE AND THEN FORGET. —GARY CHERNISS, ON DAN GOLEMAN’S BOOK

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audience the idea that interpersonal relationships were at least as important to success in life as book smarts. “It gave a scientific basis to something people recognized intuitively,” Goleman says.

“The book had a huge impact on the field and on society,” Cherniss recalls. “But Dan’s mission from the beginning was to make emotional intelligence more than just a bestselling book that people would talk about for a while and then forget. He wanted a group of reputable, well-known, respected researchers in the area and related areas to really advance emotional intelligence as a science and not just a fad.” He did that, in part, by cofounding the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, now housed at the University of Illinois at Chicago, to introduce emotional literacy to schools, and, with Cherniss, starting the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations at Rutgers. “We still meet twice a year,” says Cherniss, “to connect researchers with senior executives in large corporations and other practitioners.”

Goleman, who received his PhD in psychology from Harvard, saw the importance of the field in part because of a traveling fellowship he did for 15 months in India, where he became interested in meditation, which he wrote about in an earlier book with fellow grad student Richard Davidson. “A foundational skill in emotional intelligence is self-awareness,” Goleman says, “and meditation is a method for that.” At Harvard, he also learned from his mentor, psychology professor David McClelland, about competencies that make a person outstanding in their field. He also connected with another fellow student, Richard Boyatzis, PhD '73, to expand the concept of emotional intelligence in the business world.

“One of the greatest gifts that a Harvard graduate education gives you is the people you connect with while you’re there,” Goleman says. “I never would have met all these people who influenced me so much if I hadn’t gone to Harvard.”

Sanford Greenberg, PhD '65

IN 1961, SANFORD GREENBERG was halfway through his junior year at Columbia University when misdiagnosed glaucoma claimed his sight and seemed to foreclose on a promising future. “I went from having 20/20 vision while pitching in a baseball game the previous summer to 0/0 by January,” he says. “I went back home to Buffalo. A social worker came to see me and said, ‘Now that you’re blind, you have the following career choices. You can make screwdrivers. You can cane chairs. Or you can become a justice of the peace.’ That’s when I decided I was going to try to educate myself in government, business, law, and finance, so that if my eyes were gone, at least I’d have my brain to work in different fields.”

Determination, though, is one thing; execution another. Greenberg might never have completed his undergraduate degree if his roommate—singer-songwriter Art Garfunkel—hadn’t shown up on his doorstep that spring to insist Greenberg return to Columbia and promised to be his bridge over troubled water when he did.

“Arthur said, ‘You must come back, Sanford. Darkness,’ as he took to calling himself, ‘is going to read to you,’” Greenberg recalls. “He became one of the many extraordinary human beings who took an hour or two away from studying or dating or resting at Columbia to read to a blind student.”

In that way, Greenberg finished his BA, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and as class president. Greenberg says everybody believed he wouldn’t make it in a major grad school. He remembers them saying, “It’s not in the cards for you.” And yet, Greenberg got into several and chose Harvard because “in those days, as I think is still the case today, it has the best government department in the nation. And I felt if I knew the details of how societies are governed, perhaps I could do something constructive in the commonweal.”

“Constructive” is an understatement. In the next few years, Greenberg would earn his PhD in government from Harvard, attend Harvard Law School, and return to Columbia for an MBA while also attending Oxford University as a Marshall Scholar. Along the way, he invented technology that compressed speech without distorting it, the analog forerunner of today’s MP3 format.

In the years since, Greenberg has mixed multiple entrepreneurial endeavors with philanthropic outreach and public service. He started a company eventually worth \$80 million, helped renovate Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C., worked on US–China relations, served on the National Science Board under Bill Clinton, wrote a book about his life and his relationship with Garfunkel, and much more.

In 2012, Greenberg and his wife, Sue, created the Greenberg Prize, which awards \$3 million to scientists who contribute

the most to the cause of ending blindness. In 2020, he and Sue distributed the prize among 13 researchers, following that up with the creation of the Sanford and Susan Center to End Blindness, which is affiliated with the world-renowned Wilmer Eye Institute, where Greenberg has served as board chairman for many years.

