HEAR THE DRUMMER GET WICKED
A 1969 riff by Clyde Stubblefield, James Brown’s drummer, has been sampled in other recordings more than 1,400 times, more than any other snippet of sound. So said Rock ’n’ Roll Hall of Fame inductee Hank Shocklee, right, who knows because he’s done it. Shocklee — a member of the rap group Public Enemy’s production team, the Bomb Squad — spoke in Ukrop Auditorium during a panel discussion on sampling and copyright that included law professor and intellectual property expert Chris Cotropia. The talk was part of a spring semester course called The Voice of Hip Hop in America.
Read more about the artist-in-residence who co-taught the course with School of Professional and Continuing Studies professor Erik Nielson, left, on Page 11.
TO TOP IT OFF  There’s a unique story or three behind every graduate who walks across the Robins Center stage at commencement. Sometimes, a graduation cap gives us a glimpse of what it is.
the best is yet to come

I know I winced a LOT but I did it!

She believed she could so she did.

ANF Happy Mothers Day


FELICIA

RHI

17 MD

I love my mommy and daddy.

Twirl on the Haters

There are far fewer things ahead than any we leave behind.

For you mommom.

All for you mom

I finished what I started.

ESSLAV 2018

School beauty

LOVE UR SELF
How’s your Greek?

Two decades ago, I taught persuasive writing at the small branch campus of a public university in the Midwest. The students this campus served were generally (but not always) underprepared for college-level academics, so the course was very much introductory. Part of our charge was to help students understand the physics of persuasion, the push and pull of evidence and argument that lead a reader to seriously consider whatever point of view a speaker or writer proposes.

Luckily, I had Aristotle’s help. Twenty-five hundred years ago, he outlined three basic rhetorical tools for speakers on which we still rely today. But I didn’t make my students actually read Aristotle. I gave them Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” instead.

To refresh your memory, King, sitting in jail, was replying to eight clergy of several faiths who counseled him to call off the civil rights protests that were disrupting everyday life in Birmingham, Alabama, in the spring of 1963. The clergy called these protests “unwise and untimely.” King’s reply was a thoughtful and elegant “no.” For my teaching purposes, it was also a pitch-perfect example of all three of Aristotle’s persuasive tools.

When King described in detail “the hard, brutal and unbelievable facts” of unsolved bombings, mistreatment by the police and courts, and the refusal of Birmingham’s leaders to negotiate in good faith, he deployed what Aristotle called logos, an appeal based on logic and reason. When he conveyed “the stinging facts of segregation” with a story about his 6-year-old daughter with “tears welling up in her little eyes” learning that she cannot go to an amusement park because of segregation, he relied on Aristotle’s pathos, an appeal based on emotion. When he described himself as “the son, grandson, and great-grandson of preachers” who had “wept over the laxity of the church,” he used the Aristotelian concept of ethos, a rhetorical strategy that says you should listen to me because of who I am. Examples of all three persuasive tools abound throughout the letter’s 20 typewritten pages.

But ethos can also mute a speaker, and sometimes the deficit is in the listener. In today’s national mood, we too often pre-emptively wall off our minds and our hearts because we reflexively dismiss the person in front of us. This dynamic diminishes our capacity to find common ground and be kind to one another.

These thoughts are on my mind as we prepare this issue and every issue because opening oneself to new, better ideas and bridging differences is something we talk about at Richmond and prepare our students to do. It’s risky stuff, but to work on a college campus is to every day meet students who pull it off and offer hope. In their fundamental optimism and willingness to tread uncertain ground, I often see the better version of myself that I strive to become.

Students aren’t the only ones who can learn Aristotle’s lessons. Let’s be honest: This magazine has been engaged in one, long persuasive argument since its founding in 1936. We work hard to deserve your attention and trust (ethos), to share facts and news (logos), and to nurture your memories and move your heart with stories (pathos).

So what’s the case we’ve been making all this time? That through the ebb and flow of our lives, few experiences are as meaningful as becoming a Richmond Spider.
FEATURES

18 The Grand Experiment
Are our brains outsmarting themselves? A Richmond researcher (and her rats) say maybe.

26 Actual Size
What’s bigger — a Polymita picta’s exoskeleton or an elephant’s tooth? We reproduce real objects from across campus at 100 percent of their actual size.

34 To Ease the Burden
How Charleston pediatrician Conrad Williams, ’05, helps children at the end of their lives.
ENCYCLIOPEDIA, VOL. 2
How about Theresa Pollak [for Vol. 2 of "Spider Encyclopedia," Winter 2018?] In 1931, when the alumnae of Westhampton College petitioned the board of trustees for a fine arts teacher, Theresa Pollak, a 1921 Westhampton College graduate, was appointed to conduct courses in drawing and painting. A student at the Art Students League in New York, she had organized the first art classes in 1928 at Richmond Professional Institute. Organizing similar courses at Westhampton, Miss Pollak remained in a part-time position until 1935, when she resigned to become professor of art at RPI and chair of its school of art from 1942 until 1950. She taught there until her retirement. The current art building at VCU is named in her honor.

—L. Henry Anderson, R ’55
Catonsville, Maryland

[Editor’s note: In 1975, Doll received the Exceptional Service Medal, one of NASA’s highest awards.]

OUR SHOT WENT WIDE
At the risk of being “that guy,” I wanted to kindly point out an error on Page 24 of Volume I of the Spider Encyclopedia. While the Spiders were indeed the first 15-seed to ever win a NCAA Tournament game, it was not in 1984, as the article states. It was a victory over Syracuse in 1991. It’s nice to have multiple successes to point to, though. Thanks for producing an interesting magazine.

—Kevin Stubbe, B ’85
Sarasota, Florida

POSTCARD FROM BHUTAN
Here we are at base camp, 13,400 feet, with Mount Jomolhari in background. This was Day Three of our trek. Every year since 2002, Ted and I have taken a trip that began as a journey in Nepal, trekking 21 days to Mount Everest base camp. Our trips are based on three criteria:

• Expanding our comfort zone: Choose interesting places with unique cultures as the world gets more homogenous.
• Requires training: We choose locations that are not easily accessible so we must train and be physically prepared. These trips usually involve some sort of trekking and/or tent camping but have also involved biking.
• Sense of accomplishment: We choose locations and activities and study the cultures so that we have a sense of accomplishment once the trip is completed.

—Laura Lee Hankins Chandler, W ’74, and Ted Chandler, L ’77
Richmond

SYNCHRO LOVE
Very happy to see all the synchronized swimmers (“Enduring Spider spirit,” on spiderpride.richmond.edu) together! As a former Aquanette, I’d have loved to have known who the women from the ’80s were. (Particularly ’81 – ’82 when I swam for the team. National champs with Peg Hogan.)

—Kristina Rhomberg Simon, W ’85
Taradeau, France

A GOOD READ
I’m passing along an outstanding article on Conrad Williams, ’05. He is a pediatric palliative care physician in Charleston, South Carolina. He is making huge positive impacts on the care of chronically ill and terminally ill children on a local, regional, and national level. I have known him personally for many years and have worked with him as a pediatrician myself. I cannot think of a more outstanding human to feature in our alumni magazine.

—Christina Cochran, ’06
Birmingham, Alabama

[Editor’s note: We were just as struck by Williams’ work and the article Cochran sent. You can read a reprint of it starting on Page 34. Do you have a story recommendation? Send it to us at magazine@richmond.edu.]

THE VERY BEST TEAMMATE
My family and I read the letter from Dick Hankinson (“Pitt and the President,” Winter 2018) with pleasure. It reminded us of a story our father, Anthony Dominick “Tony” DiServio, told us of playing baseball against President George H.W. Bush. Dad played football, basketball, and baseball for U of R. He played first base, as did President Bush. While impressive, he considered the more important person he met at Richmond to be our mother, Elise Bertha Henley, W ’46. They were married for 50 years. Thanks for your always interesting magazine.

