PEEKABOO  Of course, he saw you.
He has eight eyes.
Tiny, this white-striped bird eater
who lives in Gottwald in the care of the
biology department, visited Tyler Haynes
Commons to help celebrate National
Spider Day March 14. Read more about
it on spiderpride.richmond.edu,
filed under Arachnophobia.

Photograph by Gordon Schmidt
SEEING RED Spider red is everywhere on campus, if you look close enough.
On a windy March day, the biology department’s Jennifer O’Donnell wore a Spider red T-shirt and blue jeans as she placed translucent containers with eight live spiders on a long table in Tyler Haynes Commons.

On the far left was Tarrant, the green-bottle blue tarantula that makes appearances at basketball games. On the right was Tiny, a gorgeous white-striped bird eater about 4 inches long. Between them were more cases and vials that held smaller specimens from places like Honduras and Brazil, some the size of your fingernail. They were there to help the University with its second National Spider Day celebration.

Many of the students passing by during class changes paused for a closer look, but more than a few took a wide berth with shoulder-shaking shudders best translated as “Ew.” A ninth spider nearby attracted, in contrast, universal affection. WebstUR, the 6-foot-something costumed spirit spider in a basketball jersey, got nothing but high-fives, hugs, and selfie requests.

In typical Richmond style, our choice of mascot sets us apart in higher education. By my back-of-the-envelope calculations, a little more than 40 percent of the NCAA’s 351 Division I schools cheer for some version of a bird, cat, or canine. Throw in dudes with weapons (Cavaliers, Musketeers, Buccaneers, and such), and it’s 55 percent.

Other mascots might appear more distinctive at first glance, but they’re nearly always pieces of a larger collection. Pilots, Miners, and Lumberjacks — all in the same tables of Department of Labor reports. Hurricanes, Red Storms, Rainbows, and Waves — the stuff of meteorologists’ morning chatter. That three of the nation’s four Rams ended up in the Atlantic 10 has to be someone’s idea of a private joke.

There’s only one Spider. The creatures themselves are intelligent, patient, and hard-working. Some look coldly mechanical; others, like Tarrant on this page, have an almost teddy bear quality. Their webs have sparked human imagination across cultures for millennia.

I’m proud this mascot’s all ours.

—Matthew Dewald
Editor, University of Richmond Magazine
OUT CAME THE SUN AND DRIED UP ALL THE RAIN
Huguenot Bridge over the James River, near Pony Pasture. Photograph by Katie Tanner, ’17

FEATURES

18 My hand on the wall first
The Spider swim and dive juggernaut entered the A-10 championship meet on a mind-boggling six-year winning streak. After an early DQ, this looked like the year it would end.

26 The commish
Over the last two decades, the PGA Tour has responded to its challenges with creativity and growth. Its guiding hand has been Tim Finchem, R’69.

30 The mountain in him
Ambition and confidence brought Conor Phelan, ’13, to Alaskan soil to retrace his family’s lost past. Its waterways and wilderness would test whether they were enough.
Correction: In our last issue, we misstated the dates of the Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker’s pastorate at Canaan Baptist Church. He served from 1967 to 2004. We regret the error.

A GRACIOUS MAN
I read with much sadness about the passing of Dr. [Bill] Myers in September 2016. My husband and I visited UR in September 2015. Although Dr. Myers was not expecting us, he warmly welcomed us and spent over two hours showing us around the science building and proudly sharing all the exciting activities in the chemistry department and the sciences in general. He could not have been more gracious with his time and knowledge. Simply, the wonderful professor I remember so fondly.

Thank you for your work on the magazine. I enjoy keeping up with my fellow Spiders.
—Suzanne Kelly Bates, W’84
Belle Mead, New Jersey

KEEN EYE
I am not sure if it was intentional or not, but the background of the inside cover picture of the Winter 2017 issue of U of R Magazine shows the statue Connecticut.

The original placement of the statue was to be in Washington, D.C., but it ended up atop a Best Products store in Bethesda, Maryland. In 1985, it began keeping an eye on spectators entering the Diamond to see the Richmond Braves. Now he stands guard above the mighty James River atop the former Lucky Strike building, keeping an eye on the James River and the Spider Crew.

I feel like I am more a part of American and Virginia history when I go downtown to the James River to fish the spring shad run and see Connecticut leaning over the Lucky Strike building.

Thanks for making U of R Magazine even better and an enjoyable publication.
—Alex “Bo” Ulasiewicz, R’77
Richmond

MORE ON POLITICS AND THE ACADEMY
Mr. McGuffin’s comments in the winter edition that universities should teach the students to think versus preaching toward conservative beliefs or liberal beliefs are good (“Letters to the Editor,” Winter 2017). My feelings are that professors like Dr. Steward, who I had also, should teach students to think and then let the students decide which way they want to lean (politically). We need, as parents, to allow our children to make their own choices and not push them the way that we think. The professors have the right to be liberals or conservatives, and they have a right to express it. The students do not have to accept their thinking.

Today’s students are the next generation, not us. They will be the ones who make the future decisions. (I have) two grown sons. I have no idea which way they lean. Both are smart enough to make their own decisions.
—Roger Collier, B’66
Midlothian, Virginia

In reading an article from the last excellent magazine, there was mention that our band no longer plays “Dixie” at our football games (“The Tales We Tell,” Winter 2017). If still true, save the postage by discontinuing your fine magazine. I had no idea that such intellectual fascism had taken root at the University, in the ’70s no less. After all, the narrative of political correctness has now reverted to a more sane correctness. I believe our last election indicates thusly.

Certainly, mature adults can agree to disagree. Do continue your effort in keeping all informed. You can’t please everyone, for sure. I am thankful to know of the political drift of the university, but not of its direction.
—Robert Bullock, R’64
Bozeman, Montana

TRENDING
If I’m going to be home sick again, I’m going to make Jersey Dirt, dammit. @urichmond #jerseydirt #gospiders

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The red items in my wardrobe continue to multiply! Once a ❌, always a ✔️ & proud of it. #proudtobeaspider @SpiderClubUR
@URichmondMag
—@PatriseS via Twitter

Literally the only red thing in my wardrobe @URichmondMag #chinesenewyear
—@RosaMarks8 via Twitter

D-Hall jersey dirt was a fave of the #Gottwald ladies!! Probably owe much of our success to it … 👌ᵃᶜᵗᵢᵛᵉᵐᵉᵉⁿᵗ #Gottwald
—@Kayleigh_MWC via Twitter

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Whenever I travel for performances, my cello occupies the airplane seat next to me. A treasured and valuable instrument, it’s usually too risky to stow in the baggage hold or in the care of a handler pressed for time. It also encourages amusing in-flight conversations.

My first cello — on loan from my middle school music department — was made of plywood and sturdy enough to withstand the carelessness of a teenage boy. I outgrew it within a year. Not in size — the cello is a large instrument that accommodates all musicians — but in suitability. When my cello teacher advised me that a new cello was necessary to advance my fledgling skill, I mustered the courage to ask my parents for a $250 cello. Within a year, I was back asking for a $1,500 one, a significant financial commitment for my parents. But they agreed and sacrificially hastened my ascent into public performing.

I made a similar calculation many years later when I purchased a cello worth 40 times the one my parents bought me. It was made in Cremona, Italy, from 300-year-old wood, and I still play it today.

The decision to invest in a new cello is not unlike choosing to invest in a Richmond education. Both decisions require careful attention to price and a deeper consideration of the “value proposition,” or determining whether the investment will bring an enduring benefit — value — that surpasses other options available.

Recently, the Princeton Review included the University of Richmond in a list of the top 50 schools that “pay you back.” In their judgment, all institutions on the list share “stellar academics, affordable cost (either via sticker price, generous financial aid, or both); and strong career prospects for graduates.”

To compile its list, the Princeton Review evaluated more than 40 data points covering academics, costs, financial aid, debt, graduation rates, and career/salary data, including starting and mid-career salaries and career social impact. They gave particular merit to college costs and financial aid.

All such calculations are to some degree selective and arbitrary, but this one was clearly setting out to measure something we consider carefully. At Richmond, our commitment to need-blind admissions and meeting the financial need of all traditional undergraduates opens our doors to the most talented students. The Richmond Guarantee awards up to $4,000 for undergraduates to pursue unpaid research fellowships and internships during the summer months. We are proud of these commitments to alleviate the costs of a Richmond education for students.

But we need to speak more frequently — and confidently — about our value. A Richmond education provides a powerful return on investment. Nearly 60 percent of every senior class graduates with no debt. The average loan debt for those who do finance their education, $27,670, is less than the national average and comparable to that of public universities. Based on average loans and starting salaries, Richmond graduates can expect to pay about 7 percent of their salary on monthly loan payments. Our loan default rate is just 2.1 percent, one-fifth of the national average. This data reflects that our graduates leave with the capacity to fulfill their financial obligations responsibly and with far greater success than their peers.

And when you add our small class sizes, high level of personal attention, integrated curriculum, and extracurricular opportunities such as study abroad, leadership, arts, and athletics, our value is unmatched.

Each new cello in my life has been the right investment precisely because each provided the value I required to reach the goals I had at that time. Decisions that families make at the kitchen table about education and Richmond require similar considerations. I’m working hard to share with them and everyone the incomparable value proposition the University of Richmond offers.

The value proposition

Some of the most consequential financial decisions of my life have involved recognizing the true value of the cellos that could position me for success.
Same, but better

North Court reopened in January after an extensive renovation that reconfigured its traditional dorm-style rooms and hall baths into suites.

Students who moved in also found new lounges and study spaces; upgrades of the heating and air conditioning, electrical, waterproofing, and fire protection systems; replacement windows and roofing; and an elevator, making more than 90 percent of the student rooms accessible.

Even as systems were updated, the investment in the student experience valued preservation. New seats and lighting and a refinished floor have Perkins Recital Hall looking stunning again, and the Blue Room received similar care. Outside, workers relaid the 1914 bricks to more closely resemble the courtyard’s original design.

The biggest change happened post-renovation, when male students became some of North Court’s newest residents. It will remain coed, along with South Court after its upcoming renovation, said Patrick Benner, director of residence life and housing.
When national and local media cover news and events, they come to Richmond for perspective and expertise. Here’s a sample of recent stories that put the University in the news:

“American business is global business,” NANCY BAGRANOFF, dean of the Robins School of Business, wrote in a Feb. 11 Richmond Times-Dispatch op-ed explaining business leaders’ reactions to the president’s first executive order restricting travel. “Not every business will think that the executive order is a bad idea, but what is remarkable is that so many do and are willing to say so.”

CBS Moneywatch turned to Richmond Law professor JACK PREIS for comment about Apple’s decision to speak out against the White House’s decision to amend Obama-era policy applying federal sex discrimination laws to transgender students. “When Apple speaks, its message is more likely to be heard than, say, the local grocer down the street,” he said.

The Scientist asked biology and biochemistry professor EUGENE WU to comment on researchers who developed a semisynthetic organism that can replicate artificial DNA base pairs indefinitely. “I think they’re moving towards a place where we are able to ask questions that we’ve never asked before,” he said.

A New York Times investigative reporter turned to Richmond Law professor CARL TOBIAS in a March 7 piece about a petitioner’s request that a judge throw out the class-action settlement reached in the Trump University lawsuit. The judge would have to weigh the objection to the settlement against “substantial pressure to hold the deal together,” Tobias said. “A lot of work has gone into this, and people are generally satisfied all around.”

In a Yahoo Finance piece warning of the dangers of weak enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a U.S. anticorruption law with worldwide reach, analyst Max de Haldevang turned to Richmond Law professor ANDY SPALDING. “The FCPA train has left the station,” Spalding said, “and to repeal it now would be analogous to repealing the Civil Rights Act or our securities law.”

IN THE NEWS

Three Fulbrights

The next time you text, stream a video, or shop online, spare a thought for the unsung professionals who make it possible: mathematicians.

“There’s a lot of math that balances speed, accuracy, and security” when you’re using a cell phone, said professor Jim Davis (above), an expert in the invisible mathematical infrastructure underlying modern communication. “We’ve all been in a situation where we are trying to send a text or download something and can’t.”

With support from a Fulbright Global Scholar Award, Davis will travel to three countries in 2017–18 to confer with colleagues to solve “problems related to coding theory and combinatorics, specifically Boolean function theory and difference sets,” according to a University press release. Put more plainly, “there have been many advances in [communication technology] in the past 10 to 15 years, and there’s a need now to further review the math and make improvements as needed,” he said. “That’s what I’ll be working on with other leading experts.”