“For Sandy, light truly emerged from darkness,” says Richard Axel, a Columbia University professor and Nobel laureate.

“If you don’t have the capacity to marvel every morning when you wake up,” Greenberg says simply, “you are losing the magic of this life.” ♦♦



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I FELT IF I KNEW THE DETAILS OF HOW SOCIETIES ARE GOVERNED, PERHAPS I COULD DO SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE IN THE COMMONWEAL. —SANFORD GREENBERG

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TRUE EXCELLENCE

Hua Hsu, PhD '08, history of American civilization, won the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for memoir or autobiography for *Stay True*, "an elegant and poignant coming of age account that considers intense, youthful friendships but also random violence that can suddenly and permanently alter the presumed logic of our personal narratives." A staff writer for the *New Yorker* magazine since 2017, Hsu is the author of *A Floating Chinaman: Fantasy and Failure Across the Pacific* and is also an associate professor of English at Vassar College.



Ruth Simmons, PhD '73, romance languages and literatures, was honored by Brown University, which renamed its Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice after her. Simmons, who stepped down last February as leader of the historically Black Prairie View A&M University, was recognized for initiating the effort to investigate Brown University's historical ties to racial slavery during her years as president from 2001 to 2012.



Peggy McIntosh, PhD '67, In June, Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) and Wellesley College announced that Peggy McIntosh, PhD '67, English and American literature and language, a senior research scientist and former associate director of WCW, will be inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in September 2023. MacIntosh was recognized by Harvard Griffin GSAS in 2021 with the Centennial Medal, the School's highest alumni honor.



Lawrence Bacow, PhD '78, in April received the American Council on Education's Lifetime Achievement Award, which "recognizes exceptional and visionary college or university presidents and chancellors" for "championing the value of higher education and the good it does for our students and society." Bacow, who stepped down as president last June, also received the Harvard Medal during Alumni Day last June for "extraordinary service to the University."



Christine Jones Forman, PhD '74, astrophysics, of the Harvard & Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in May. Jones Forman has played a pivotal role in the development of the field of X-ray astronomy, spanning NASA missions from the Uhuru X-ray Explorer Satellite to the Chandra X-ray Observatory. Jones Forman also served as the president of the American Astronomical Society from 2016 to 2018.



Fiona Hill, PhD '98, history, was elected in May to the Harvard Board of Overseers. the former US National Security Council senior director for European and Russian Affairs, Hill is a distinguished senior fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe within the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution.



Sarah Ballard, PhD '12, astronomy, was named a 2023 Cottrell Scholar by the Research Corporation for Science Advancement. Ballard, a professor at the University of Florida who studies the day and night cycles of the Milky Way's most common planets, will receive \$100,000 to support her research and educational programs.



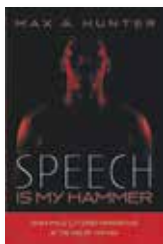
William Hahn, PhD '94, immunology, was honored by Hope Funds with its 2023 Award of Excellence in the areas of basic science and medicine at a ceremony in Newport, RI, last July. The chief operating officer at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Hahn's laboratory has pioneered the use of integrated functional genomic approaches to identify and validate cancer targets.



Robert Metcalfe, PhD '73, mathematics, received in March the 2022 ACM A.M. Turing Award for inventing, standardizing, and commercializing the Ethernet. Often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of Computing," the award carries a \$1 million prize and is named for Alan M. Turing, the British mathematician who articulated the mathematical foundations of computing.

AUTHOR PROFILE

BEYOND 'AUTHENTICITY'



Max Hunter, AM '06, is an assistant professor of biology at Seattle Pacific University. In his 2022 book, *Speech Is My Hammer*, Hunter explores the literacy stories of Black male artists and thinkers—from Langston Hughes and Richard Wright to Malcolm X and Stringer Bell, a fictional character from HBO's award-winning series, *The Wire*. He also writes candidly about his own experience growing up poor, Black, and intellectually curious in the housing projects of San Diego. The goal of these meditations, he says, is to help free Black men from the performance of authenticity so that they can embrace their own multifaceted, transcendent humanity.