—Donna DiServio Lange, L ’84
Locust Hill, Virginia

WE’LL TAKE IT
What does it mean that I never attended U of R but find your magazine vastly more engaging than any publication from my quite fine alma mater? It says you’re doing a damn fine job. Keep at it.

—David M. Poole
Richmond
On the road

Thoughts from a year of travel meeting and talking about Spiders

Jack Kerouac once decided, “I just won’t sleep. There are so many other interesting things to do.”

I’ve been on the road myself lately, having spent the past year with interesting Spiders doing interesting things across the country and around the world. From the ancient ruins of Rome to Microsoft’s homage to modernity outside Seattle. From the tranquil vineyards of rural Virginia to the bustling open-air markets in Old Havana. From Wall Street to Wilshire Boulevard, Marylebone in London to Michigan Avenue.

My experiences are too numerous to count and frankly too interesting to describe in this constrained space. The quick version would read something like this: Rome, to present a keynote to a global audience on the enduring value of American higher education; Seattle, to visit Microsoft headquarters for a two-hour meeting, facilitated by Richmond parents, on the wisdom of hiring Spider graduates; and Los Angeles, to entertain recently admitted students and families atop a hotel that hosted the Golden Globes weeks earlier. I’ve performed three concerts in Cuba, discussed access and affordability with an editor from The New York Times, and shared Spider pride with a large, spirited crowd of alumni over looking Boathouse Row in Philadelphia.

Varied and inspired excursions like these are essential to promoting the university, engaging our alumni, and advancing the goals of our strategic plan. Every keynote speech, Q&A with high school counselors, press interview, or candid conversation with an alumnus provides an opportunity to illustrate the extraordinary richness of a Richmond education. As I’ve traveled from city to city, I’ve also discovered that our audiences are eager to learn about the University today and to know how they can contribute to our momentum. Alumni in particular have responded enthusiastically to our stated goal to engage more actively and meaningfully with them.

Let me tell you about two such encounters. I met Jennifer Chazanow, GC’17, at a reception in Seattle. She recently graduated from the School of Professional and Continuing Studies with a master’s in human resource management and was quickly hired by Amazon. Armed with the confidence and skills she honed at Richmond, Jennifer is thriving professionally and is now actively (and directly) involved in hiring more Spiders at Amazon. Mihir Patel, ’02, who works in finance in New York City, has supported Richmond since graduation, contributing to the annual fund and establishing an endowed scholarship that continues to grow. Earlier this academic year, I had the opportunity to thank Mihir for his generosity at a meeting in Manhattan. During our conversation, he expressed his wish to gather a few of his former classmates to talk about the roles they can play in supporting the university’s future. So I said, “Do it, and I’ll come back.” He did, and in December I enjoyed a lively meal with a group of Spiders from the Class of 2002 talking about the university.

We’ll continue to monitor the outcomes of this and every stop on our Richmond road trips. Our successes will manifest as rising enrollments from targeted outreach areas, national media placements, new internships and career opportunities, and, yes, financial investments that sustain our mission. In fact, I’m not ashamed to admit that I’ve returned to campus more than once to find a check supporting an initiative that touched the heart of an alumnus, friend, or parent with whom I had visited. There is a purpose behind our coordinated outreach, and we are extraordinarily grateful when plans and promises align.

I hope you’ll continue to join me on this adventure. The interlacing bonds we create with one another and with the University of Richmond are strengthened when we share a story, pursue a goal, or walk a path together as a community consumed by intellectual curiosity and confidently pursuing its ambitions.
Future Spiders

A record number of applicants sought spots in Richmond’s Class of 2022, which enters this fall. (You read that right: 2022.)

More than 11,800 high school students submitted applications for the approximately 800 spots in this fall’s entering class, an increase of 18 percent over the previous year.

“In addition to the quantity of applications, there are more qualified applicants, as measured by quality of courses taken, GPA, standardized test scores, and extracurricular activities,” said Rebecca Buffington, senior associate director of admission. Expanded outreach in areas of the country with growing numbers of high school graduates increased the pool of prospective applicants, and the addition of a new early action admission plan offered a new application cycle.

Stephanie Dupaul, vice president for enrollment management, credits a strategic, multiple-year approach. “The momentum is continuing,” she said. “We are already on track for an even stronger 2019.”

This year’s numbers mark the continuation of a long-term trend for Richmond, which has seen its reputation for academic excellence continue to climb in recent years. This rising reputation, combined with Richmond’s policy of need-blind admission and meeting the full demonstrated need of admitted students, have put Richmond at the top of multiple “Best Value” lists, including U.S. News & World Report, the Princeton Review, Kiplinger’s, and SmartMoney.

Last year’s incoming class was one of the most academically prepared and the most diverse in history. Thirteen percent are first-generation college students, and 30 percent identify as domestic students of color, the highest percentage in university history.

ACCOLADE

SHE’S TOPS The commonwealth’s education leaders honored a Richmond professor as one of Virginia’s best.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia named chemistry professor Carol Parish a 2018 Outstanding Professor of the Year, its highest award. A Richmond alumna who is now on faculty at William and Mary also received a SCHEV award; read about her on Page 43.
An ‘epic’ footnote

In a segment broadcast on 60 Minutes March 11, history professor Julian Hayter sat across from correspondent Anderson Cooper in the Jepson Alumni Center. They were discussing the Confederate statues on Richmond’s Monument Avenue. Statues like these, Hayter told Cooper, could help people “face down history for what it is — in all its ugliness and all its beauty.”

“Do you believe the statues should be removed?” Cooper asked.

“No,” Hayter said. “I’m a historian, and I think that the statues should stay with a footnote of epic proportions.”

As a historian and a member of Richmond’s Monument Avenue Commission, Hayter is an influential voice in the national debate over the meaning of the monuments when they were erected and efforts afoot nationwide today to remove them. As he wrote in an essay in the previous issue of this magazine, and as he told Cooper, the the sides getting the most attention in the debate — advocates for leaving them alone or tearing them down — miss important middle ground.

“There are 75 million people in the South who are the descendants of Confederate soldiers, and who am I to tell them that they cannot celebrate their ancestor in a particular way?” Hayter told Cooper. “But I also have ancestors who were the victims of the slave system, and I see no reason why we can’t find a usable way to tell two stories or tell multiple stories.”

He favors leaving statues where they are and adding historical signs or markers that explain the context in which they were built. Most were erected at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century to reassert white supremacy as Jim Crow laws developed and expanded.

National and international media frequently turn to University of Richmond experts for understanding and perspectives. From January to March, Richmond faculty and staff were featured in more than 1,750 media placements, including CBS Sunday Morning, The Washington Post, Huff Post, National Geographic, CNN, Voice of America, and more.
ACCOLADES

Latest rankings
In January, the Princeton Review ranked Richmond’s internship programs No. 3 in the nation on its “Best Schools for Internships” list and listed UR at 39th on its “Colleges That Pay You Back” list.

On its “Best College Values” list in December, Kiplinger’s ranked Richmond 18th among liberal arts colleges and 33rd overall. The ranking puts UR ahead of Brown, Penn, University of Chicago, Notre Dame, Georgetown, and University of Virginia, among others.

BOOKSHELF

Faculty authors land national awards
President Lincoln’s birthday may be Feb. 12, but this year it was former university president Edward Ayers who got the present.

On Lincoln’s 209th birthday, Ayers was announced as the 2018 recipient of the Lincoln Prize, which honors the year’s best nonfiction historical work on Lincoln, the American Civil War, or its soldiers. Previous recipients include James McPherson, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and Ken Burns.

The award recognizes Ayers’ most recent book, The Thin Light of Freedom. In it, he traces the second half of the Civil War through the eyes of ordinary citizens in Augusta County, Virginia, and Franklin County, Pennsylvania.