April brought news of two more Fulbrights. David Brandenberger, a professor in history and international studies, received a grant to support four months of research in Russia. Ryan McEvoy, ’17, received an English teaching assistant grant and will teach English and American studies in North-Rhine Westphalia, Germany.

Three juniors received the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, the country’s premier undergraduate scholarship in mathematics, science, and engineering. Richmond has had 24 Goldwater scholarship recipients and six honorable mentions since 1990.

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The Beyoncé boost
A mini viral sensation happened last semester when someone affixed a yellow sticky note to a soap dispenser in one of the law school’s women’s restrooms. An anonymous writer invited visitors to “share the love.” And they did, covering the mirror next to it with messages of encouragement, affirmation, and humor. “You have the same amount of hours in a day as Beyoncé,” one wrote. “You matter. You are loved,” wrote another. “Now, that’s community.”

Recent rankings
In January, the Princeton Review ranked the University among the nation’s top 50 “Colleges that Pay You Back.” The citation notes that Richmond “invests a tremendous amount of time and money in making it possible for lower- and middle-income students” to attend. Nearly half of students receive need-based financial aid, with an average award of more than $44,000. The Princeton Review also ranked Richmond No. 18 on its “Best Schools for Internships” list.

The Robins School of Business part-time MBA program rose more than 20 positions from 59th to 33rd in the most recent U.S. News & World Report rankings. “It is encouraging to see that the U.S. News ranking is beginning to reflect what our students, faculty, and alumni already know — that the Richmond MBA is among the most well-regarded part-time programs in the country,” said Randy Raggio, the program’s director.

The website College Choice ranked Richmond’s teacher preparation programs 20th nationally. “UR is leading the way,” the editors wrote. “The education programs keep UR’s reputation as an institution that expects achievement and produces results.”

ACCOLADES

Initiative? Oh yeah.
Some students choose a major. Lindsay Hamm, ’17, created hers. It’s art conservation — a degree that she developed through the interdisciplinary studies program. She is also a curatorial assistant in the Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art in the Modlin Center for the Arts, a position that, like her major, she forged herself after approaching a member of the museum’s staff.

“I feel like that’s how I’ve found my experiences,” she said. “More often than not, people are really responsive and willing to help. It’s definitely been one of the best things I’ve done during my college career.”

It began last summer when Hamm landed a fellowship with Jeremy Drummond, chair of art and art history. “I wanted to meet and talk with as many people in the arts world as possible just to learn about their careers, how they got to where they are, and what formed their decisions,” she said.

One of the people she met was Elizabeth Schlatter, deputy director and curator of exhibitions, who was in the midst of curating an upcoming exhibit called “Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art.” Hamm knew she had to be a part of it, so she approached Schlatter with an offer of assistance. A short time later, Hamm was serving as the lead creative designer for the online exhibition catalog, conducting email interviews, and co-moderating a talk with featured artists.

Hamm’s time with University Museums has exposed her to a lot of different aspects of the art world in general, experience she hopes to parlay into a summer internship shadowing a conservator. Ultimately, Hamm plans to attend graduate school to continue her study of art conservation.

“We like about conservation is you’re just helping the artist live on,” she said. “I think that’s a really awesome way for me to find my way.”

“You have the same amount of hours in a day as Beyoncé.”

“We had to hike six miles to the rainforest station to get there, but everyone was sort of into it.”

SARAH TIMKO, ’17, quoted in a March 16 Collegian story about a group of ecology students who spent their spring break doing research in Belize
Submitted for your consideration: the polyglot life of Finland native MIKA ELOVAARA, Ph.D., Richmond’s associate head soccer coach and the co-editor of Connecting Metal to Culture, the newest addition to the field of metal academia.

MY METAL FAN ORIGINS
I was 8 years old when Kiss was in my hometown, and I was so upset with my dad that he wouldn’t let me go.

Now when I think about it — my son’s 8 right now, and if he wanted to go, I’d say, “No. You’re not going.” But my dad went and had a blast. He got Gene Simmons’ and Paul Stanley’s autographs in a bar in the late hours. Metal music has been popular in Finland as long as it’s been around. It’s definitely a cultural thing.

MY PLAYING CAREER
I always signed with a team in my hometown, Oulu. It was awesome. We were completely homegrown. I ended up playing five years after college, but one of the things I recognized is that I’ve always really been a student-athlete. I still am. A student of the game, yes, but a student of many other things. I don’t need to be just a soccer player, so I went to graduate school and eventually got my doctorate in cultural studies.

MY RESEARCH
As a fan of the music but also as an academic, I think that there’s a need for more information about metal’s complexity and its different hues and colors.

When you write something, it means something to you, but when I read it, it may mean different things for me. That duality is fascinating to me and also the reason why some music genres, like punk and metal and hip-hop, are so often misunderstood.

In our book, I’m not trying to say this is what metal is, just this is what it’s also about, and maybe you haven’t thought about that.

MY METAL LISTENING HABITS
It’s the mood, the emotional connection, and the drive that I get from the music.

The lyrics don’t usually mean anything to me. Some of them you can’t even decipher when you listen, and some of them would bother you if you did read them. Too much weight is associated with the lyrics. Sometimes the lyrics are provocative just to be provocative.

MY BRUSH WITH DENNIS RODMAN
He came to Finland to play a one-off game in the Finnish League. I knew I had to talk to him for my dissertation (on athletes as hero figures), so I got a press pass.

He took only three questions at the press conference, and I was really aggressive to get the third one. I said, “You’re really adamant in your autobiography that you’re tired of this role model (nonsense). What do you think if people idolize you exactly because of that statement?”

MY COACHING PHILOSOPHY
Absolutely we want to win. Everybody who knows Peter [Albright, head coach] and me knows how much we want to win, but at the end of the day, we, as a program, care way more about the person than the performer.

I constantly encourage players to pursue what their heart is telling them because society doesn’t always help with that. Society puts pressure on you about what you should do. I think it’s important to appropriately encourage them to think for themselves.

MY PLAYERS
As a coach, my main job is to make myself unnecessary. Soccer is so fluid and spontaneous, such a players’ game. We don’t have timeouts; we only have one half-time. When it matters the most, the player needs to be independent. They are to trust that, “I can give it a go, I can be bold, and I can dare to try this.”

2017 SPRING/SUMMER
MAY YOU TEACH IN INTERESTING TIMES

Political science classes are designed to encourage knowledgeable political participation without getting bogged down in partisanship. Here are Simpson’s tips for the art of teaching about politics in contentious times.

Set parameters
“...at the very beginning of the course, establish rules of civility and openness. They can coexist.”

Point to the big picture
“Encourage students to think about issues as phenomena through which we understand social and political systems. Steer them away from value judgments about the ideas and the people who hold them.”

Have some laughs
“When you can, insert a little levity into the discussion. Humor has always been helpful to me.”

PEOPLE POWER Andrea Simpson focuses on African-American politics in her research as a political science professor. During the spring semester, she taught a senior seminar focused on grassroots political and social movements.

How did you initially become interested in grassroots political and social movements?

When I was in junior high school, I was actively involved in the sanitation worker movement in Memphis, Tennessee. I got to be in Martin Luther King’s last march. That was a very profound experience, to be in that march, to be a part of something larger than myself.

Did your experience inspire you to teach this course, or was it something else?

As a scholar, you look for the gaps in the literature. There wasn’t much out there about African-American women in politics. I found three areas of activism for African-American women: nationwide, but I delved into environmental justice. There were so many layers. I knew it was something I’d have on my research agenda for a long time.

In your research, have you found movements that particularly inspire you and inform the direction of your work?

In the 1950s, a chemical company sold land from a chemical waste dump in Niagara County, New York, to the city for a dollar. It became a neighborhood called Love Canal. Lois Gibbs was a Latina housewife who realized stuff was bubbling up in people’s yards, and she wondered if her son’s epilepsy was related to that. So she began organizing the women in the neighborhood. We shouldn’t leave that movement out of the conversation. More broadly, what are the movements that you focus on in your class?

We look at the coal miners’ strikes in West Virginia and the industrial unions’ efforts to organize. We look at the civil rights movement and the welfare rights movement. We are studying the factors that go into formation of a social movement. Why do some movements succeed and others decline?

So what does it take for a movement to succeed?

It is very difficult for the powerless to wrest power from the powerful. You only get concessions by steady, meaningful protest strategies. And if I want you to support me in my issue, you have to know my story, believe in my story, and be moved by my story.

On the other hand, how does a movement fail?

Well, you can’t let the issue get out of the public’s mind for a long time. Black Lives Matter, we haven’t heard from them in a long time. So now you see more movements honoring public servants and police. But you also need to be clear about what needs to be done. With Black Lives Matter, I can’t give you a clear policy.

What’s different about contemporary grassroots movements?

We are back in a space in our political culture where we are less tolerant of disruptive tactics. But there is a tremendous shift in the mindsets of the students I teach. They are not willing to sacrifice their morals to succeed. They’re saying, “What can I do to make other people’s lives easier?” They’re never going to be extreme in their pronouncements, but they are still passionate.

With that in mind, what do you tell them is the importance of grassroots movements in this political moment?

We need to talk about what policies mean for the people affected by them. We are deeply fractured right now, but I’m optimistic because sometimes fracturing can lead to growth, and you can come out better than you were before you were broken. I feel that way, that we’re going to come out better than ever.
The cello player has a day job

The Klemperer Trio — which includes Richmond’s president, Ronald A. Crutcher, on cello — has performed around the world since 1980. On April 12, it made its debut at the Modlin Center. The trio — described by San Francisco Chronicle as “three brilliant artists who play as one” — played pieces by Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, and Arensky.

“In the 18th and 19th centuries, chamber music was played among relatives and friends to entertain other relatives and friends or for the musicians’ own enjoyment,” music critic Clarke Bustard wrote on his blog, Letter V. “That was very much the vibe” of this performance.

Projects for Peace

When she was 16, Fabiana Ayala, ’17, “left home looking for an opportunity to show myself and my city and country what I was capable of,” she said. Home was Bolivia, a country the U.S. State Department says is among the poorest in the Western Hemisphere.

A $10,000 Projects for Peace grant awarded to her and classmate Yasmine Karam is giving her that opportunity. They will use the grant this summer to partner with community-based organizations to recruit and train women in Cochabamba, Bolivia, interested in earning an income from crocheting and connect them to international markets.

“Now I can go back home not only to show what I’ve been capable of,” Ayala said, “but also to give back to the country that gave me those opportunities.”

AROUND CAMPUS

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A tough case

Three days before he left the presidency, Barack Obama granted clemency to 231 people. Among those receiving the news gladly were a group of Richmond Law students whose advocacy led to one of the grants.

Dujuan Farrow was not a typical client for Richmond Law’s Institute for Actual Innocence, which takes on cases in which evidence shows an innocent person has been convicted.

Farrow’s guilt was not in doubt, but his 2005 sentence of life without parole far exceeded current sentencing standards.

“Under today’s sentencing guidelines, Mr. Farrow would have received nothing close to life in prison,” said Mary Kelly Tate, director of the clinic.

The details of Farrow’s case were compelling to Tate and the law students working with the institute. Farrow was a nonviolent drug offender who was a passenger in a drug dealer’s car the night of a federal sting operation. He received a life sentence for conspiracy after choosing to seek a jury trial. The clemency grant reduced his sentence.

“It was a great learning experience — a great practical experience as a law student — to be able to take on a real case,” Carter Nichols, L’16, told the Richmond Times-Dispatch. “We were doing things that you don’t learn in law school.”

Except, of course, at Richmond Law.

CAREER

Spider Shadowing

SHADOWS AND STARS Over winter break, Carney Judge, ’17, shadowed Roger Mancusi, ’12, of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His day included a screening of the new Ben Affleck film Live by Night, followed by a Q&A with cast members, including Affleck.

“If I can pass that on, great,” Mancusi said of his decision to host Judge through the Spider Shadowing program. “If I can pass it along to a Richmond student, even better.”

LAW

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Richmond Law students argued for clemency for a man serving a life sentence that wouldn’t be handed down today.