What was your own literacy journey as a Black male?

I grew up mostly with my mother in the projects of San Diego, then went to a Catholic school in a white upper-class neighborhood in Southern California. I had

some great teachers, but they were mostly white males. Those were my models for people who were highly literate.

At the same time, I lived in a region where gang culture was ascending and hypermasculinity was becoming more and

more prominent. To perform my identity differently was to risk being perceived as soft or queer. The University of Waterloo professor Vershawn Ashanti Young talks about this dynamic in his 2004 book, *Your Average [N-word]*. He begins recounting his experience with being afraid to bring a book into a Black barbershop because people might perceive not that he's less Black, but that he's queer.

The result for me was a lot of ambivalence. I was the kind of kid who would go to the library and check out all these books. When I was 17, one of my first big purchases was a set of the works of Sigmund Freud. I brought it home, set up in my bedroom, and immediately started reading through it, really struck by how self-aware his writing was. I got the idea, though, that if I pursued literacy as it was presented to me in academic settings, then I was somehow acquiescing to power—I was conceding that European culture was the pinnacle of civilization and abdicating my humanity and my masculinity.

You actually start your book with quotes from Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, as well as Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Homi Babha's "Of Mimicry and Man." Connect the dots between the three thinkers and how they speak to the themes of *Speech is My Hammer*.

The thread for me is this ambivalence related to modernity. I gravitated to Freud's notion—that we have the benefits of civilization, but at the same time society imposes these cultural ideals that make us unhappy—because it describes the kind of ambivalence I experienced in my own literacy journey and that I found in the narratives of other Black males.

At the same time, I was trying to



Dr. Max Hunter, AM '06
Speech is My Hammer

identify examples of this ambivalence in Black male literacy narratives themselves. And lo and behold, there it was in *Invisible Man*, where Ellison writes of “a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids” who “might even be said to possess a mind,” but is invisible on a societal level.

I included Homi Babha’s quote from his essay “Of Mimicry and Man” for a post-colonial perspective. He writes that “the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence” because “it never wants colonial subjects to be exact replicas of the colonizers—this would be too threatening.”

The Duke University scholar Mark Anthony Neal talks about “illegible masculinities.” My book is in part about what we do to become “legible” and how Black males make choices regarding that legibility—just like Freud’s modern man, like Ellison’s invisible man, like Babha’s post-colonial mimicry. Black men are double-minded about the choices we make around literacy because they have consequences, both positive and negative.

How is the Black male experience of literacy shaped both by the desire for authenticity and resistance to socialization in mainstream culture?

Coming out of the Enlightenment, you had to be a certain kind of white male to be a citizen/subject. Reading that, African Americans—those striving to have their personhood and their citizenship recognized—tried to assimilate. They thought once they demonstrated they were capable of living a morally-disciplined life and adhered to a kind of respectability politics—including a certain kind of academic pedigree—they would be treated as equals. During the modern era, Black writers like Langston Hughes rejected the requirement to portray Black life in a way that mirrored and imitated whites. Hughes wanted to write about Black life as it was, which included writing about people who didn’t

adhere to heterosexual gender norms—radical for the 1920s. He wanted the right to perform his identity on his own terms—to write about people who spoke in the Black vernacular—without being excluded.

There’s a tension there that Black folks still struggle with in our culture: socialization versus authenticity. Who’s Black and who’s not? I’ve experienced it myself. There was an incident with my daughter one time during a youth soccer game. Someone was pulling her hair. That made me angry. When I reacted, one of the Black men who was there kept calling me “Dr. Hunter.” He was reminding me that, because of my education and status, I probably shouldn’t be using the language that I was using. In fact, I shouldn’t demonstrate affect at all. That’s the tension and the ambivalence—giving up a part of your humanity to conform to the sort of cultural ideals that Freud talked about in *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

Finally, you write that the goal of your book is “to encourage other Black men to examine and embrace their emotional and cognitive vacillation regarding their literacy performances.”