In March, Columbia University announced that religious studies professor Douglas L. Winiewski would receive the 2018 Bancroft Prize in American History and Diplomacy for Darkness Falls on the Land of Light. His book examines the changing ways that ordinary people in 18th-century New England experienced religion as membership in the Puritan church declined.

Each semester, Winiewski opens his archive of photographs of manuscripts, sermon notes, diaries, and other materials to students.

“I love looking at 18th-century manuscripts, and I realize our students do, too,” he said. “I want them to experience the thrill of discovering something new and having something new to say.”

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

People power
“OK, you’ve convinced me,” President Franklin Roosevelt once told visitors. “Now go out there and bring pressure on me.”

Lobbying has always been a game for the deep-pocketed, but 2018 JD/MBA candidate Heidi Drauschak wants every voice to be heard. She is shaking up the lobbying landscape with CrowdLobby, a crowdfunding platform that aggregates small contributions from everyday people to hire top-notch lobbyists.

“People have a say in who they vote for, but big business typically steps in after elections to direct legislation through lobbyists,” she said. “We want to give people the power to direct legislation even after election day.” Read more at www.wearecrowdlobby.com.

THRIVING

Healthier, happier
A philanthropic foundation established by two alumni is enabling the university to strengthen its position at the forefront of colleges exploring modern approaches to student well-being.

In April, the university announced that the Walrath Family Foundation — established by Michael and Michelle O’Donoghue Walrath, ’97 and ’98, respectively — pledged a lead gift to launch a fundraising effort to build a new campus Well-Being Center.

“Mike and I hope the center will enable UR to become a leader in the campus health and well-being movement,” Michelle Walrath said. “Nutrition, which affects our lives in so many ways, needs to be the focal point of our wellness initiative, and we need to think of wellness holistically. If we can do this effectively, we can graduate healthier and happier students. ... We hope that others will join us in this important effort.”

The center will house all campus health care in one location, providing convenient yet discreet access for students and enhancing the university’s ability to provide integrated care and support. It furthers the momentum of the opening of the Weinstein Center for Recreation in 2007 and the creation of a Health and Well-being Unit in fall 2017.

“Michael and Michelle Walrath believe strongly in the power of well-being to transform society, and their gift will have a lasting impact on our students,” President Ronald A. Crutcher said.
SPIN MASTER  Grammy-nominated songwriter, DJ, and rapper Donnie Lewis, aka Mad Skillz, is the School of Professional and Continuing Studies’ first artist-in-residence. He co-teaches a course on hip-hop with associate professor Erik Nielsen that includes Arts and Sciences undergraduates and SPCS undergraduate and graduate students.

MY START
The first time I performed in front of others was probably break-dancing. I had to be like 11, 12 maybe. I was in a group with one of my childhood friends and his sister. His sister was so cute. We would always win competitions just on the cute factor. She was like our secret weapon. I’m still friends with them to this day.

MY EARLY WRITING
I used to like to talk in front of the class. My English teacher took notice and always called on me first to read reports and things like that. I figured out early that I was good at conveying stories, which turned into writing. That ended up turning into raps.

MY UR CONNECTION
A friend of mine was a student here. He did a radio show on WDCE every Saturday called UR House Party. He told us, “From 6:30 to 7, I’ll just let y’all rap. You’re artistically free, but don’t curse.” It became training ground for getting better.

MY STAGE NAME
We used to take calls at WDCE. A guy called and asked, “Who was that rapping over that instrumental? I don’t know what his name is, but he has mad skills.” From that point on, I was Mad Skillz.

MY RAP STYLE
In rap battles, I was very “I got more raps than you.” We’d be going around, but I would always wait so I’d go last. That was my goal. I didn’t want anybody to feel like they could come after me. When I rap, it’s over.

MY SETBACK
I got a record deal in the early ’90s. Then my label said, “Think about it. That instrumental? I’m still waiting for you.” That was the turn. All of the marketing money, all of the attention just shifted. I went back to what I was doing before, working at a parking deck. It was weird, but I kept writing.

MY DISCIPLINE
I was always an underdog. No major rappers had ever been from Virginia. From 7 o’clock to 3 every day, I worked. By 6 o’clock that evening, I was in somebody’s studio trying to finish a song or record. That fire was still in me.

MY CAREER
I signed with Timbaland, and then I started hanging out with Missy Elliott. At this time, Missy was on fire, super hot. I started paying attention to songwriting. That’s been my focus ever since.

MY MOTIVATION
A life lived with music is a very well-lived life. I made a decision at 14 or 16 that I’m going to do this music thing, and it paid off. Even when it didn’t pay off, I didn’t stop doing it. That’s how I know this is what I’m supposed to do.

MY MOVE TO ACADEMIA
A student of Erik’s interviewed me. When she was done, Erik asked me, “Have you ever thought about teaching?” I was like, “Nah. I’m cool.” He said, “Think about it. Here’s my number.” I talked to friends that had done it, like Questlove from the Roots and 9th Wonder. 9th said, “You should take this seriously. Call him and ask exactly what they want you to do.” Every time Erik and I talked about it, I got excited by how excited he was.

MY TEACHING STYLE
After a couple classes, I figured out what the students needed from me: a real perspective from somebody who’s been there. I’ve been in the room with P. Diddy or Nicki Minaj trying to construct a song.

My aunt is a teacher, so I see how it is when somebody digs deeper than they normally would.

MY REWARD
The students are listening with a different ear, which opens up my ear. We were listening to the Geto Boys’ “My Mind’s Playing Tricks On Me.” The whole song’s about being paranoid whenever you go outside the house because you’ve done so much wrong to so many people.

One of the students said, “This is a PTSD song. It sounds like something a soldier would make after coming back from war.” And I thought, “Wow, it does.”

MY STUDENTS
I’m proud of them. They want to learn. One of the students said, “I have children and they love it, and I just want to understand more about it.”

Hip-hop is the needle of the youth. These discussions open up doors. I wish there were more universities that took it seriously.
A DRESS OF ONE’S OWN

When Sarah Wang, ‘18, walks at commencement, she’ll be wearing a one-of-a-kind dress she designed for herself through a one-credit independent study she created with Heather Hogg, director of costume and makeup in the theater and dance department.

How did you get interested in fashion?

This past summer, when I went home to Nashville, Tennessee, I worked at this designer liquidator, United Apparel Liquidators. At one point, we had an item that was a $7,000 Stella McCartney skirt, and that was pretty awesome. It was like a boutique, and I got to play a stylist’s role.

What inspired you to design your dress with a focus on self-identity and fashion?

I kind of made my dress for ring dance last year. It was a mermaid dress. I actually bought that, but I added capes to it because I wanted to add my own flair.

I thought, “Well, I had a little taste of that. What if I made my own dress?” Heather (Hogg, who supervises the costume shop where I worked all year) told me I could get an independent study out of it, so then it just all kind of worked together in my schedule.

What were the first steps of this project?

Heather suggested that I start with digital media research, so literally think about the feeling. A really important piece to it was the identity part, so I went from Google images to Pinterest looking up things like “Hong Kong style.” Hong Kong, I thought, was an incredible focal point for seeing that fusion between Eastern and Western. I was definitely focusing on Chinese because my family is Chinese.

How have you combined Eastern and Western elements into your design?

What I’m drawn to right now is the fitted bodice. I’m not sure about the color yet, but maybe a darker red because that’s good luck and happiness in Chinese culture. And I think gold would be nice because gold in a lot of cultures symbolizes wealth and success.

Also, I think I would like a high collar, something like a Mandarin collar because that would be kind of cool to pop out. From the waist down, I think it’s going to be more Western, whether it’s pleats or an asymmetrical bottom or something else. I think there are some characteristics, having grown up as an American, that I’m not afraid to show, like the sheerness of the dress. I think for me, I would like to show a little skin, and I think that’s from something in American culture that is part of our nature in being bold and not being afraid.