The work of Richmond Law’s Institute for Actual Innocence spans the spectrum of legal skills, from research, writing, and analysis to negotiation, strategy, and litigation. Students visit prisons, interview witnesses, collaborate with forensics experts, investigate crime scenes, and do many other tasks connected to the legal needs of each case.

IN PRACTICE

A tough case

Three days before he left the presidency, Barack Obama granted clemency to 231 people. Among those receiving the news gladly were a group of Richmond Law students whose advocacy led to one of the grants.

Dujuan Farrow was not a typical client for Richmond Law’s Institute for Actual Innocence, which takes on cases in which evidence shows an innocent person has been convicted.

Farrow’s guilt was not in doubt, but his 2005 sentence of life without parole far exceeded current sentencing standards.

“Under today’s sentencing guidelines, Mr. Farrow would have received nothing close to life in prison,” said Mary Kelly Tate, director of the clinic.

The details of Farrow’s case were compelling to Tate and the law students working with the institute. Farrow was a nonviolent drug offender who was a passenger in a drug dealer’s car the night of a federal sting operation. He received a life sentence for conspiracy after choosing to seek a jury trial. The clemency grant reduced his sentence.

“It was a great learning experience — a great practical experience as a law student — to be able to take on a real case,” Carter Nichols, L’16, told the Richmond Times-Dispatch. “We were doing things that you don’t learn in law school.”

Except, of course, at Richmond Law.

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THEY SAID IT

Every semester brings speakers from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives to campus, giving students the opportunity to grapple with new discoveries and thorny issues.

Ambassador Thomas Pickering
1.30.17 “I think the tendency to kind of shoot from the hip and make decisions rapidly, but make them without consultation and without much look at the consequences, is not the kind of pattern of national behavior which produces confidence abroad, and it may even affect confidence at home,” Pickering said, according to The Collegian.

Political science professor Stephen Long hosted the conversation with Pickering in the Brown-Alley Room in Weinstein Hall, in part through questions submitted by the audience. In a career spanning four decades, Pickering served as a U.S. ambassador in six nations and at the United Nations under Republican and Democratic presidents.

Author Isabel Wilkerson
1.24.17 “They freed themselves. And in freeing themselves, they also helped to free our country — or get us on the road to freeing our country — from an arcane and feudal caste system that was holding everyone back,” Wilkerson said.

A capacity crowd packed Cannon Memorial Chapel for Wilkerson’s talk, which was part of the 2016–17 Jepson Leadership Forum. Wilkerson is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of The Warmth of Other Suns, which chronicles the Great Migration, the mass movement of African-Americans out of the Jim Crow South into cities in the North, Midwest, and West in the early and mid-20th century.

Netflix co-founder Marc Randolph
2.22.17 “The key was not about having good ideas. It was building a system to try lots of bad ones. It turns out that success is directly proportionate to how many ideas you try — or get us on the road to success without consultation and without much look at the consequences,” Randolph said.

His talk in Booker Hall was the most highly attended Robins Executive Speaker Series event ever held. He shared his insights on founding and building a major company and helping young entrepreneurs succeed in Silicon Valley, California.

QUOTATION

“No regrets. ... I tell them all not to mourn because I’m ready. ... I’ve had a good life.”

JOY SAUNDERS, a 97-year-old resident of Nova Scotia, speaking to a group of students who traveled to meet her as part of Longevity and Happiness, a Sophomore Scholars in Residence course taught by psychology professor Jane Berry

EXPERTISE

A bit of a parlor trick? Sure. But it was a pretty good one when a delivery of diapers, ice cream, and bananas arrived in the middle of a talk at Ukrop Auditorium in January.

The speaker welcomed the interruption because it made his point about the ability of his company, Amazon, to get a vast array of consumer goods to customers astonishingly quickly.

Greg Grilliot, the speaker, is general manager of a Richmond facility that in earlier times might have been called a warehouse but Amazon calls a fulfillment center. The revised nomenclature emphasizes goals over means. What the facility exists to fulfill is 21st-century customers’ expectations.

Message delivered

Delivery periods measuring weeks quickly became days. And now, in select markets with fulfillment centers like the one Grilliot manages, deliveries are measured in hours and minutes through a service called Amazon Prime Now. The elapsed time between Grilliot’s click at the beginning of his talk to place his order and its arrival was 28 minutes.

At the moment of delivery, Grilliot had just finished showing his audience a video about how the center works. A half-hour later, as he wrapped up, he referred again to the packages at his feet and told students about the expectations others will have of them.

“You’re going to have to use your ability to deliver results,” he said, “to set you apart from your peers and others around you.” He then made a delivery of his own: a closing pitch for his company as the right place for Richmond students to begin their careers.
ETY-WHAT-OLOGY? One surefire way of helping students master a subject is to put them in a situation where they have to teach it to someone else. A course on the roots of English words offers a recent case in point.

Changes? Emily Gove, ’17, has seen a few.

“The first day they wouldn’t even talk to us or lift their heads up,” she said of her start as a tutor of ancient languages at a local youth center. “There was a day when a boy walked in and asked what class this was, and when he heard what it was, he left. He didn’t know what he was missing.”

The kids who stuck around eventually became full of enthusiasm correcting one another and no longer needed the reward of candy to participate, she said. “The difference between the first and last days was so significant.”

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Gove enrolled in Classical Elements of the English Language during fall 2016 and spent a semester studying Latin and Greek language and teaching etymology — the study of word origins — to middle school students. They were enrolled in an after-school program offered by the Youth Life Foundation at the Highland Park Learning Center in Richmond’s Northside neighborhood.

“These five students had to figure out how they would present the whole subject of etymology: breaking words down, seeing words made up of parts — prefixes and roots and suffixes,” said Dean Simpson, the classical studies professor who taught the course. “And as they’ll tell you, they had to figure it out on the fly sometimes. They made use of what they’d been learning about the Latin and Greek roots in English to make it accessible to middle school students.”

Simpson began the program encouraged by examples of British schools using etymology to help students — particularly struggling students — improve their reading. It seemed like a good approach for Richmond’s community-based learning program, which enhances the learning of the Richmond students through community involvement. Interactive games helped pique the kids’ interest. In one game, the kids took a step forward if they responded to a prompt correctly, but there were a couple of “bombs” along the way that made them back up. It turned the whole room into a game board. In another game, the kids ran back and forth in a relay race matching roots and English words. It got incredibly competitive — there was pushing and shoving, but also learning.

With each activity, the kids grew more interested and took in more information, and the Richmond students understood better how to tutor effectively.

“In the beginning, it was kind of slow because we had just given them a lecture, and we didn’t really do that much with the games,” James McGuire, ’20, said. “But then we got to know them better and developed the games with the blocks and the cards. That really brought out their personalities.”

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“It was so much more than I’d hoped for,” Simpson said. “They, of course, had to be so quick about recognizing what was a match or helping somebody along, saying what word has the same root. These students here were developing a knack of making use of a skill, seeing words made up of parts.”

2017 SPRING/SUMMER 15
Twists, turns

When Elsa Diaz practices her swing, she’s thinking about her dad, but this story isn’t one of those feel-good, tug-at-your-heart tales of sentimental woe. Her dad’s a chiropractor. Years of treating patients with golf injuries has given him a lot of well-informed, highly technique-oriented ideas about how to swing a golf club properly, so he’s also her daughter’s swing coach.

Stand with your feet just so.
Bend your left knee this many degrees.
Torque this way, not that.

“It’s all about keeping a healthy body,” Diaz, a junior, said. “I don’t practice to repeat something. I practice to figure out what my dad is saying.”

It’s paying dividends for her at the collegiate level. In February, she shot a 69 at the Edwin Watts Kiawah Island Classic in South Carolina, tying a Spider record for lowest round. Last spring, she and her team were Patriot League champions, earning the program’s first-ever NCAA tournament bid. They became two-time champions in 2017.

Diaz’s third year as a Spider has also been her head coach’s third year with the program. In 2016’s championship season, the Patriot League named Ali Wright its Coach of the Year, an accolade Diaz says only begins to hint at the impact Wright has on the team members as both players and people.

“I don’t know how Coach Wright has done it, but we all love her,” Diaz said. “We give it our all because she makes us want to. She fits exactly what this Richmond experience has been for me. I can’t imagine myself with another coach.”

Except, of course, her first coach, her dad back home in San Antonio. He and Wright talk often by phone to identify ways to improve her game, said Diaz, who hopes to play professionally.

“My dad’s 52,” she said, “but he swings like a 16-year-old.”

National record
Freshman cross-country runner Miles Clikeman (above, No. 8) broke a 37-year-old national record at the Fred Hardy Invitational in Robins Stadium March 24.

Clikeman set the new U.S. 20K junior national track record with a time of 1:09:07.50. His time was more than four minutes better than the previous record, set in 1980, long before he was born.

Triple-double x2
T.J. Cline became the 10th Spider basketball player to earn AP All-American honors after a senior season in which he collected accolades including A-10 Player of the Year and tallied two triple-doubles. He ended the season in the top 10 in Spider record books in single-season points, assists, and rebounds, the first time a Spider has ever finished in the top 10 of all three categories in one season.

When a draw is a win
Women’s lacrosse mid/fi  elder Caroline Queally became the program’s all-time leader in draw-control wins with 203 in the Spiders’ 18-8 win at LaSalle April 2. The junior ended the game with a No. 9 national ranking among active players in career goals per game. At the same point in the season, freshman goalie Megan Gianforte ranked No. 8 nationally in save percentage.

Giant killers again
In monsoon-like conditions in Chapel Hill in March, Spider men’s lacrosse took down the University of North Carolina, the defending national champions. It’s the second consecutive season that the Spiders have beaten a top-10 ACC opponent on the road.

More than 5,000 fans turned out to Robins Stadium April 1 for a hard-fought 8-7 loss to University of Virginia. It was only the second loss for the Spiders at that point in the season, each coming by a single point.

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He repeats the question back: “What’s the most interesting thing about me?”

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“I don’t know,” he says. “I’m kind of boring.”

By early April, Dunbar, a senior on Richmond’s men’s tennis team, was 28-5. He and his doubles partner, Alexandre Felisa, ranked 49th in the world in the ITA collegiate tennis rankings in early March. Dunbar, an Atlantic 10 All-Conference First Team player in his first three seasons, has dominated since high school, when he was named Ohio state champion. In April, he became the first Spider to win more than 100 games in his collegiate athletic career, and his team was on a 20-match win streak.

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“Starting early definitely gave me an advantage, and it’s great to have someone there 24 hours a day who can talk to you about tennis,” he said. “But it also took a lot of hours on the court.”

And after years of preparation and those countless hours, he is now one of the best college tennis players in the country. Yet Dunbar is reluctant to talk about his successes. Instead, he puts his tennis career into perspective, balancing his athletic involvement with his academics.

“You can’t put tennis ahead of school, and you can’t put school ahead of tennis,” Dunbar said. “But I’ve made intelligent decisions about where to put my time. The toughest part is having a social life.”

Felisa, his doubles partner, said that Dunbar keeps to himself: “He eats and sleeps tennis. That’s what he lives for.”

As Dunbar prepared this spring for a match against the University of Virginia, one of the best teams in the country, he admitted to being nervous, but he exhibited no signs of anxiety.

“You need to make sure that when you walk out there, there’s nothing else on your mind,” Dunbar said. “You have to bring yourself back to earth and realize the goal isn’t to win a match; it’s to get better.”

Felisa said Dunbar’s style on the court matches his personality.

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After graduation, Dunbar will begin his professional career. Though he is excited for that next step, he already says he will miss his time at Richmond.

“I’m kind of sad, honestly,” Dunbar said. “I’ll miss our freshmen. I’ll miss the whole team atmosphere. It’s kind of hard to realize it’s over and done.”

This summer, he plans to play several tournaments in the U.S. before heading to the Middle East. If he pulls off victories, he’ll win prize money to finance his participation in more matches. If he loses, his hopes of a professional tennis career will dwindle. As always, he remains calm.

“Whether you succeed or fail, it doesn’t mean all that much in the end,” Dunbar said. “You still have to be a good person. You still have to do the right thing.”

The Centurion
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MY HAND ON THE WALL FIRST

By Caroline Kettlewell
Photography by Kristen Litchfield
or the Richmond women’s swim and dive team, traversing the distance between elation and uncertainty took precisely .04 seconds. “I saw the official’s face, and I knew,” said freshman swimmer Virginia Marsh.