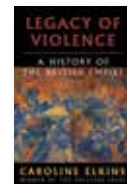
Where do you hope the type of examination you propose would lead?

One of the things I hope it will do is to provide rest. I want Black people to be free from constantly living in a space of vigilance, knowing that their identity and gender are being policed. I want people to embrace the reality that human beings are multifaceted creatures. And I’d like to help people move towards the kind of human dignity that my grandmother was very committed to—acknowledging and accepting your humanity beyond the performance of your literacy or how people assess it. I see it again and again in Black male narratives—whether veiled as in Langston Hughes’ autobiography, *The Big Sea*, or unveiled in other places. This transcendent self-awareness is a prophylactic, so to speak, from the psychological harms of our racial caste system. 🍷

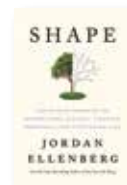
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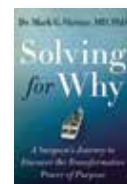
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Shape: The Hidden Geometry of Information, Biology, Strategy, Democracy, and Everything Else,
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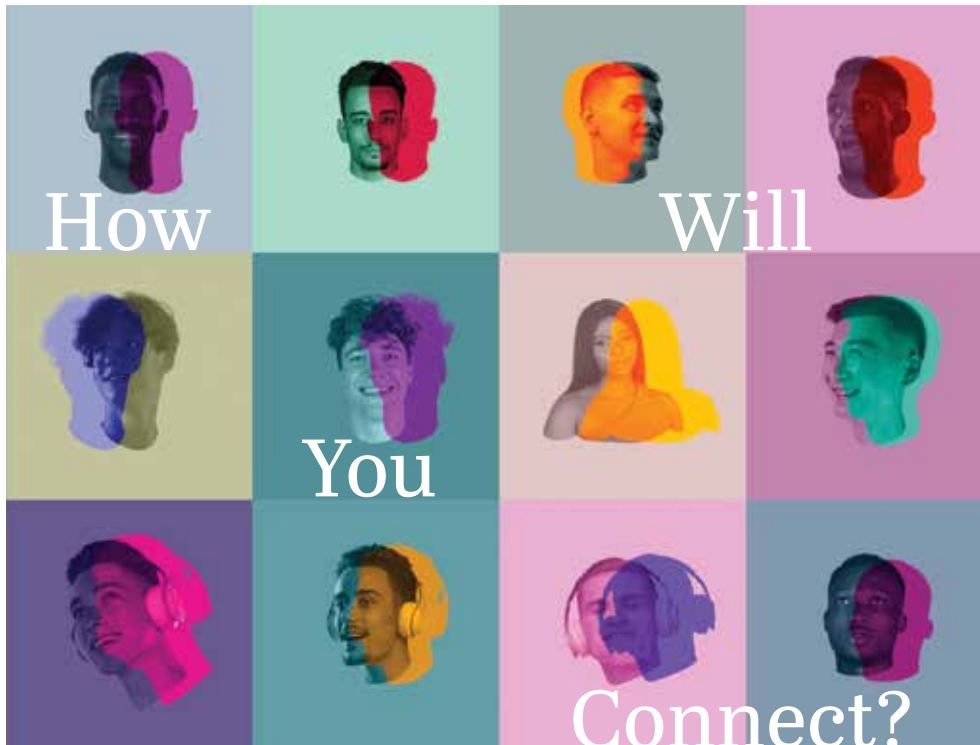
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Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting,
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ALUMNI HAVE A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH HARVARD GRIFFIN GSAS, BOTH IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY, WHETHER BY INTERACTING WITH FACULTY AND FELLOW GRADUATES AT EVENTS, BEING A MENTOR, OR SIMPLY HELPING A STUDENT NAVIGATE THEIR TIME AT THE SCHOOL. HERE ARE SOME OF THE MANY WAYS TO CONNECT!