Tell me about the most difficult part for you.

Sticking with an idea. It’s like when you go clothes shopping: You’ll have something in mind, and then you’ll start going through the racks and get entranced by something else and then you’re like “Oh yeah, it still needs to fit certain criteria.” A lot of it is learning because I’ve never done concept to product. It’s interesting learning how to make a flat, two-dimensional piece fit the curves of my body.

What do you want people to think when they see you in your dress?

I want it to say different, elegant, intricate, and maybe even designer. And definitely Chinese, proudly Chinese.

You’re a biology major with a minor in business administration. How has this independent study contributed to your academic goals?

When I first came in, I wanted to be pre-med. But I think the crazy reason why I wanted to go into it was that I looked at the courses I needed to take and thought, “This looks really hard. Let me see if I can do this.” Maybe it’s always been a journey of finding things I can challenge myself in and see if there is a passion in them.

I think I can see some parallels between the challenging aspects of these really different fields. I think if I didn’t work in the costume shop, though, I would not be here. This project has been my creative outlet to express something I don’t really get to in my science or business classes.
Feed the hungry

Dozens of students, staff, and community members packed 10,000 meals for children in vulnerable countries during the sixth annual Rise Against Hunger meal-packing marathon in March.

Spiders spent two hours measuring rice, dry vegetables, and other food to assemble into meals formulated to ease malnutrition. Rise Against Hunger hosts similar events across the nation to generate meals for school children worldwide threatened by hunger.

Lauren Passero, ’18, a student with UR’s Center for Civic Engagement, coordinated with dining services, the chaplaincy, coed service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega, and the university to bring the event to campus.

“I was thrilled to see so much engagement from students and community members that afternoon,” Passero said. “All their effort and enthusiasm helped the event run really smoothly. We actually had more people reach out about volunteering to package meals than we could take, so I’m also looking forward to seeing how the meal packaging event grows over the next few years.”

AROUND CAMPUS

Duty, country

To the extent that any night at war is routine, Navy pilot Lt. Ian Hutter got a routine assignment in the early hours of May 2, 2011. He was leaving Afghanistan in his F/A-18 combat jet when he was told to help escort an MV-22 Osprey to an aircraft carrier in the sea.

Hutter had already logged thousands of hours on similar missions. There was no reason to think this assignment was any different, but he also had no way of knowing that SEAL Team 6 had just raided a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and killed Osama bin Laden. That night, Hutter and other F/A-18 pilots unwittingly escorted Osama bin Laden’s remains as SEAL Team 6 made its way to the North Arabian Sea.

“For good reason, those guys were not advertising what had just happened,” he said. He is quick to emphasize that his role in the operation was very small. “I absolutely do not take credit for the guys that did so much great work,” he said.

He pieced it together only later, as the news started to spread. The best part, he said, was sharing the news the next day with soldiers on the ground. “They’d been living pretty rough lives, and to know that a goal of the campaign was accomplished was motivating,” he said. “It almost sounds terrible that a dead person instills a sense of patriotism. I think it’s more that we’ve been doing this for a long time, and it’s easy to lose sight of what the end goal is.”

His career led him to become an instructor at Topgun’s satellite school in Virginia Beach. When he met his wife, his attention began to shift to family. Together, they started to picture a life outside the military, one that soon included Richmond Law, where Hutter just completed his first year.

With only two semesters behind him, he’s not sure where he’ll land (maybe a law firm, maybe criminal prosecution). Behind all his options is a sense of duty and service to others.

RESEARCH

Tops for Fulbrights

Richmond is again one of the nation’s top producers of Fulbrights, according to the U.S. State Department. Three UR professors were awarded Fulbright grants for 2017-18, the top number in the bachelor’s institutions category. They included historian David Brandenberger for research on Russia’s political landscape during the 1940s and ’50s, mathematician Jim Davis for his research improving communications such as text messages, and biologist Rafael de Sá for amphibian biodiversity research in Colombia.

“Prestigious honors like Fulbrights allow [faculty] to share their expertise with others around the world, but also to bring their global perspectives here to our campus,” said Jeffrey Legro, provost.

In the past five years, 16 UR faculty members have received Fulbrights.
USA Today published an op-ed by Ronald A. Crutcher, president, about how colleges can explain the benefits of inclusivity better. An excerpt:

The facts are that racial, economic, and gender diversity and commitment to valuing all voices have proven to be essential in making organizations from Wall Street to Main Street more profitable, productive, financially sound, and responsive to customers. This approach has been shown conclusively to produce the kinds of people our nation needs to compete globally, and we need to be more assertive in trumpeting this truth. …

As attorney, author and entrepreneur Verna Myers says, “Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.” …

Like many institutions, the University of Richmond seeks economic diversity and enriches the perspective of its campus community by actively recruiting low- and moderate-income students. … With respect to racial, ethnic, and global diversity, 38 percent of our incoming class are students of color and 10 percent are international students.

But we have to be more clear about all the reasons we are making such efforts. Colleges and universities should tout diversity as a driver of the bottom line more frequently and fervently. We need to brag more about how our graduates go into the workplace and make it more productive and profitable, even as we continue to champion diversity because it is ethical and just.

We know we may get a little bruised along the way as we tackle difficult issues, but our graduates will be more attractive job candidates and stronger employees and leaders because they are practiced at being open to and interacting with a variety of opinions, experiences, and perspectives.

For a link to the entire op-ed, go to president.richmond.edu/crutcher and click “In the News.”
INSIGHT Every semester, management associate professor Richard Coughlan invites CEOs and other business leaders to Ukrop Auditorium for public, unscripted interviews called C-Suite Conversations. Coughlan approaches his subjects like a journalist, always curious and ready to ask why and how. Here are five lessons he and his audiences have learned from these conversations.

1. WORDS AND PHRASES HAVE POWER
   Too often, the way we speak or write shifts ownership or blame. Kevin Eastman, R’77 and G’89, of the NBA focused on changing a culture of “no” to a culture of “know.”

   When Eastman arrived in Los Angeles, the Clippers were a disaster. As he made the move from coaching to the front office, he conducted a listening tour and discovered an environment where the word “no” dominated and people were afraid to ask questions. The culture was unhealthy. By shifting the organization to a culture of “know,” he learned where the problems were and how to address them. Transparency and openness were key.

   The same held true for Michael Dan, former chairman, CEO, and president of Brinks. He required that incidents involving trucks be described as “crashes,” not “accidents” to better understand the role that systems played in each crash. By shifting the terminology, he shifted the conversation and made it more possible to identify and solve the problems leading to crashes.

2. BOOST LOYALTY
   Loyalty isn’t about blindly following a company or CEO. It is about shared values and voluntary adherence to them.

   When Matt Williams was with the Martin Agency, an advertising firm, he screened for talent but hired for heart. He did so because he knew that when the company experienced setbacks, those hired for heart would help the company through the setbacks productively. They rolled up their sleeves and pushed through.

   Beto Guajardo of Starbucks believes culture trumps strategy. He said it’s important for leaders to define corporate values through their eyes and share with others what the values mean to them.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY PAYS DIVIDENDS
   Insurance companies typically have a chief risk officer. Markel doesn’t. Executive vice president and COO Anne Waleiski, G8’96, said the company wants every employee to feel responsible for risk, no matter where in the organization the person sits.

   Hiter Harris, a university trustee and co-founder of Harris Williams and Co., learned early that grades he earned in college were not passing marks in the mergers-and-acquisitions industry. A mentor told him, “A+ is the only acceptable grade.”

4. PAIR IT WITH SUPPORT
   Leaders must be committed to being in touch with the business and the people inside it. They need to know their people and what drives them.

   Bill Nash, CEO at CarMax, often makes the rounds at the end of the workday, encouraging employees who are still in the office to finish work, enjoy their personal lives, and maintain an appropriate work-life balance.