On the opening night of competition at the A-10 championship in Geneva, Ohio, on the final leg of the 800-yard freestyle relay, sophomore Morgan Soulia left the starting block .04 seconds too early, disqualifying the relay.

In .04 seconds, 30 points evaporated, and the defending-champion Richmond women found themselves in a meet very different from what they had hoped for. Like 2010. Like the only time Richmond had lost the championship in 15 years.

“We all knew that a DQ on the 800 relay was why they lost in 2010,” said Laura Rokop, ‘18, a diver.

“I was so devastated,” said Soulia, who feared she might have lost the meet for the team. “If it’s a close call,” she thought, “then those points are on me.”

How do you come back from that kind of blow, on the first night of a four-day championship meet? What head coach Matt Barany knew, but wouldn’t tell the women: In the history of the championship, rarely — and in more recent, increasingly competitive, years, never — had a team come back from a relay DQ to win.

“History,” he said, “was stacked against us.”

‘A DIFFERENT PUZZLE EVERY YEAR’

What does it take to build a winning team?

For Barany, there is no blueprint he can take from one year and slap onto the next. Every year, he starts over. Every year, the 26-week season that stretches from September through the A-10s in February presents different challenges, unexpected twists, sudden crises to be navigated. In six months of hard training — 20 hours a week of double practices and weights, dives repeated by the hundreds, tens of thousands of yards in the pool, meets won and lost, all balanced against the academic demands and emotional ups and downs of college life — the blueprint will be drawn new, scrapped, and drawn again countless times.

“I see every season as a process,” Barany said. “You are merging all of the different attitudes and experience and personalities — and then to try to get their bodies to perform the way they want their bodies to perform, and the way we know they can perform, is a different puzzle every year.”

This year, the puzzle proved particularly difficult to assemble. Illnesses, injuries, and personal problems plagued the team from the start. The assistant coach was recruited away only weeks into the season. The team didn’t manage to put a full-strength roster into even a single regular-season meet.
Going into the A-10s, his 12th coaching the team, he knew Richmond’s championship streak couldn’t last forever. The meet had grown more competitive. Other teams’ programs kept getting stronger. In January, with only a few weeks of training left, he acknowledged the uncertainty.

“I think we are all nervous right now,” he admitted, “because we are not healthy, because of the unknowns. We don’t know what our bodies are going to do in three weeks.”

‘REMEMBER YOU LOVE SWIMMING’
The highs and lows of a championship meet follow fast upon each other. In two minutes, one minute, or even less, your hopes, your plans, your nerves, your determination, your training — the culmination of your season — play out, event by event. Soulia’s meet had started out so well; she’d powered the breaststroke leg of the team’s 200 medley relay, helping them take second in the opening event of Wednesday evening’s competition.

“I was so excited after the medley,” she said. “I was faster than I ever could have believed.”

Then came the devastating DQ in the 800 relay. Soulia hadn’t DQed a relay in years, and now she’d done it at the A-10s. The fourth-place finish they would otherwise have won in the event would have put them within 12 points of the lead. Instead, they finished their first day trailing by more than 40.

On Thursday morning, everyone on the team knew they had to put that DQ behind them and keep swimming their best. For Soulia in particular, though, Thursday needed to be a reset.

“A new day, a new session,” she thought as she stood poised for the start of the second event of the evening. It was the 200 IM, or individual medley: 50 yards each of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

For most of the women, the journey to swimming for Richmond began when they were only 5, 6, 7 years old, all gap-toothed smiles and candy-colored goggles and belly-flopping first dives. By the time they took their plunge for the Spiders, the smell of damp towels and chlorine has perfumed their lives.

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Gatorade, clacking with plastic deck passes from senior meets, regional championships, and junior nationals. They’ve stepped up onto the starting blocks more times than they can remember.

Swimming competitively since she was 6, “I couldn’t describe myself without saying I’m a swimmer,” Soulia said. But this year, for the first time in all her years as a swimmer, Soulia knew, glancing up into the stands, she wouldn’t find the face of her mother — her biggest supporter, her tireless champion — watching her. In the spring of her freshman year, Soulia lost her mother to breast cancer, and this was her first championship without her.

What had her mother said to her when she hit a rough spot? “Remember you love swimming,” she’d told her. “You want to do this.”

Coming into the meet, Soulia was seeded 13th in the IM, but in morning preliminary qualifiers, she unexpectedly clocked her best time of the season, vaulting into the top-seed position. Could she repeat that performance with points on the line? As they took their places and tensed for the start of the IM finals, in the lane next to Soulia was the favorite for the event going into the meet, a senior swimmer from Fordham with a powerful butterfly who had won this event in the last two championships. Barany had counseled Soulia not to think about anybody’s swim but her own. “Who is she?” he’d shrugged about the Fordham swimmer. “But I couldn’t think about anyone else,” Soulia admitted.

The starter sounded. The swimmers dove in.

Once in the water, Soulia expected the Fordham swimmer to go out hard and fast, so when they hit the wall at the end of the first 25, Soulia was surprised to find herself with a slight lead. Was she going too fast herself? But she felt good. Coming out of the backstroke, the second 50, she wasn’t sure where she was positioned, “But I knew in breaststroke it was time to go,” she said, and at the turn for the final 50 freestyle, she still led. “Just bring it home,” she thought to herself.

Her hand hit the wall. The finish flashed up on the electronic scoreboard. “I looked up, and seeing the ‘1′ next to my name, I remember screaming,” Soulia said. Swimming every stroke for her mother, she beat her own best time from the morning. She captured an unlikely gold for her team.
“I took my goggles off, and I was crying, and I looked up in the stands, and my dad was crying, and all the parents were crying.” Her teammates, too, were in tears as they surrounded her as she came out of the pool.

“When I won, it was every single one of us winning, because every single person had been there for me for the last 10 months,” Soulia said. “When I won, it gave everyone a little spark of hope that we can do it.”

“That was the moment,” said Maggie Pope, ’17, “when I knew we had it in us to come back and win.”

‘YOU HAVE TO TURN YOUR BRAIN OFF’

On the third day, Friday, Richmond still trailed the leader, Duquesne, by 20 points, a gap that with only two days left could prove insurmountable. A couple of bad swims, or — unthinkable — another DQ would certainly cost them the meet.

“Suddenly we are a third of the way through the meet,” Barany said, “and I have to prepare for every scenario. Friday morning, I realized we might have to talk about losing.”

For senior swimmer Pope, win or lose, the championship was marking an ending of one life — she’d been swimming competitively since she was 5 — and the beginning of another she couldn’t yet imagine. Who would she be when being a competitive athlete no longer defined her? Swimming was what she’d built her life around.

“Swimming is who I am,” she said.

Friday at the A-10s was also her last opportunity to achieve a frustratingly elusive goal — a best time in the 100 backstroke, a time she’d been chasing without success for all four years at Richmond, a time she hadn’t beaten since she’d set a personal record of 55.26 seconds her senior year in high school.

“What is limited by the body, and what is limited by the mind?” Barany had asked his team earlier in the season, and Pope hoped she might answer that question differently on Friday.

Every swimmer understands that the work she has to do each season is as much mental as physical. And what makes swimming unlike any other sport is that yard after yard, lap after lap, set after set — up to 50,000 yards a week, close to 500 miles over the 26-week NCAA season — she swims in solitude, alone with the sound of her breathing, the burble of water and air in her ears like a distant roll of thunder, the fatigue in her body pushed to its limits, the burning hunger for air snatched in brief sips. In a lane 6 feet wide and 25 yards long, there’s infinite space for doubt and fear and uncertainty: Will I falter? Will I fail? Will my body find its limit?

“‘You have to turn your brain off’ to get through it,” Pope said. “It’s a very lonely experience,” he said. “When a swimmer is going back and forth in the pool, the only voice they have is their own. There are days when you are going to jump in,
and you are in a really good relationship with the water. But I think at some point, every swimmer hates the water. Because some days, the water is not very friendly.”

For divers, too, fear is a constant adversary, said head diving coach Sean Letsinger. When you launch yourself into a twisting, spinning whirl of motion, the board you just left and the water below wait to punish imperfection.

“Almost every diver has smacked the water horizontally, and most divers will smack the board, too, at some point,” Letsinger said. “It’s the nature of the sport. You have to train to be mentally tough in a high-pressure situation.”

Mastering a new dive is a step-by-step process of increasing difficulty, and over the season, divers practice the six dives they plan to compete on the 1-meter board and the six dives on the 3-meter board multiple times each day — as many as 80 repetitions a week at the peak of the season.

“Spring, rotate, twist, tuck, into the pool, out of the water, up on the board, again.”

There are times where a dive is physically ready for competition, but mentally you still need more preparation,” said diver Laura Rokop, a former gymnast who began diving in high school. “You have to train it into your body,” she said, because at the moment of competition, “you have to turn your brain off.”

Rokop’s sophomore year, like Pope’s, ended disappointingly. “Last year at conference, I did not have a good meet at all,” she said. This year, “I wanted to see if I could redeem myself.”

After a horrible practice on Tuesday, she finally nailed the reverse one-and-a-half, her “nemesis,” the dive she’d been struggling with the whole season “and basically since coming to college,” on the 1-meter board Wednesday. On Friday, on the 3-meter, she hoped to hit another reverse dive that had troubled her: the two-and-a-half tuck.

‘I JUST GO IN AND GO FOR IT’

Virginia Marsh looked to Friday, also, and the 200 freestyle. The freshman started the season in September with the A-10 February dates already written out in her planner, and in her first year at Richmond, she had goals: She wanted an individual first place win in a regular-season meet. Like every swimmer, she wanted to improve her times. Mostly though, “I wanted to help my team win A-10s,” she said.

But then she got sick. Really sick. With the school year barely started, a diagnosis of walking pneumonia pulled her out of the pool for five long weeks. “What gave me the most anxiety was — what was going to happen at A-10s?” she said. “Was I going to be able to come back from this?”

But in January, after that hard start to the year, Marsh touched first in the 50 and 200 free events at a meet at La Salle and found herself named A-10 rookie of the week, an honor teammate Hannah Gouger earned in October.

And now here she was at the A-10s. By the third day of the meet, it had already been something of a roller coaster. She swam the final leg of the first event of the first night — the 200 medley relay — to that exciting second-place finish, barely half a second behind Duquesne. But she was also part of the DQ’d relay, the deflating finale to the night. On Thursday, seeded 11th in the 500 free, she finished sixth, joining two of her teammates in the top eight and helping to push Richmond briefly into first place.
On Friday, though, the team was back in third, with every point counting more than ever. As Marsh, along with teammates junior Annie Lane and sophomore Lauren Wallace stepped up on the blocks for the 200 free, however, she felt confident. The 200 free is her favorite event and her best race. And when the electronic “oink” of the starter went off, “I just go in and go for it,” she said.

The 200 isn’t a sprint, but it’s over in less than two minutes. Slam the wall, shoot a glance at the scoreboard. Looking up at the results, Marsh saw that the event winner had broken the conference record. But second and third place? Those podium finishes, and 33 more points scored for the team, belonged to her and Lane. “When I touched the wall in 200 free, it gave me the most excitement, the most adrenaline, from anything I have ever swum,” Marsh said.

‘THE WAVE THAT WASHED OVER’
In January, at the end of a winter training trip to Florida, Barany had challenged every member of the team: Can you be the best version of yourself? On Friday evening of the A-10 championship meet, Maggie Pope set her feet against the wall for the start of the final 100 backstroke of her Richmond career — and the final individual swim of the day for the team — with her teammate Hannah Gouger in the lane next to her. When the starter sounded and her body exploded off the wall, arching backward into the water, less than a minute stood between Pope and the final answer to that four-year quest for a new best time.

The backstroke is a blind finish; swimmers can’t see the wall, and they have to learn to gauge their final lunge horizontally, and most divers will smack the board, too, at some point. It’s the nature of the sport. You have to train to be mentally tough in a high-pressure situation.’

Almost every diver has smacked the water horizontally, and most divers will smack the board, too, at some point. It’s the nature of the sport. You have to train to be mentally tough in a high-pressure situation.’

wave that washed over the competition,” Barany said.

The divers took over next: Rokop hit her two-and-a-half tuck on her 3-meter dive and the satisfaction she’d been looking for coming into the meet. Senior Irina Chiulli took a podium finish.