» **Share Your Advice with Students in Informal Online Meetings**

The GSAS Virtual Coffee program is an opportunity for students to “ask alumni anything”—and for alumni to share their wisdom and help students navigate Harvard and life in graduate school. Register at gsas.harvard.edu/alumni/volunteer. Questions? Email the Graduate School Alumni Association at gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

» **Provide Career Advice to Harvard Griffin GSAS Students**

Share tips on how students can navigate the job market, prepare for an interview, leverage the skills developed through a Harvard Griffin GSAS master’s or PhD program, or craft a resume that showcases talents and achievements. Register for the Firsthand Advisers platform, harvardmcs.firsthand.co/, and provide students with a burst of expertise through “flash mentoring” activities.

» **Engage with Dean Dench, Faculty, and Alumni at an In-Person or Virtual Event**

Join Harvard Griffin GSAS Dean Emma Dench, faculty, and fellow alumni at in-person events around the globe—or virtually from your own living room—to explore topics such as climate change, data for better parenting, artificial intelligence and data science, next steps in your career, and more. See the list of upcoming event dates and visit gsas.harvard.edu/calendar for more information.

» **Help Us Build Our Volunteer Network**

During the 150th anniversary, Alumni Relations piloted a few regional events organized and executed by alumni. Please email gsaa@fas.harvard.edu to learn more or to volunteer to plan events for Harvard Griffin GSAS alumni in your area.

SAVE THE DATES!

Virtual Events

Thursday, December 14, 2023, 11 a.m. ET: “Future Shock: Grappling with the Generative AI Revolution,” a panel discussion led by former Harvard Griffin GSAS Dean **Xiao-Li Meng, PhD '90**

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, 12 p.m. ET: A conversation with economist **Emily Oster, PhD '06**, author of three books on pregnancy and parenting and founder of the website, ParentData

In-Person Events

Saturday, April 6, 2024
Alumni Day

Tuesday, April 9, 2024
Harvard Horizons Symposium

Wednesday, May 22, 2024
Centennial Medal Ceremony

••• **Be sure to check the Harvard Griffin GSAS website** (gsas.harvard.edu/calendar) in the months ahead for in-person events in the following cities!

- Hong Kong
- Shanghai
- Shenzhen
- Mexico City
- Dallas
- San Francisco
- New York
- Washington, DC
- Philadelphia



HELP THEM DISCOVER NEW FRONTIERS

Curiosity drives Nazli Ugur Koyluoglu. An inaugural member of Harvard's PhD program in quantum science and engineering, she is fascinated by the unknown possibilities at the intersection of quantum information and many-body physics. "These fields are ever growing and ever intertwining to show us new ways of thinking about quantum physics and applications," she says. "It's an exploratory field where I can think about exciting questions that contribute to advancing quantum science and technologies—areas that are already interesting to me, just out of pure curiosity."

It's only fitting that Koyluoglu is the first recipient of a Harvard Frontier Fellowship, funded through a generous gift from Hartley Rogers '81, MBA '85 and Amy Falls MPP '89. Alumni support enables Harvard leaders to bolster exceptional scholars and train fellows in innovative fields of study that benefit the world.

As one of several theorists in the Lukin Group, Koyluoglu is in the thick of Harvard's quantum community—what she calls "the center of gravity for quantum research." Their theoretical research supports the development of quantum simulators and quantum computers, identifies new physics phenomena, and advances information applications beyond what we can even imagine today.

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IN THIS ISSUE:

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS:

HOW ECONOMIC IDEAS SHAPED
THE NOTION OF SIN

TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF

CHILDREN: CHANGING THE
WAY SCIENTISTS UNDERSTAND
EARLY-LIFE IMMUNITY

(SESQUI)CENTENNIAL

MEDALISTS: HONOREES
EPITOMIZE SCHOOL HISTORY
OF INQUIRY, INNOVATION,
AND IMPACT

BEYOND 'AUTHENTICITY':

EXPLORING THE LITERACY
JOURNEYS OF BLACK MEN