   Other approaches can work, too. Joe Gibbs of Joe Gibbs Racing sometimes looks over his team members’ shoulders, but it’s not intimidating. It signals to his team that he wants to know they have everything they need to succeed.

5. STAY CURIOUS
   An underlying theme of all of these conversations is having the humility to know you need to ask questions. Leaders don’t need to have all the answers. Their success comes because they recognize the things they don’t know and ask appropriate questions.

   They also surround themselves with talented individuals. As an assistant coach in the NBA, Eastman visited other clubs in the off-season and explored the new things they were doing.

   Joe Gibbs Racing went beyond thinking of sponsorship as a sticker on the car. Instead, leaders asked what motivated sponsors and then determined how to make the connections that would lead to success for both the sponsors and the racing team.
More giant killing
Men’s lacrosse knocked off No. 14 UNC at Robins Stadium March 14 by a razor-thin margin of one. The final score was 11-10. Junior Ryan Lee got the go-ahead goal with 8:10 to play, and the team held on with stellar defense and clutch goalkeeping.

It was the Spiders’ second consecutive victory over five-time national champion UNC. The win was also the young program’s second at home against a ranked opponent and the first at home over a team in a Power 5 Conference.

Championship numbers
Firsts and thirds are the best way to tell the story of the remarkable performance by women’s golf at the Patriot League Championship in April.

The firsts: The team finished first, winning the championship. Junior Sophie DiPetrillo was first on the overall leaderboard to become the program’s first individual conference champion. Teammate Lizzie Reedy finished first among the tournament’s rookies.

The thirds: Reedy, a freshman, finished in third place individually overall. The 2018 title is the team’s third in a row. With it, the team secured its third consecutive invitation to the NCAA regionals.

Hail to the thief
Freshman men’s basketball guard Jacob Gilyard stole his way to the top of Spider record books and the NCAA this season.

Gilyard recorded 89 steals in 32 games, ranking sixth in Division I for total steals and steals per game. He also became Richmond’s all-time single-season steals leader, just ahead of Tony Dobbins, ’03, who had 85 steals in 33 games during the 2003–04 season. The Spider record for career steals — held by Greg Beckwith, R’86 — is 227.

For the lastest Spider athletics news and scores, go to richmondspiders.com.

A new era

Spider basketball is set for the most significant transformation of its facilities since the construction of the Robins Center in 1972 and its three-phase renovation, which began in 2013.

In February, the university announced a lead gift of $7.5 million to jumpstart fundraising for a $15 million training and performance facility for men’s and women’s basketball. It will include academic support areas, sports medicine and nutritional facilities, a full-sized practice gym, strength and conditioning areas, an athletic training room, coaches’ offices, team locker rooms, and a Spider Heritage Hall celebrating Richmond’s athletic excellence.

The facility “will greatly enhance the experience of our student-athletes and will assure potential recruits of our school’s commitment to excellence on and off the court,” said men’s basketball head coach Chris Mooney.

The facility, which will be named the Queally Athletic Center, will be southeast of the Robins Center next to Millhiser Gymnasium. Construction is expected to begin in late spring 2019 with the conclusion of a fundraising effort to match the lead gift. The center is slated for completion by fall 2020.

A rendering of the Queally Athletic Center. The building on the right is Millhiser Gymnasium.

“A lot of people were telling me about Richmond QB Kyle Lauletta. ... I now see why.”

GIL BRANDT, NFL.com analyst, tweeting after Lauletta was named Reese’s Senior Bowl MVP. In April, he became the highest-drafted quarterback in Spider history when the New York Giants selected him during the fourth round of the NFL draft.

SPORTS
Injury sidelined Maeve Holland, ’18, but her athlete’s mindset kept her contributing to her team and advancing her professional future.

When Maeve Holland ran onto the field as a starter on Senior Day, she carried with her four years of dashed hopes to be a difference-maker on the field. She played in only 10 games her freshman year because of concussion issues from high school, and she hadn’t been in a game since. Her next three seasons were claimed by a ligament tear, a quadriceps tear, and then a quad re-tear.

As she took the field, she could be forgiven for appearing not to know exactly where to go. Her specialty is defense, but her teammates were urging her to the center circle so she could take the first touch of the game.

The start was ceremonial. Holland made a quick pass back to a teammate who promptly kicked it out of bounds. With the stop in play, Holland subbed out, her quad still too delicate for any serious running.

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But even through injury, the drive she brought with her as a three-sport star at Londonderry High School in New Hampshire remained strong. Although she couldn’t satisfy it on the field, she dialed it up everywhere else: in practice, in class, in internships, and wherever else she saw opportunity.

Holland majored in PPEL — philosophy, politics, economics, and law — and always saw herself headed to law school. “Then I started taking econ classes,” she said. “I realized I’m good at this, and this is really interesting.”

The new interest led her in new directions. Just as she’d shadowed lawyers to figure out if she wanted a career in law, she landed a summer internship at Ironman’s headquarters in Florida, a chance to dip her toe in consulting and the marketing of triathlons and other endurance events across the country.

Ironman events produce adrenaline rushes, sore muscles, and immense pride. But they also produce gigabytes upon gigabytes of data and images. As an intern, part of Holland’s job was as mundane as mundane can be: tagging thousands of photos with information that would make them searchable and useful later for new marketing and sales opportunities.

The mental attitude ingrained in her as a student-athlete took over as she challenged herself every day to tag more photos than the day before. “How many can I get done today? How many this week?” she asked herself. The professionals in the office noticed, said Ruthie Gelber, senior manager for partnership services at Ironman.

“We loved her,” she said. “She really won all of us over.” Holland found herself invited to more meetings and working with analytics on account executive summaries. She was seeing firsthand that what athletes call “grinding” — going all out on even the smallest details — is a transferable skill.

“You do that, you get the project no one else gets or the opportunity no one else gets,” said Holland, who landed a post-graduation position as a consultant at Beacon Group in Washington, D.C. “Being hungry is the most important thing I learned this summer. I was very interested in making my presence there significant.”

They were the same qualities her teammates and coaches had seen in her for four years as she rehabbed and came to practice after practice with no expectation of playing. When she couldn’t do drills, she shagged balls. As she became a veteran, she sat with younger reserves, keeping their heads in the game and giving them an example of hard work and positivity.

When her teammates nudged her to the center circle on Senior Day, it was because she’d earned it. In pushing herself, she’d pushed them, too.
CONSIDER OUR TECHNOLOGICALLY ENABLED AMERICAN LIFE, circa 2018. With a mere voice command to our smart-home devices, we can turn down the lights, turn up the music, queue a movie, order takeout. With our now-omnipresent digital companions, we can summon a date on Tinder, a ride via Uber, and someone to assemble our bookshelves from TaskRabbit. Our work, our workouts, our social lives, our shopping, our entertainment, our anything else that can be coded and commodified — yeah, there’s an app for that. And in the not-too-distant future, so we’re assured, our cars will be driverless, our reality will be virtual, and our refrigerators will order our groceries for us.

The promise that everything you want or need can be but a tap, click, swipe, or “Hey Google,” away, that our devices will in fact soon be able to anticipate our needs before we even know what they are, is the stuff of Silicon Valley dreams. But are our brains paying a price for this outsourced life?

Are our brains outsmarting themselves? A Richmond researcher (and her rats) say maybe.

BY CAROLINE KETTLEWELL
ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATIE McBRIDE
This is the question, both practical and philosophical, that Kelly Lambert explores in her research. Professor of behavioral neuroscience in the psychology department, Lambert has focused a 30-year career on studying the relationships among the brain, behavior, and the environment. In particular, she’s interested in experience-based neuroplasticity, or “how our experiences, our lifestyle, our external and internal environments influence our brain’s ability to keep changing,” she says.