“It was nice to be done and know that you have done your part,” Rokop said. “It was nice that you can see your points helping the team.”

Who can say what the limits of human performance are? Who knows what one’s body can do when the will and the want burn fiercely enough? Ending the evening with a second-place finish in the 400 medley relay, the Richmond women scored 224 points across seven events, taking the overall lead in the meet. And if going into Saturday, victory wasn’t a sure thing, by the time Gouger and junior Hanna Verrette took first and third in the 200 backstroke and junior Erin Barry, after frustrating performances in her first two events (”She was battling a lot of doubt,” Barany said), took first in the 200 breaststroke, it was clear that the Spiders had beaten history as they added to their history. Once seemingly impossibly behind, they had won another championship.

“We had a lot of highs and we had a lot of lows,” Rokop said, “and this one was more special to me than the others just because of that. Coming back from having that rough start — it was a very sweet victory.”

Those high moments that everyone will remember from the meet are likely to be Soulia’s 200 IM victory, Barry’s in the 200 breaststroke, and Gouger and Pope’s 1-2 finish in the 100 backstroke.

“But it truly does take the entire team,” Barany said. “I realize that there are lessons that these young people will take that will hopefully be valuable for them for many years to come. It’s not just a championship. It’s lessons about how the team is more important than any one individual. It’s about not giving up.”

As the parent of a competitive swimmer, Caroline Kettlewell knows the whiplashing highs and lows of championship meets, where hundreds of hours and thousands of training yards can come down to less than 30 seconds of swimming and a team’s win or loss can hang on fractions of a second between two swimmers’ finishes in a relay. She is a freelance writer based in Richmond.
AS A WIDE-EYED 8-YEAR-OLD, Tim Finchem, R’69, began to follow his father around the golf course at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Norfolk, Virginia. It was the mid-1950s, and his dad — a Marine gunnery sergeant — was stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. “I was just hitting the ball around,” Finchem said. “I wasn’t really playing.”

Until it happened. “I can still remember hitting the ball in the air for the first time,” he said. “That was a great feeling.” And just like that, the game had him. He would end up serving it for decades of his professional life.

Finchem retired in December after nearly 20 years as commissioner of the PGA Tour. During his tenure, the Tour saw unprecedented television contracts, massive increases in prize money, a broadening roster of stars, and the establishment of signature new initiatives. It rode the emergence of Tiger Woods, survived the Great Recession, and became a charitable powerhouse.

Behind it all was the steady hand of Finchem who, as a boy, developed a love of the game because he had the opportunity to play it.

The Finchem family did not have a lot of money; fortunately, the course on the base didn’t cost much. For about a dollar, he could play all day. He did whatever he could to earn a few bucks — not to go to the movies or buy candy, but to play golf. He battled it out often with his father and friends on the naval base links.

In 1957, Finchem and his father drove to Wilmington, North Carolina, to watch the Azalea Open Golf Tournament. There, Finchem first saw Arnold Palmer play the game. “I was captivated by him,” he said.

Palmer went on to win the Masters two of the next three years, including a watershed victory in 1960 that was the first to be broadcast in color. Finchem recognized — even then — that golf was experiencing its first great public moment.

“When Arnold Palmer, CBS, and Augusta National [home of the Masters] all came together, that was the biggest launching point for golf in the history of the game,” he said. “And I was one of those people watching.”

But it would be something else he was watching that would shape the direction of his early life. Finchem’s grandfather had been an elected official in LaSalle County, Illinois — where Finchem was born — and his mother grew up with, as he puts it, “an Irish focus on politics.” She sat the 13-year-old Finchem in front of the television to watch John F. Kennedy accept his party’s nomination at the 1960 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles.

For Finchem, it was a defining moment. “That convention spurred my next 20 years,” he said. “It skewed me toward idealism and started to get me interested in leadership.”

In high school, Finchem stayed true to his love of golf, playing on the team at Princess Anne High School in Vir-
FINCHEM AT A GLANCE

- Majored in political science
- J.D., University of Virginia
- Deputy advisor to the president, Office of Economic Affairs, during the Carter administration
- Founder, National Marketing and Strategies Group
- PGA Tour commissioner, June 1994 to December 2016
- Current University of Richmond trustee
- Single-figure golf handicap
- Attended Richmond on a debate scholarship

Virginia Beach, Virginia. It had become clear, though, that golf was not his ticket to college.

“I was one of six kids,” he said. “I wanted to go to college, but I would have to get a scholarship to be able to afford it.”

Debate, into which he had fallen because of his love of politics, got him to Richmond.

Bert Bradley, coach of Richmond’s nationally ranked debate team, led summer retreats for promising young debaters, often recruiting the best of the group. Finchem was among the attendees.

“We won the state championship my junior and senior years of high school, and I was offered a scholarship to come to Richmond for debate,” said Finchem. “It changed my life. It developed my skill set from the standpoint of the way I think, the way I argue. It also led to my interest in law and politics.”

During his years at Richmond, Finchem immersed himself in campus politics and leadership. He was a class officer, captain of the debate team, and an active leader in Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, among other things. But he found himself increasingly casting an eye to the simmering political and social scene up I-95 in Washington, D.C.

National events would solidify this trajectory. On a debate team trip to Detroit, Finchem found himself near riots in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. In the summer of 1968, he was on his way to work for Bobby Kennedy’s campaign when Kennedy was assassinated.

The self-proclaimed idealist was now moved to action.

He entered law school at the University of Virginia in 1970, and then party politics shortly thereafter, running congressional and senate races and taking a leadership role in Virginia Democratic politics. He entered private practice in the Virginia Beach area after graduation, but he wouldn’t stay there long. Shortly after the election of Jimmy Carter, Finchem received a call from a law school classmate serving as commissioner, Finchem pushed the Tour forward in ways that proved critical.

One might look at the arrival of Tiger Woods and conclude that a PGA Tour commissioner need only stand quietly aside and let the phenom fan the marketing flames. Overnight, Woods became a household name. From 1997 to 2009, he won 71 tournaments, including 14 majors, and picked up one of his former marketing clients, as chief operating officer. Five years later, in 1994, Deane Beman stepped down as commissioner.

“So,” Finchem said, “they gave me the reins.”

Finchem, from the 1968 UR debate team picture

THE WORK OF THE PGA TOUR COMMISSIONER falls into two main buckets, according to Finchem. One is that of a traditional CEO:

“You have all of the basic functions that a typical company would have,” Finchem said. “You have HR, finance, marketing — all of those things.”

The other bucket is what makes the PGA Tour job unlike any other. It’s caring for golf itself, the athletes who play it, and the fans who watch. It’s both tending the public image of the game and managing the logistics of tournament infrastructure.

Finchem’s path to the Tour — both personally and professionally — was custom-built to prepare him for that duality. His mother instilled intellectual curiosity; his father instilled a military discipline. Finchem once told Golf Digest about a time when, as he was leaving the house, his father noted that his shoes weren’t shined. The young Finchem suggested that no one would ever know. His father replied, “but you will.”

“After that, I shined my shoes every morning,” Finchem said.

The man who remembered fondly the first time he hit a golf ball in the air applied the skilled thinking of a debater and the deft hand of a politician to bring people together at a time when the game changed at light speed around them.

“I’m not one to get whacked-out over anything,” he said. “And I’m also one to look at how we can do things differently.”

In two of the defining challenges of his tenure, these skills became stabilizing forces for the Tour, and perhaps for golf itself. One was the meteoric rise and dominance of Tiger Woods, who burst onto the scene with a 12-shot victory in the 1997 Masters. The other, a recession.

One might look at the arrival of Tiger Woods and conclude that a PGA Tour commissioner need only stand quietly aside and let the phenom fan the marketing flames. Overnight, Woods became a household name. From 1997 to 2009, he won 71 tournaments, including 14 majors, and picked up nine player-of-the-year awards. In 2009, Forbes reported that he was the first athlete to top $1 billion in earnings.

While Woods was certainly an enormous asset to the Tour, Finchem recognized the potential pitfalls.

“During the years Tiger was dominating, it made it more difficult because he soaks up all of the media,” Finchem said. “If you don’t have a single dominant player, it’s easier to create multiple stars.”

In creating more stars, you widen your marketing base. The challenges presented by the Great Recession were more evident. As the economy tightened, fans rethought how to spend their shrinking discretionary income. Sponsors rethought the distribution of their marketing dollars.

Before the recession even began, Finchem had already laid the groundwork for weathering it. Almost immediately after becoming commissioner, Finchem pushed the Tour forward in ways that proved critical. The Tour made aggres-
leadership brought real stability to our sport.”

His transition. “I’ve never seen him react in a way that isn’t well-thought-out and without taking a look from all angles,” he said during the forging to the players first.

Professional golfers are not employees of the Tour; they’re independent contractors whom the Tour needed to continually attract to be successful. Joe Ogilvie, a player advisory council member, once called Finchem “a master at building a consensus.”

“You want the players to feel really good about what’s happening here,” Finchem said. “The players are the ones the world listens to first. Tiger Woods’ name is more impactful than Tim Finchem’s. Looking back, near the top of the list of things we accomplished is a strong working relationship with a very smart, savvy group of athletes.”

As the recession set in, Finchem invited sponsors to focus on spending metrics. He knew the Tour had the strength to stack up well, so he invited the scrutiny. They also looked at contract terms with sponsors, offering longer-term agreements, increases in cash flow, and other incentives.

“We just tried innovative techniques to get our sponsors through this patch with us,” he said. “I knew we penciled out for these companies better than other sports.”

Just before the recession, in 2007, PGA Tour purse money stood at $272 million, up from $56 million in 1994, according to Forbes. Five years later, as the nation recovered, PGA Tour prize money defied the odds, growing to $298 million. Ratings remained high, and the Tour maintained a larger, broader audience. Strong tournament branding opportunities and a huge advertising reach signaled that the Tour’s strength had seen it through.

So, too, had Finchem’s even keel.

“You’re going to have downturns — they’re cyclical,” he said. “The trick is to focus on what you have to do to come out on the other end stronger.”

Jay Monahan, Finchem’s successor as PGA Tour commissioner, credits Finchem with the strong organization he inherited.

“I have always admired how Tim takes a long-view perspective when dealing with situations,” he said during the transition. “I’ve never seen him react in a way that isn’t well-thought-out and without taking a look from all angles. His leadership brought real stability to our sport.”

FINCHEM DISLIKES THE WORD “LEGACY.”

“I did the job I was supposed to do,” Finchem said matter-of-factly on a recent morning in Jepson Hall.

On one level, true. But for millions who play and love the game, Finchem deserves much more credit than that. He was its protector in what might have been down years. He kept golf’s most visible public interface — the PGA Tour — thriving at a time it could have faltered. In doing so, he ensured that millions of others could be mesmerized by the game and its stars, just as he had been by Arnold Palmer that day in Wilmington.

Beyond his successes in the business of golf, Finchem also made it a priority of the Tour to give back. Each year, PGA Charities gives millions of dollars to more than 3,000 charities. In 2015, the Tour raised more than $160 million in charitable donations. Wherever the PGA Tour tees it up, the local community wins.

“We have a historical relationship with giving back,”

‘I’m not one to get whacked-out over anything. And I’m also one to look at how we can do things differently.’

Finchem said. “It started in World War II when Bing Crosby and Bob Hope held tournaments to sell war bonds. We are now so recognized on the charitable side that it changes the interface with the communities in which we play. It has become a fundamental part of our culture.”

Finchem himself also will continue to give back to the game. Among his achievements as PGA Tour commissioner is the establishment of the First Tee, an organization whose mission is to “impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values, and promote healthy choices through the game of golf.”

Finchem was a key driver in its creation, and he plans to remain active there now that he’s retired from the Tour. “Over 11 million kids have now been touched by the First Tee,” he said. “We’re in over 8,000 schools and have 52 chapters around the country.”

It’s appropriate that Finchem would find it important to get kids started in the game of golf, the way his father did for him all those years ago. He knows that once the game has you, it stays with you, and you never know who will emerge from the program. Maybe the next Tiger Woods. Or perhaps the next Tim Finchem.

“My family didn’t have any money, but I had access to inexpensive golf,” he said. “The game changed my life.”

And, in turn, he changed the game.

Phillip Gravely, ’96, is a longtime fan of professional golf and a recreational golfer. He is the University’s assistant vice president for communications and digital engagement.

UNIVERSITY of RICHMOND DOSSIER
THE MOUNTAIN IN HIM
Ambition and confidence brought Conor Phelan, ’13, to Alaskan soil to retrace his family’s lost past. Its waterways and wilderness would test whether that was enough.
SOME MEN HAVE A MOUNTAIN INSIDE OF THEM

— Conor Phelan, ’13, more so than most.

His metaphorical mountain is a tower of strength not easily moved by fear or challenge or a lone wolf standing, staring, 10 feet from where Phelan has stopped, stone still, before reaching for his camera.

His philosophical mountain is the rhythmic working of his mind, much like his footfalls while a Spider distance runner, now focused on shortening the distance between his life and that of ancestors removed by a hundred years and a continental divide.
And then there is Phelan’s actual mountain, 3,200-foot-high peaks that jut out of the cold sea pounding southeast Alaska’s coast, age-old lava ravaged by wind and ice and stamped on maps with a name from his maternal lineage, “Freeburn Mountain.”

Last summer, Phelan set out to become the first family member to see Freeburn Mountain in nearly eight decades. The 700-mile kayak trip took him back a century to days when gold flowed from mines and dreams of adventure ran through men’s veins. The trip would confirm that he, too, had the family blood for adventure, as well as the drive to surmount the most harrowing challenges the wilderness would send his way.

TONGASS NARROWS
On the first day of Phelan’s seven-and-a-half-week paddle, the two friends nearly died.

Phelan and Kyle Smith had flown into Ketchikan, the southernmost commercial airport in southeast Alaska, along with gear including two collapsible kayaks. Now assembled and loaded with supplies, the boats sat waiting for Phelan and Smith to push off.

The water looked a bit choppy. They checked the wind speed. “Are you sure you want to go out?” the locals asked.

They most certainly did. The pair had been planning the trip for months, accumulating maps and gear. Their route would take them north through the Inside Passage of the Alexander Archipelago before heading out to the open waters of the Pacific Ocean that broke at the base of Freeburn Mountain.

But first, they had to paddle north through the Tongass Narrows to an open-water crossing. And the weather was not cooperating.

Fifteen minutes after pushing off from the marina, gale-force winds whipped the chop into white-capped waves. The friends rocketed along, wind pushing them perpendicular to the shoreline, as they tried to maintain course and contact with one another.

They might have made it if they had been fighting just wind and waves. But Tongass Narrows is an active waterway sailed by ferries and shipping boats.

There was also a submerged dock floating right in their path. Phelan cut left, aiming for the center of the channel, while Smith dug right, skirting the shore with the dock bobbing between him and Phelan. With each paddle the men focused on the patch of water immediately ahead, so neither saw Smith’s error until it was too late: a double-hulled tugboat sat at the dock’s end, blocking Smith’s path to open water.

“I just reached over and grabbed the dock, hugged it,” Smith said. Phelan whipped around his kayak, cutting back into the wind, worried that Smith would be sucked under the bobbing dock and drown. The two worked together to flip Smith’s kayak onto the dock and then hauled Phelan’s up beside.

Twenty minutes of intense paddling left them wet and exhausted. Phelan and Smith climbed on shore and decided to spend the night at an inn. There, they talked — Smith rattled and reluctant to commit, Phelan unsure if he could go it alone.

Smith remembers looking at his friend and recalling why, three months previous, he had agreed to join the trip both men knew would tax their physical and mental limits.

“Tongass Narrows” is a fluke and that was not how the trip was going to be.”

The next morning, they awoke to find blue skies and water like mirrored glass.

“That really helped to sway the decision to get back in the boat and back out in the water,” Phelan said. “We realized it was a fluke and that was not how the trip was going to be.”

Smith trusted his friend, and Phelan trusted their months of preparation.

That day, during the open-water crossing, humpback whales surfaced ahead of them, signaling the way forward toward Freeburn Mountain.

CHASING GOLD
Phelan was barely a teen when he first heard of the mountain in the family.

Giana Phelan, keeper of family history, mentioned to her three sons living in Rochester, New York, that their great-great-grandfather had once lived in Alaska. James Freeburn was superintendent of the Chichagoff Mining Co. at a time men chased veins of crystalline quartz deep into the rock in search of gold and silver. Employees living in the town of Chichagof* so appreciated his hard work that they named the three-peaked mountain that dominated their view for the man.

The mountain came up again when Phelan was studying geography and biology at the University of Richmond. Giana Phelan was transcribing an autobiography by Phelan’s great-grandfather, Henry Baumann. Titled Concerning Myself, the manuscript chronicled Baumann’s travels to Chichagof Island as an assayer, testing the purity of the gold and overseeing its transformation into bricks. He married the superintendent’s daughter, Louise Freeburn, and was promoted to superintendent himself. From 1906 to 1938, the company mined gold worth more than $805 million by today’s prices.

THE WATER LOOKED A BIT CHOPPY.
THEY CHECKED THE WIND SPEED.
‘ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO OUT?’ THE LOCALS ASKED.
Baumann was the Instagrammer of his time, carrying his camera throughout the islands to capture images of natural beauty and human ingenuity. Phelan turned the pages of his great-grandfather’s photo album, sepia-toned images jumping off black paper. Under each photo, Baumann had penned a caption in silver ink, detailing the people and locations captured on film.

“What must these places look like today?” Phelan thought. He Googled “Freeburn Mountain, Alaska.”

“Given how they seem to have everywhere on the planet mapped very well, it was surprisingly pixelated and not very detailed,” Phelan said.

Far from being disappointed, Phelan was energized by what he saw — or didn’t see.

“I’m someone who is drawn to those more remote, hard-to-get places, so I relished the fact that it wasn’t right next to a big city or wasn’t in a town,” he said. “I just zoomed out from there, took in the surroundings and where it was. I realized I had the opportunity to make a pretty cool trip.

Phelan got a taste for Alaska the summer after graduation, when he worked as a conservation intern in the state’s interior. He returned home even more determined to chase the mountain and search for the spots where his great-grandfather once stood, camera in hand.

During his three years as a project manager for the Chesapeake Conservancy in Annapolis, Maryland, Phelan planned and saved. When Mom told him she’d never let him go alone, he invited Smith. When Phelan needed open-water kayak experience, he took to the Chesapeake Bay. Phelan, a competitive distance runner through high school and college, found kayak training similar to reaching mile 5 of a 10K on the track. “There’s that same mental well you’ve got to pull into,” he said.

Steve Taylor, his running coach at Richmond, saw Phelan’s determination many times, whether diving into academics or a new workout.

“When he would try something new, he wanted to master it,” Taylor said.

For Phelan, the trip was a journey back in time to connect with characters out of a book. But for his grandmother, these were people she knew: the grandfather she met just once, the father who had moved the family from the Pacific Northwest to the shores of Lake Erie.

Claire Baumann Marrone of Buffalo, New York, was born in 1932 to Henry and Louise Baumann after they had left Alaska. She said she recognizes in Phelan the same drive that had sent her grandparents and parents to Alaska, spurred her brother to become an international courier, and propelled other grandchildren toward Namibia, Siberia, and South Korea.

“It’s endemic to the clan,” said Marrone, 85, who’s taken the train cross-country five times — the first time at age 2, her first solo trip at age 16. “I wish that my father knew that members of the family were moved to do what they did because of what he did in his life.”
MOUNTAIN MAGIC
Every day in Alaska, their routine was nearly the same: Wake up. Break camp. Paddle 15 miles. Set up camp for the night. Sleep.
During the day, Phelan and Smith were wedged into their boats; at night, they were hugged closely by their hammocks under rain flies. They cooked as little as possible, worried they’d entice the locals, a brown bear population believed to be the most concentrated on the planet. The friends dined on pre-packaged Indian food and pouches of peanut butter, supplemented with Snickers bars to pack in the calories. Still, each man, who launched from Ketchikan strong and toned, would finish the trip minus 10 pounds — and plus a full beard.

There were days of pure joy, of watching the otters play or paddling with a pod of orcas.
And there were times that tested their strength. Two weeks before Freeburn Mountain, Smith pulled an abdominal muscle. Coupled with repetitive stress on his wrists from paddling, his pain became so intense that the two needed to decide whether it was safe for Smith to continue. They resolved that Smith would continue on at least to Freeburn Mountain.

The morning of July 7, the men set out to sea at first light. The rising sun set the world aglow, blinding the difference between ocean and sky. It was a long day’s paddle that could be among their most dangerous; open ocean and jagged cliffs would mean disaster should the weather turn. But it held, and as they approached, the three peaks and hanging glacial valleys of Freeburn Mountain dominated their view.

There is no road on Freeburn Mountain, no trail to guide an ascent. Part of the West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness, the mountain and its surroundings offer little connection to the civilized world. If the men were going to get to the top, they’d have to forge their own path.

Phelan described their ascent, the biologist noting the changing flora of the landscape. The men first had to beat their way through dense vegetation of cedars, firs, and spruce covered in moss. As they gained altitude, the trees gave way to an alpine environment, with short grasses and lichen.

The higher they climbed, the more their previously blue skies clouded over, until the men were walking high in the mist.
They’d paddled 450 miles to get here, but Google Maps hadn’t shown Phelan what to expect when he arrived. If the summit required rock-climbing skills, he’d have to turn around.

“Until the day I finally climbed the mountain, I had no idea how possible it was to climb the mountain,” Phelan reflected.
Go to magazine.richmond.edu for additional photos, including photos that Henry Baumann and Conor Phelan took in the same spots 100 years apart.
Then the friends reached the knife edge, a thin ridge of rock that connects the land where the men stood with one of the mountain’s peaks.

Smith sat down. Afraid of heights, this challenge was more than he could muster. He pulled out a pouch of peanut butter and waited for Phelan to return.

One foot in front of the other, Phelan continued the climb. The sky opened up as he reached the summit. At the top, Phelan looked down on the land of his ancestors.

“The entire ocean was clouds, and the clouds were coming in and filtering among the mountains,” he said. “It was something phenomenal, something magical. I remember when I came home I commented to my cousins: ‘We don’t just have a family mountain in Alaska, but it’s a beautiful mountain, and a dramatic mountain, and a very serious mountain.’”

THEN AND NOW

Atop that mountain, Phelan pulled out his camera and took a photo of his feet dangling off the peak into the cloudy abyss.

It was one of about 1,500 he took along the trip. The conservationist in him captured the fragility of nature and the interconnectedness of species — even when he found himself uncomfortably connected. (His encounter with the wolf ended when the wolf wandered off, and Phelan checked another item off his bucket list.)

Phelan is also interested in how humans have altered the wild landscape. Inspired by his great-grandfather’s photo album, Phelan re-created a dozen of Henry Baumann’s photographs, including scenes from the mining town. The day after they summited the mountain, the men found that the Chichagof neighborhoods had rotted back into the forest, porcelain toilets among the surviving objects that hinted at its past inhabitants. A vault door also survived, the backdrop for a photo of Baumann’s young daughter posing with gold bricks. That child grew to become Phelan’s great-aunt Mary Lou, with whom he’d visit periodically after she retired as a university professor.

A hundred years had passed, and Baumann and Phelan were sharing an experience, possibly even the same footprints.

“Relatives like that, of generations that you don’t get to interact with, they’re usually no more than stories told by the family around the dinner table,” Phelan mused.

With the mountain and the town rediscovered, the friends still had a month and 350 miles of kayaking ahead of them before reaching Juneau and their plane tickets home. But Smith’s body could not withstand the daily punishment, and he was airlifted out, leaving Phelan to paddle home alone.

Solitary and focused, Phelan found himself not speaking for days. His heightened senses absorbed the natural world around him.

On his way toward Juneau, the waters turned rough. Deep sea swells caused his little kayak to rise as he saw all horizon for but a moment and then plummeted 15 feet down toward the wave’s trough, before rising again on the next wave.

Over and over he climbed and plummeted and paddled. From the swell in front of him, a humpback whale exploded out without warning. It launched itself in his direction and dove just shy of his craft, slipping under him and out of sight.

Phelan looked back to see the school-bus-sized animal resurfacing. It continued its swim in the direction of Freeburn Mountain, where all wild things are drawn.

There are still two unclimbed peaks of the family mountain. Phelan will be back. ⭐️

A seasoned hiker and camper, Michelle Tedford once paddled through hazardous waves during a small-craft advisory on Lake Superior as she headed toward the Apostle Islands. The following day brought blue skies and bolstered confidence. She writes from her home near Dayton, Ohio.