The accumulated evidence of Lambert’s work, she believes, offers compelling evidence to suggest that our brains benefit when we engage our bodies in effort — such as cooking or throwing clay, exercising or gardening — where we interact physically with our environment to achieve a desired result.

“My brain benefits from persistent hard work,” she says. So when Lambert looks around at a world growing increasingly effort-free and device-mediated, she worries that our brains’ ingenuity might be triumphing at the cost of our brains’ well-being.

“Our brains are so clever that we have created a world where we don’t have to interact with the environment as much to get the output that we want,” says Lambert. However, she theorizes, “Maybe we are creating a world where we don’t have to use our brain, and that may ultimately have a negative impact.”

The scientific community has not always embraced the concept of neuroplasticity. Until the 1960s, Lambert explains, the dogma in neuroscience was that we are born with the brains we are going to have — that following infancy, the brain is essentially fixed and unchanging throughout life.

Then Marian Diamond, a researcher at the University of California Berkeley, presented pioneering work with rats that seemed to demonstrate the opposite. When the rats, normally housed alone in featureless metal cages, were instead placed in an “enriched environment” — a kind of rodent Disneyland that provided opportunities for activity and exploration and social interaction — “their brains seemed to be more complex” after only 30 days, says Lambert; Diamond and her Berkeley colleagues had physical evidence that the brain could change.

Her research was not met with immediate enthusiasm. At a conference where Diamond presented her findings, another scientist in the audience grew so incensed that he stood up and shouted, “Young lady, that brain cannot change!”

“Even the neuroscientists studying brains couldn’t accept that they change,” says Lambert.

But in the wake of Diamond’s and then other researchers’ work, the evidence mounted that in fact they could. As our tools and resources for studying the brain have become progressively more sophisticated, our understanding of neuroplasticity has continued to expand. Most recently, notes Lambert, the field of epigenetics has begun to uncover fascinating evidence that environment may even affect gene expression across generations, proving how important — and complex — a role environment and experience play in our lives.

Lambert was a first-generation college student in a small school in Alabama in the 1980s when she first heard of neuroplasticity in a psychology class. Before that time, “I knew nothing about the brain, nothing,” says Lambert. What she learned in that psychology class, however, captivated her curiosity.
"As a 19-year-old hearing that, it just seemed like magic — you could change your brain," she says. It was a revelation that would shape the course of her future.

Today Lambert is a respected expert in her field, a past president of the International Behavioral Neuroscience Society (which will recognize her with a career achievement award at this summer’s annual meeting), and frequent presenter at conferences, with dozens of professional publications to her name as well as numerous interviews and articles in the popular press. She has authored two textbooks on behavioral neuroscience (one co-written with the late Craig Kinsley of the department of psychology, with whom Lambert enjoyed a long collaborative research partnership) and three books for general audiences (the most recent forthcoming from Yale University Press). Throughout her career, however, her fascination with how experience changes the brain has remained the guiding force of her research.

A significant focus of Lambert’s work has been stress and adaptive resilience, or the ability to positively respond to the stressors and uncertainties that life throws at us. From the simple “You want fries with that?” to the life-changing “Will you marry me?”, the inconsequential selection of a shirt in the morning to the momentous commitment to have a child, we are barraged every day with the endless demands of choices to be made and actions to be taken.

“Our lives,” says Lambert, “are just one decision after another.”

And the number, frequency, and urgency of decisions seems to be only growing, with emails flooding our inboxes, 20 flavors of seltzer on the grocery-store shelf, and the right preschool choice seeming to foredoom our child’s entire future. Thus, effective and informed decision-making — what Lambert calls “contingency calculation,” or the ability to take in information and accurately evaluate possible outcomes in order to make the best choices — is, more than ever before, an indispensable life skill.

It’s also a skill, however, that can be seriously derailed by stress, another of life’s all-too-common companions. Think, for example, about any big decision, like a job offer or a major purchase, that you’ve had to make under pressure of a deadline. That ticking clock adds stress, making the process that much more difficult. Other challenges — like poverty, social isolation, or even, Lambert’s research surprisingly suggests, the ease of a “privileged” life — can be even more debilitating to our decision-making capabilities, our “contingency calculators.”

What Lambert wants to know, then, is this: If experience does indeed continue to shape our brains, then are there particular kinds of experiences that effectively strengthen our brains’ ability to handle whatever comes our way? To seek answers to these questions, Lambert turns most often to the research subjects for whom she has developed a deep affection and respect across her years as a scientist: rats.

While Lambert also studies raccoons in the wild and macaques at a natural-environment conservancy in Florida,
rats have been the constant companions of her research career, and she takes obvious delight in the ways they continue to surprise and teach her. “My rodent colleagues,” she calls them in The Lab Rat Chronicles, her second book for a general audience.

Rats, she notes, are a “social, skilled, intelligent, and complex species” and “the sophisticated product of millions of years of evolution.” And as resilient, adaptive mammals that — like the humans who are their frequent fellow travelers — have successfully managed to survive, thrive, and spread around the globe, they offer an appropriate scaled-down model, she says, for basic research. Rats aren’t people, in other words, but studying rats can offer intriguing clues that point towards areas for potential further study in human subjects.

Imagine your standard-issue freshman dorm room. It’s functional, safe, and adequately equipped, and if it’s designed for utility above all, still, once its residents have filled it with puffy comforters and nubby carpets, well-stocked mini-refrigerators, and one-click ordering from Amazon, then by the measure of human history, it’s a hella sick crib, as the kids say.

If you are a laboratory rat, the exhaustively regulated "standard environment" mandated for your care and housing is something like a rodent equivalent of that freshman dorm room, if you threw in regular pizza delivery and maid service. Extensive rules detail specifics about food and water and bedding, controlled temperatures, freshly circulated air, and other features that assure the animals remain comfortable, safe, healthy, nourished, and clean. And though the standard-environment rodent residence, too, is designed more with an eye to utility than aesthetics, if you were a wild rat — whose life is likely to exemplify the Hobbesian paradigm of nasty, brutish and short — such cushy digs and reliable comforts would probably seem infinitely preferable to the scramble for survival in the real world.

But the real world is where rats and humans evolved to live. It’s complicated, it’s messy, it’s demanding, it’s ever-changing — it’s anything but a controlled experiment — and across the long reach of human history, we’ve had to work hard at the job of surviving. And just as lying inside on the couch all day binge-watching Netflix and thumbing through our Instagram feeds certainly isn’t good for bodies that evolved to move and act in the world, it also, for the same reason, might be bad for our brains — not simply "dumbing down" our intellects, as many hand-wringing op-eds have fretted, but actually depriving our brains of the experiences, the physical activity, and the engagement they need to be healthy.

It’s a fundamental error to regard “brain” and “body” as somehow dichotomous at all, Lambert says, noting that a large portion of the brain is dedicated to movement — with approximately 70 percent of the brain’s neurons located in a single brain structure, the cerebellum, that coordinates the body’s movements. Based on her research and what we know of neuroplasticity, Lambert believes that the experience of actively, physically interacting with the environment acts like a continuous “sculptor” of the brain.

“As we engage in experiences, that builds new connections, prunes away those that are not necessary any more, strengthens existing connections,” she says.

Conversely, “when we take movement out of the picture, it does reduce our brain’s activity,” she says. So when we’re not moving around or using our body to act and interact, when we can summon dinner with just a few taps to our phone, or as we rely on others to handle more and more of our life tasks, “we are passing up the opportunity to be actively engaged in building those networks,” says Lambert.

The theory Lambert is proposing, then, is that the increasing ease of modern life — like a human version of the progression from wild rat to lab rat — is bad for our brains. And, she suspects, the price we may be paying could be evident in the rising epidemic of depression and anxiety and their attendant feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that a multibillion-dollar flood of pharmaceuticals has failed to quell.

“Taking away our interactions with the environment and just movement itself — I think our brain is less engaged, and a side effect of that could be these symptoms we are calling depression,” she says.

These are complex disorders, of course, and Lambert certainly isn’t suggesting that merely putting down our screens to hang up our laundry will somehow wholly overcome genetics or adverse childhood experiences or trauma to cure what ails us emotionally. Nevertheless, her work leads her to believe that “the outcomes of all these factors can be affected, to some degree, by sustained meaningful interactions with the world around us,” she says.
One line of Lambert’s research explores this theory by expanding on work that reaches all the way back to Diamond’s groundbreaking investigations in the 1960s on so-called “enriched environments.” An enriched environment offers something more like real life — social interactions, space to move and exercise, novel objects to explore — and Lambert is interested in whether all enriched environments are equal. Specifically, she is examining whether environments that mimic the natural stimuli and challenges that our brains likely evolved to engage with — she calls them “natural-enriched” environments — help build the healthiest and most resilient brains.

“We think the brains are more tuned in to natural elements,” says Lambert, so in her lab, she and her students are systematically comparing rats in the default “standard environment” — the dorm-room rats — versus two other environments. One is a more spacious and stimulating artificial-enriched setting with shelters and objects for climbing and manipulating made from plastic and other manufactured materials. The second is a natural-enriched setting with sticks, hollow logs, and dirt. Lambert calls them her “city rats” and “country rats,” respectively.

Lambert’s research team studies how the city rats and country rats respond not only within these environments but also when they encounter the stress of a novel setting or situation. And since a rat can’t tell you how it’s feeling, Lambert looks for indicators both in the rats’ behavior and in biochemical and neurological markers, such as stress hormones or changes in the brain.

“We argue that the behavior is just as complex and important as the biological mechanisms that we are studying,” she says. “The behavior is the output of all those complex, dynamic, integrated systems of the brain.”

The research so far suggests that rats in both these environments demonstrate similar cognitive abilities when compared to the dorm-room, or standard-environment, rats.

“But our natural ones” — the country rats — “have a bit more emotional resilience in a new environment,” she says. “They are a little bolder in their exploration, and their stress hormones are a little bit healthier than in the artificial.”

She cites, for example, the case of some of the country rats subjected to a swim test. Rats are competent swimmers, but like a preschooler balking at a first lesson in the pool, they don’t particularly like swimming, and the experience is mildly stressful, so the swim test is a good way to assess a rat’s adaptability under stress. While most rats might typically respond to the swim test by paddling about frantically but fruitlessly, the country rats showed more willingness to dive under the surface in search of an escape — which Lambert believes is a problem-solving response indicating that the country rats can better muster the emotional self-regulation to overcome their anxiety.

The country rats have also managed to surprise the researchers. When Lambert and her students decided to video how the rats, which are naturally nocturnal animals, spent their nights in the lab, they saw that the dorm-room rats demonstrated some limited activity and the city rats a little more, but the country rats were far busier. They were interacting socially, moving dirt, constantly investigating the many elements of their environment.

The behavior was so unlike what Lambert was used to seeing that her immediate reaction, she acknowledges, was “slapping a diagnosis” on it. “The first time I was watching the video, I thought, ‘They are ADHD rats!’” she says.

Then it occurred to her that what she might actually be seeing for the first time was rats behaving, well, naturally. In all her years of observing rats, she realized, she’d never looked at them in a context that reasonably mimicked the conditions of rats in the wild.

“Not only is nature relaxing and stress-reducing, but the rats are telling us it is stimulating curiosity and movement and interactions, too,” says Lambert. “So understanding the brain in its natural elements — sometimes I talk about ‘going green’ with the brain — that’s going to be the path to understanding how to have a healthy brain,” she theorizes.

JUST AS LYING INSIDE ON THE COUCH ALL DAY BINGE-WATCHING NETFLIX AND THUMBING THROUGH OUR INSTAGRAM FEEDS ISN’T GOOD FOR BODIES THAT EVOLVED TO MOVE AND ACT IN THE WORLD, IT ALSO, FOR THE SAME REASON, MIGHT BE BAD FOR OUR BRAINS.
Another area of Lambert’s research considers the potential benefits of “effort-based rewards,” the kind of positive, satisfied feeling you might get when you put physical work towards a goal, such as successfully training for your first 10K run, mastering a tricky passage from a piano composition, or finally cleaning out the garage. Lambert and her students spend six weeks working with one group of rats, training them for five to ten minutes every day on searching for and digging up a buried sweet cereal treat. They call these the “contingent rats” because, as the song goes, they can’t always get what they want — at least not without working for it.

“I tell the students, ‘You’re the rat life coaches,’” says Lambert. “What I am interested in is building a connection between this effort and the reward of the Froot Loop.”

Another group, by contrast, gets the treats without making any meaningful effort. These are Lambert’s rodents of privilege, her “trust-fund” rats.

Once the contingent rats have completed their training, they, along with the trust-fund rats, are given a new challenge with an unfamiliar object and an unsolvable task that won’t yield any reward. Lambert’s team is looking at whether the contingent rats demonstrate greater determination or resourcefulness in the face of their frustration. And while this research is ongoing, initial results suggest they do.

Lambert calls this “learned persistence,” or “the rat version of self-efficacy,” and she believes that the physical effort that the contingent rats have to put forth to dig up their food reward in the first challenge is essential to shaping their neural networks in ways that make them more willing to persist in the second one.

“They are learning that, ‘If I exert effort here, I can get the prize,’” she says. “That is a very simplistic way of building this contingency circuit or self-efficacy or, ‘I have some influence in the outcome.’”

From this work, Lambert conjectures that the more we interact and engage with our environment, not only do we build a kind of investment fund of experiences to rely upon for more informed decision-making in the future, but we also may build a stronger sense of self-efficacy and control that allows us to better navigate novel or stressful situations and to persist in the face of challenges. So perhaps running that 10K gives you more confidence to negotiate a raise or handle a personal crisis. And maybe cooking dinner every night does more than just put food on your table.

“Even though it seems trivial, doing something physical reinforces our interactions and the effectiveness of our behaviors and our sense of confidence, because it is building and strengthening neural networks,” says Lambert.

By contrast, she says, “If it is important to actually engage in that physical activity, or if the experience is important, then the more that we take that experience away” — say, by consigning ourselves to an ever-more digital, virtual, and outsourced reality — “theoretically it suggests that that would not be good for the brain.”

Lambert calls this the “contingency conundrum,” and it’s the subject of her next book for a general audience, *Well-Grounded: The Neurobiology of Rational Decisions.* “I am arguing that when you have a little bit of skin in the game, then..."
that is building that agency, that self-efficacy, that sense of control," she says. "If what the rats are telling us is that the effort, that the contingency building is important, then if we compromise that contingency building — as I think we have in the world around us — then the conundrum would be that we are not allowing our brains to do the very thing that they probably evolved to do."

"When I say, 'Engage in a hobby,' that just sounds soft, doesn't it? It sounds like soft science."

f Lambert could write a prescription for a healthy brain based on her 30 years of research, she’d tell you to "engage in satisfying, meaningful hands-on activities like baking bread or learning to knit, to put down your screens and interact with the people and the world around you.

“Something that is somewhat physical where you can see the effect,” she says, “something that allows you to really interact. To use your hands — that’s using both hemispheres of our brains.”

As prescriptions go, she acknowledges, nothing here is particularly radical. Lambert’s work is not likely to excite the kind of venture-capital buzz that a promising potential drug therapy or technological gizmo might. For one thing, she points out, as a society we like our treatments to sound “scientific”: a pill, a surgical procedure, something delivered in the multisensory environment of the natural world, to take the time to engage in satisfying, meaningful hands-on activities like baking bread or learning to knit, to put down your screens and interact with the people and the world around you.

"When I say, 'Engage in a hobby,' that just sounds soft, doesn't it?" she says. "It sounds like soft science."