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UNIVERSITY of RICHMOND FIELD NOTES

2017 SPRING/SUMMER 39
When music professor Jim Erb took his students on their first choral tour of Europe in the summer of 1971, a parent asked how many adults would be going on the trip. Erb’s response: there would be 40 adults — the same as the number of singers in the choir.

To those who sang under his baton, that story speaks to what made Erb special. He had high expectations, and his students rose to meet them every time. Barbara Baker, W’73, recalls, “He had a great passion for the music. He insisted that it be right and respected and always paid incredible attention to detail and phrasing.”

When Erb passed away in November 2014, he left behind a staggering musical legacy. His 39 years of teaching at the University inspired generations of students who remain active as singers, teachers, and church musicians. He also founded the Richmond Symphony Chorus in 1971 and conducted the group until 2007, when he stepped down from the podium and into the tenor section. Several of his arrangements were featured, including “Shenandoah” and one of his favorite pieces, Brahms’ Requiem.

—Andrea Johnson Almoite, ’99

Who’s calling?
Tropical storm Matthew blew through campus in October, downing trees and dousing lights. One tree fell across Boatwright Drive, taking down one of the University’s brick pillars at the intersection.

During the cleanup, facilities employees discovered a tin box in the base of the pillar. The box was rusted, but they were able to pry it open. Inside they found a cache of calling cards belonging to women from the Weshampton senior class of 1923.

We don’t know why or how the cards ended up in the pillar. But we’re left wondering what other secret stashes are out there, waiting to be found.
To some people, March 14 is Pi Day, but for us, it's a reason to celebrate the country's only spider mascot. This year, we dialed up the arachnophoria and Spider spirit by wearing Spider gear. Spiders around the world joined in on the fun, like Melissa Aste, '18, and Danielle Del Giudice, '18, who posed with Maman, a 30-foot sculpture at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. David Sylvia, '08, stepped out into a Boston snowstorm to snap a quick pic. And Rasheeda Perry, '03, showed her Spider-at-work style.

Find a recap of the day — we didn't even mention the edible crickets and live tarantulas — at our new encyclopedia of bragging rights, spiderpride.richmond.edu.

Do-gooders

It might have been a cold Midwest morning, but these Spiders were warmed by coffee and time spent helping those in their community.

Members of the Minneapolis regional alumni group gathered in March for a Spider Day of Service at Second Harvest Heartland, one of the largest food banks in the nation. They spent the morning packing and sorting food for distribution to those in need, followed by brunch with friends both old and new.

“As Second Harvest volunteers, we had the opportunity to be part of a dramatic positive impact on a broad demographic of people by facilitating food distribution for those in need in the Minneapolis region,” said Ron Blum, '02, one of the event organizers. “Together we can demonstrate the spirit and value in community service that we share as products of the University of Richmond,” he said. “Big ideas — such as, ‘Service to our fellows should be a priority for each individual in a civilized society’ — motivate people to collaborate to do great things. We can prove that big ideas can be given effect, even by a small group of dedicated UR grads just looking to do some good.”

Looking for ways to connect with Spiders in your city? Check out alumni.richmond.edu/regional-groups for the latest on service days, lectures, and watch parties, happening all over the country.
Step 1: Make the call and don't look back.

In 2014, Lindsay and Jared had all of the boxes checked: good jobs, two dogs, and a 2,000-square-foot house in Arlington, Texas. “It felt really weird to be in that situation at 25,” Jared says, “like there weren’t many more adventures or unknowns ahead.” So they put their house on the market, got an offer the first day, and they were out.

Step 2: Start gradually.

The Knights moved into a 600-square-foot apartment in Jared’s parents’ house while building their even tinier house. “The gradual process was not what we had planned, but it was perfect,” Lindsay says. “We got rid of a lot of stuff, but we also packed some things we thought we might need. It helped us realize, ‘Oh, we don’t need three different-sized colanders.’”

Step 3: Conjure Marie Kondo.

The Knights each have one 22-inch-wide closet. For Jared, five shirts and a couple of pairs of jeans do the trick. Lindsay researched capsule wardrobes, which feature a set number of versatile, mix-and-match pieces. “It’s so much easier getting dressed in the morning,” she says. “I know that I like everything in my closet and it goes with eight different things.”

Step 4: Get creative.

Boxes and bins are for novices. In the Knights’ house, a stowed footstool doubles as storage space, lazy Susans leverage corner cabinet depths, and shelves stake claims to vertical space. Their TV? A ceiling-mounted projector with a roll-up screen.

Step 5: Make everything multipurpose.

“We installed two folding tables right beside each other,” Lindsay says. “They can be a changing table, or you can just pull one up and have an extra desk or a place to fold laundry.”

Step 6: Channel your inner handyman.

Most out-of-the-box products don’t work at their scale. Jared and Lindsay have learned to build what they need, like a plexiglass baby gate for their lofted bedroom.

Step 7: Find your tribe.

They haven’t met any other tiny housers with twins — yet — but they regularly seek the counsel of owners around the country. “You know you must have a lot of things in common,” Jared says. “It’s just a big lifestyle change.”

Step 8: Be flexible.

Expecting the unexpected with tiny house living has maybe prepared us a little bit for parenthood,” Lindsay says. “We’re not experts. But it will be at least entertaining for people to read about and maybe inspire [them to try] the minimalistic way. You don’t need all of these things; you can still have the cool joys of life.”

Step 9: Keep us posted.

Want to know how the Knights’ expectations met reality? We’ll have an update following the twins’ arrival at richmond.edu.

A SMALL CHANGE

When Lindsay and Jared Knight decided to build a 310-square-foot house, they wanted to have more time and money for adventures, like travel and parenting. They got their wish: twin babies are on the way. Here are their tips for doing more with a whole lot less.

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Get cooking

“Don’t live your life on the left-hand side of the menu.”

When Clifford Dowdey, a former creative writing professor at Richmond, said this to his students, he was talking about smaller, simpler items, like appetizers. The right side of the menu, full of entrees and desserts, was where to go for depth, complexity, and richness. Dowdey was encouraging his students, like Joy Smith, W’66, to think big and live richly.

Smith took these words literally when she published a collection of recipes from her cooking column in the Fort Mill Times, a newspaper in South Carolina. Her book, Tell Me a Story, I’ll Bake You a Cake, opens with desserts and winds up with appetizers. For added flavor, Smith tells the story behind each recipe — including some about her days at Richmond.

Take the flank steak marinade, which comes from Smith’s college roommate of four years, Nancy Saunders, W’66. According to Smith, Saunders was just as “wild and crazy” as she was; the two were proud members of the unofficial sorority PEA (Party Every Afternoon). Smith has stayed in touch with her “partner in crime” to this day. During one visit, Saunders made the “outstanding” steak, and Smith has been making it ever since.

Smith never imagined that she would spend 10 years writing cooking columns; she never set foot in the kitchen growing up. It was her interest in journalism and writing that led her to pick up both pen and spatula.

“Clifford Dowdey instilled a love of writing in me,” Smith said. “He encouraged our class to write about things we knew. The stories I share about my life create a common bond with my readers.”
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SEE YOU AT REUNION WEEKEND
JUNE 2–4, 2017

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University of Richmond Magazine

Class notes are available only in the print edition. To submit your news and photos, contact your class secretary or email us at classnotes@richmond.edu.
Photos submitted by or for:
1. David Mercer, ’73
2. Wilford Gibson, ’81
3. Jon David “Jay” Sukernek, ’97
4. Melissa Sorbello, ’01 and GB’07
5. Tracy Ransome, ’02
In Memoriam

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R. freshman math.

He confesses that he has “done everything ill-befitting a college grad from permanent-apprentice seaman.’’ He confesses that he has “done everything ill-befitting a college grad from permanent-apprentice seaman.’’

In the years that followed, this magazine published war-related class notes received from Richmond College students and alumni under the rule “Passed by Censor.”

There’s a sample of what they sent.

DECEMBER 1942

From ward Island out in Corpus Christi, Texas, Henry Black, ’40, good naturedly complains, “I am fast becoming known as the ‘perfect-type-for-permanent-apprentice seaman.’” He confesses that he has “done everything ill-befitting a college grad from scrubbing windows, being mess cook, scouring pots and pans, to ... scrubbing the inevitable decks.” The Navy school is described as even “rougher than U. of R. freshman math.”

A letter from Second Lieutenant Robert P. Van Buren, ’41, whose duties as a member of the Quartermaster Corps have carried him throughout most of England. “It makes quite an impression on you to see at first hand the ruins of the big cities that we calmly saw in a newsreel at home. You realize what these people have been through.”

April 1943

Captain Reed Taylor, ’39, will be remembered as a strong-armed third baseman on some very good Richmond teams, achieved a masterpiece of understatement when he described the jun- glish, guerilla warfare as “exceedingly rough.”

Ensign W. H. (Wish) Martin, ’39, who achieves the honor of being the first alumni to have a letter to the alumni office mutilated by the censor, is somewhere in the Pacific... “hell west from nowhere” which is more graphic than exact. He tells that “Parke Starke, ’40, and I left San Diego approximately the same time. He’s the squadron’s weatherman. Lyle Graham, ’37, reported in recently, and the three of us form the U. of R. alumni chapter in this particular part of (that censor again) country.”

Willibar Hoffischer, ’31, writes from officer’s candidate school that in just two weeks he’ll know whether he’s to be “a second lieutenant or an awful smart corporal stuck off somewhere.” (“He’s an awful smart second lieutenant now. Congratulations.”)

Lieut. Russ Walton, ’39, (the salty fellow who has been reported by Spider servicemen from Labrador to the Equator) was “fortunate enough to visit the States recently and I was introduced to my son. Don’t forget to send him a catalog. It is great to know that I have him back there waiting for me.” Russ encloses a picture of the young Commander, resplendent in his ol’ man’s seagoing headgear.
JUNE 1943

Pete Dunford, ’15, will never forgive the Axis for taking him clean out of the country during the spring of 1943 when the Spiders won both the Southern Conference and State championships in baseball. No one ever pulled quite as hard as Pete (Lt. Col. J. Earle Dunford) for the Spiders and the award of the gold baseballs wasn’t quite official without Pete on hand.

Always welcome are the letters from Ensign W.B. (Be) Gillette, ’30, who’s having the time of his life in the Southern Pacific. There has been “plenty excitement,” he writes. “We are doing fine in this area, and I wish I could tell you more.” The only unhappy note is the postscript: “There are swell tropical moons on these sleepy lagoons — but the other very necessary element is lacking.”

From John Archer Carter, ’16, comes word that young Nick (Charles Carter), ’34, is “first at the gun ... a sight setter ... with the champion gun crew on all oceans. He’s been chased by a Nazi raider, bombed in Bristol, and God knows what else in the whole year that he’s been sloshing his life about on our behalf.”

NOVEMBER 1943

From a prison camp somewhere in Italy, Jimmy Turkington, ’41, writes that at last he has “come down to earth.” The card, which cleared through the Italian censors, arrived just a few days before Mussolini took it in the lams. Whether Jimmy is again flying a P-38 for the Army Air Forces or has been moved to a German prison camp is uncertain.

Pvt. J. Ben Rouzie, ’42, who has always had his head in the clouds, is still flying planes as an Army Air Corps cadet and is still writing poetry.

From North Africa comes a letter from Private Bill Bareford, ’43, who sends his best wishes to the boys in the armed reserves on the campus. “Let’s finish this job,” he writes, “so that we may meet soon at U. of R.” His friend and college roommate, Struanh Richmond, ’35, is also in Africa. “So far, I haven’t seen any fireworks yet (August 21),” Bill writes, “but we are not under any immediate attack.”

The funniest thing Jack Gordon, ’41, ever saw was Private Lewis Ball, B.A., M.A., Ph.D., peeling potatoes. Dr. Ball, late of the English faculty of the University had traded in his three degrees for the military degree of K.P. when Jack ran into him at Camp Lee where both of them were inducted into the service.

MARCH 1944

Pvt. H.J. (Jack) Gordon, ’30, is soldiering in England and his biggest complaint is the weather. “The sun may never set on the British Empire,” so he says, “but, on the other hand, it never shines on England.”

Pvt. W.T. (Willie) Bareford, ’43, sends a newsy letter to Dr. Mac about the invasion. He says that censorship restrictions have been somewhat lifted. “About six o’clock on the night we were going to land, it was announced that Italy had surrendered. The air was filled with the cheers of the boys aboard. I firmly believe that the news made the invasion harder than it would have been. Before I left the ship, the wounded and dead soldiers and sailors were being brought aboard. I tried not to see anymore than possible. It took about an hour to get to the beach in our landing barge. German ‘88 shells fell about us but we were lucky and didn’t get a hit. When the barge hit sand, we ran ashore in water about waist deep and two hundred yards up the shore, we dug foxholes and prepared to stay the night.”

JULY 1944

The mail brought a letter from Lt. [Jimmy] Turkington, ’41, from a prisoner of war camp somewhere inside Germany. Jim reports that he is in good shape but a bit homesick. “I’ll be back to see you all, so have a big get-together planned.”

Lt. J.R. (Johnny) Kellison, ’41, is in the Engineers and was stationed in England. With good luck, Johnny should be repairing bridges or doing something engineering right now on the highway to Berlin.

Lt. Batholomew G. Tenore, ’36, is the proud possession of the Air Medal and two bronze Oak Leaf clusters for work with a P-51 Mustang Fighter group. He has flown his ship “Prodigal Son” on 25 missions over enemy territory, destroying a ME 100 on a bomber mission over Bourges, France, and sharing in the destruction of two others, one near Berlin and another near Barritz.

NOVEMBER 1944

Ensign John L. Decker, ’37, corvalescing from wounds received in action, writes to tell how it all happened. Writes John: “While attempting to talk to some surrounded Japanese soldiers” from a cave, I was wounded by a hand grenade and promptly removed from the scene of action. There were 20 of them in the cave and they never did surrender. I found myself in a big hospital in Guadalcanal. During my convalescence, I received ye olde Purple Heart which I would happily trade for 24 hours on the campus of U. of R.”

MARCH 1945

A postscript to that survivor note concerning Lt. Ed. Brooks, ’33, Prof. Caytor received a letter from Lt. Bill Fitzhugh, ’41, who told of being present when a very water soaked and weary Spider was pulled from the briny Pacific. It was Bill’s ship that spotted and rescued the lucky survivors. And according to both Bill and Ed, it was a lucky rescue, for the Pacific is a mighty large pond to go searching for that floating toothpick.

NOVEMBER 1945

Lt. Col. Jesse M. Johnson, ’22, is stationed in Japan as staff judge advocate with General Eichelberger. In a recent letter to friends, he stated, “Some days ago I went to Naha, the largest city and capital of Okinawa. Before the war it had a population of 65,000. Now, not a single household is left standing. It is hard to believe such havoc and ruins can come to a people. Surely Sherman was right when he said, “War is hell.”

[Editor’s note: The November 1945 issue notes that Jim Sherman was right when he said, “War is hell.”]

IN MEMORIAM

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Equal education

In 1898, Richmond College admitted its first four women as day students, and the following spring Lulie Gaines Winston became its first female graduate. But admitting women was a winding path that began decades earlier.

When Richmond College opened its doors in 1830 to young Baptist men studying arts and sciences, the suffrage movement was still decades away. But women were inching open other doors, and Baptists concluded that they should educate their daughters, too. In 1854, Richmond Female Institute was born.

A precursor to Westhampton College, Richmond Female Institute provided a junior college education to women hungry for an academic experience high school couldn’t satisfy. Still, they could not earn bachelor’s degrees like their Richmond College counterparts because, in the eyes of the general public, their purpose was to become wives and mothers.

Frederic Boatwright, an advocate for women’s education equality, had a divergent view as a professor at Richmond Female Institute and then president of Richmond College. In 1894, he began pushing for Richmond College to admit women. As president, he convinced the Board of Trustees to grant opportunities to qualified women for the 1897–98 school year, although the first three women wouldn’t matriculate until the fall of 1898.

But Boatwright wasn’t satisfied. With the support of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, he led an effort to establish a women’s college under the Richmond College administration. The association determined that the Richmond Female Institute — now called Richmond College for Women — had “far outgrown its accommodations.” More young women were asserting their right to education, and Boatwright thought they should benefit from Richmond College’s resources, even if it dissatisfied prospective male students.

Some Richmond College students did not want women at their school. After female students created the Coed Club, male students formed the Anti-Coed Club. That didn’t stop women from earning degrees as some of their male peers fumed.

Though Boatwright personally supported coeducation, where men and women take classes together, he publicly supported a coordinate system of separate classes within the institution for men and women. However, he decided not to pursue it “until the college was strong enough, financially, to legislate in the face of public opinion,” the Richmond Times-Dispatch reported. In 1911, his idea to create a nearly autonomous women’s college garnered enough financial support to begin construction on the land the University of Richmond occupies today.

Graduates of the dissolving Richmond College for Women were eligible to apply for Westhampton College when it opened in 1914. For decades afterward, alumnae of Richmond College for Women and the Richmond Female Institute joined Westhampton College alumnae for social events to celebrate their successful struggle for education and the sisterhood that came of it.
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Structural integrity

With each stretch and staple of linen, and every textured layer of color, Julia Rommel, ‘02, sculpts a painting.

Just two or three questions into a Richmond student’s interview for an online journal devoted to digital art and culture, Digital America, painter Julia Rommel, ’02, came clean. “What I do hour after hour in my studio has nothing to do with a computer,” she said.

Rommel’s paintings are relentlessly physical productions, layer upon layer of hues painted iteratively onto canvasses that she’s stretched, folded, stapled, pulled off stretcher bars, and re-stretched again until she can say to herself, “OK, this is not driving me crazy anymore.” Nearly every reviewer comments on her laborious process, the legacy of which is evident in her “broad, veiny hands of a bricklayer,” as she described them in one artist statement. Some days in her studio end with her exhausted.

Rommel, who lives and works in Brooklyn, makes the kinds of paintings that sometimes baffle the casual art gallery visitor. Her forms are abstract, her canvasses textured and sculptural. Critics offer polished praise. “As you stand before them trying to orient yourself,” wrote a reviewer for The New York Times, “you can feel the ground dropping away beneath your feet.”

“How’s abstractions take beauty by stealth,” wrote another for The New Yorker. “Their glories wittily suggest unexpected luck befalling, time after time, an artist who was just doing her job.”

It was not always thus. As a Richmond student, Rommel painted much like her mother, who filled the house with representational portraits of the family. She also earned a business degree with a concentration in marketing, although in the business school her heart was really in accounting and economics. (“Well, I mean, my dad’s an accountant,” she explained.)

She turned to conceptual art in graduate school, but several years into her professional life, she had a crisis of dissatisfaction. “I was halfway through a painting and just had to stop because I realized I wasn’t learning anything from them,” she said. “I went for about a year, maybe more, where I had no idea how to paint and whether I was really a painter.”

Her breakthrough came via some secondhand scraps of Belgian linen. After a fellow painter casually gave her some he’d trimmed from large canvasses, she rubbed their surfaces down with thin oil paint “as a kind of a prep for something else, some other total different plan I had for them,” she said. “And then I stretched them really kind of lazily, not really paying too much attention, and put them up on my wall.”

When she came back later, “I had these probably 10 or 15 [of them] on the wall, and I realized, ‘Oh, two of them are finished paintings,’” she said.

Her casual process had accidentally given her results that her critical eye recognized as artistically interesting, and she pushed. Since then, she said, her work in the studio has been as much about critical editing as creative intent as she contorts canvases and adds layers in increasingly complicated, unpredictable ways.

“If you’re looking for unexpected luck, you have to be a pretty critical editor,” she said. “So much of your day is just this kind of process and stuff happening that’s not that exciting or that’s a failure. Sometimes it’s really boring, and then every once in a while, this really amazing thing happens, and it’s like, ‘Oh, it’s all worth it.’”

To read Digital America’s interview with Rommel, conducted by Izzy Pezzulo, ‘18, go to digitalamerica.org/julia-rommel-q-a.

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**IN MEMORIAM**

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**CLASS NOTES**

The original Spider social network

"Life is too short to spend many, many hours a day doing something you don't love, so I decided to try my hand at something I did love: wine."

"When I made up my mind to become a winemaker, I decided to pursue formal training rather than just move to California and buy some grapes."

"I am the one who gets his hands dirty on a daily basis. I am on my feet and in the cellar literally handling the wine."

"My first, and current, release is called Maiden Effort, a blend of Carignan and Petite Sirah from an old-vine, dry-farmed vineyard in Mendocino County."

"Wine is a living thing. Science gives us a glimpse into what is going on during its life, and hopefully it gives us some tools to gently guide a wine to where we want it to be."

"Whip-Smart is the name of the second album by one of my favorite artists, Liz Phair. As this was my second career, or sophomore effort, it seemed to fit."

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University of Richmond Magazine

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GEEK FOR FREAKS When Matt DiCintio, ‘00, began researching early American tavern performances, he expected to find advertisements for short plays. Instead, he found a strongwoman. And then a lion. Similar characters and animals kept appearing. That’s when DiCintio, a history buff with “a taste for the bizarre and offbeat,” knew he’d found the subject of his doctoral dissertation.

What constitutes an early American freak show? In my dissertation, “Freaks, Beasts, and Gadgets: Performing Order and Disorder in Early America,” I examine displays of anomalous bodies, exotic and wild animals, and electric gizmos between the 1730s and 1830s. Some were exploited for profit, including the animals, of course. Others derived power through their performances.

How would someone be empowered by their performance? In 1796, there was a man named Harry Moss, who put himself on display in a tavern in Philadelphia. He was black. He was free. He had what we would probably diagnose as vitiligo today; parts of his skin had turned white. So here was this black man who was turning white, putting himself on display, while taking money in this tavern that was around the corner from Philadelphia’s largest slave market.

Can you explain your argument that these shows were a way for Americans to understand their new world? In the instance of animals, they can fight back in a very limited way, right? As opposed to [Moss], who puts himself on display, a moose doesn’t necessarily derive power from that. Bison were on display. It was this massive animal from the interior of the country that you could go out and conquer. There was this idea that if they could conquer this big animal, they could conquer the land.

Foreign animals were also brought in, like camels. The first elephant came in 1796. This was happening as the Age of Empire was dawning. It shows that not only can Britain, our old enemy, go out and conquer the world, but so can we.

Did the people performing also challenge ideas of what’s American? During the first decade of the United States, there was great anxiety about who’s a citizen. The idea that a black man could turn white really troubled the notion that the races were so distinct. There was also a strongwoman who performed in the 1730s in a tavern in New York. Advertisements described letting two men pound on her with large sledgehammers while taking money in this tavern that was around the corner from Philadelphia’s largest slave market.

Foreign animals were also brought in, like camels. The first elephant came in 1796. This was happening as the Age of Empire was dawning. It shows that not only can Britain, our old enemy, go out and conquer the world, but so can we.

Is there anything we can learn from your research that’s still relevant today? I think it’s important not to overlook what was very important and very popular in the lives of people who have come before us and try to understand the link between then and now. If you think of a show like My 600-lb Life, which people watch for the freakery of it, it’s presented as a medical show, and we’re going to watch these people get help. There are all sorts of those shows, right? So we still have freak shows, but they’re under the banner of education.

There’s a lot of scholarship that talks about people that we want to see on display, that it essentially makes us feel better. It reinforces our own supposed wholeness. Of course, the flip side of that is, these people really are getting help, and it’s help that they would not get if it’s help that they would not get if the TV show wasn’t there. It can get very complicated when you start getting into the ethics of who displays and who goes on display.
No place like home

Plenty of Richmond undergraduates still come from Virginia, the mid-Atlantic, and the Northeast, but during the fall 2016 semester, Spiders called 45 states (plus D.C.) and 65 countries home, according to data from the office of institutional effectiveness. This diverse blend of backgrounds and perspectives makes Richmond an intellectual meeting place that inspires scholarship, creativity, and excellence. It’s also a fun place to be.

A few notes: The map offers a snapshot taken on a single day. Its data reflect the permanent residences of degree-seeking traditional undergraduates on Oct. 1, 2016. Other students aren’t reflected, such as three dozen non-degree-seeking students from Denmark, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Finally, we’ve fudged with the projection to help make the information clearer.
In fall 2016, 305 students came from outside the U.S., compared with 193 in 2010. Rising enrollment of students from China accounts for a share of this growth at Richmond and at universities nationally.
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