Another reason? There are no blockbuster profits to be made here, no IPOs in baking therapy, no Big Wool advising the term "behaviorceuticals" to try to frame her ideas within that kind of medicalized perspective.

="WHEN I SAY, ‘ENGAGE IN A HOBBY,’ THAT JUST SOUNDS SOFT, DOESN’T IT? IT SOUNDS LIKE SOFT SCIENCE.”

"It gets into deep philosophical issues," Lambert says. "I'm always thinking about it," she says. "I want to immerse myself in the multisensory environment of the natural world, to take the time to engage in satisfying, meaningful hands-on activities like baking bread or learning to knit, to put down your screens and interact with the people and the world around you.

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As prescriptions go, she acknowledges, nothing here is particularly radical. Lambert’s work is not likely to excite the kind of venture-capital buzz that a promising potential drug therapy or technological gizmo might. For one thing, she points out, as a society we like our treatments to sound “scientific”: a pill, a surgical procedure, something delivered by skilled experts with advanced degrees, and not what our grandmothers managed to pull off armed only with a gravy-stained copy of Betty Crocker. In fact, she sometimes uses the term “behaviorceuticals” to try to frame her ideas within that kind of medicalized perspective.

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LION SCULPTURE
Garden of the Five Lions,
Weinstein Hall
n a 2001 episode called “Kid Logic,” the radio show This American Life ran one of my all-time favorite stories. It’s about a little girl on an airplane.

“She was about 4 years old, and on her very first flight,” we hear Aileen Goldman, a therapist in Texas, say. “And as the plane was airborne, she turned to the woman next to her and said, ‘When do we get smaller?’ That had been her experience at airports watching airplanes take off. They do get smaller.”

Perspective skews perception, but in these pages, we broke out our rulers to offer images of things across campus reproduced at 100 percent of their exact size in real life. There’s something very Richmond about the exercise, this juxtaposition of things that, when seen plainly and observed closely, reveal new symmetries, spark curiosities, and suggest relationships.

Our comfort with it explains why we have business majors in our art studios and art majors in our science labs. Any of them might have just come from lacrosse practice or a semester in Belize studying health care delivery systems. We value the ways that disparate ideas and experiences complement and extend each other.

It can be joyful, too. So, enjoy.
BLACK GEM CORAL
Lora Robins Gallery

ELEPHANT MANDIBLE
Biology department,
Gottwald Center
DAFFODIL
Near Boatwright Library

MEGALODON TOOTH
Lora Robins Gallery

LOBLOLLY PINE
FASCICLE
Near Ryland Hall

POLYMITA PICTA
Lora Robins Gallery
MEMORY CARD
GoPro camera, Puryear Hall

WIRELESS MOUSE
Communications office, Puryear Hall

LOBLOLLY PINE CONE
Behind Richmond Hall

CURLY FRY
Tyler’s Grill, Tyler Haynes Commons
SIZE 18 CLEAT
Worn by Alex Light, '17, Spider football offensive lineman

ICED COFFEE WITH CREAM
8:15 at Boatwright café, Boatwright Library

SMA R T P H O N E
In almost every student’s pocket

E A R B U D S
In almost every student’s ears

L OBLOLLY PINE CONE
Behind Richmond Hall
USHABTIS FROM EGYPT
Lora Robins Gallery

GAMELAN FROM INDONESIA
World music studio, North Court
DRAWSTRING PURSE FROM CHINA
Lora Robins Gallery

BOOK FROM UNITED KINGDOM
Rare Books Room, Boatwright Library

EFFIGY BOWL FROM PERU
Lora Robins Gallery
TO EASE THE BURDEN

How Charleston pediatrician Conrad Williams, ’05, helps children at the end of their lives.

HAS ANYONE TALKED TO YOU ABOUT HER LATEST BRAIN SCAN?

Jillian and Steve Williams were desperate for good news when they sat down in a small room full of medical specialists to talk about their baby girl.

Three-month-old Charlotte was born nine weeks early and slept nearby in the intensive care nursery. She’d spent her whole life in hospitals and on the highways between them. A hospital in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, another in Florence, a third in Charleston.

A meningitis infection racked Charlotte’s small body. Five silicone tubes stuck out of her scalp like long spaghetti noodles to drain the excess fluid inside her head. She’d already survived five brain surgeries and more seizures than her parents could count.

Along the way, Jillian and Steve tracked their daughter’s every setback, making the four-hour round-trip drive from their home in Horry County several times a week. They kept careful notes. They learned the complicated language and the acronyms that hospital staff used. And they met with Charlotte’s team at the Medical University of South Carolina every day. All that time, they trudged toward the goal of getting their girl home.

Not if, but when.
Now, this nightmare: Has anyone talked to you about her latest brain scan?
“No,” Jillian said. “No.”
That’s when Dr. Dorothea Jenkins, a neonatal brain injury expert, showed Charlotte’s parents a 3-D model of a healthy baby’s brain. The mood in the room felt subdued that morning. Something seemed different.

Jenkins pointed to the occipital lobe, near the brainstem. This is where vision comes from, she explained. But on Charlotte’s brain scan, the occipital lobe was damaged. Her vision was gone.

“OK. Our daughter is going to be blind,” Steve said. “We can handle that. No problem.”

Back to the healthy brain. This is where speech comes from, Jenkins said.

But on Charlotte’s scan, that part was gone, too.

“Gone. Fine. She’ll be blind. She won’t be able to talk. We can handle it,” Steve said. “We’ll get through it.”

Last, motor skills.
Also gone.
“Does she have any quality of life?” Steve said.

By Lauren Sausser
Illustrations by Victoria Borges
No, the doctor said.

Jillian and Steve started sobbing. Everyone else in the room was crying, too. They all knew they’d reached the end. The beginning of it, at least.

In their fog of grief, one of the specialists led Charlotte’s parents to a small, private space near the neonatal nursery on the eighth floor of the children’s hospital. It was dimly lit, furnished with a few chairs, stocked with tissues. It’s known as the Grieving Room.

Jillian and Steve waited for a tall, lanky pediatrician named Conrad Williams to join them. They’d never met this young doctor, a stranger who shared their last name. He was relatively new to the hospital, the one who would shepherd them through their daughter’s death.

“We heard you were coming,” Steve told Williams as he walked through the door. “We just don’t know what to do.”

Conrad Williams didn’t look much like a doctor. At least Jillian didn’t think so.

No lab coat, no stethoscope. They hang in his office, rarely used, next to a few pictures of his favorite patients and his framed diplomas. Williams studied history in college [at UR] and didn’t much like medical school. At first sight, with his dark hair and eyeglasses, he resembles Harry Potter, if Harry Potter had grown up and become a doctor.

He dresses casually for work — chinos, checked shirts — and in his back pocket is almost always a sheet of white paper, folded longways, with a list of patients he’ll see that day. There may be more than two dozen names on that list, mostly babies, some of them nearing the end of their short lives.

Williams is one of few physicians in the United States who specialize in end-of-life care for children.

Most days, he walks the hospital hallways making sure his patients are comfortable. He talks to children in their beds and to babies in their bassinets. He talks to their families, too, and introduces himself as Conrad, but doesn’t make much chitchat.

His wife says he’s “more on the introverted side.” Williams grew up in New Orleans but bears no accent. His voice is deep. He asks families how his team might be helpful. He listens.

And when the time comes — if the time comes — he’s often the one who explains to parents what to expect when their children are taken off life support, what happens when their babies begin to die, how their hands and feet might turn cold and change colors, what noises they might make, and what those noises mean. He answers questions parents don’t want to ask, the ones many doctors aren’t trained to handle.

Then, Williams often sits with his patients and their parents, sometimes all day. This is pediatric palliative care.

“Inevitably, people say, ‘That must be so depressing. How can you do that?’ And it has its sad moments, but one of my friends said, ‘If you focus on the 5 percent that’s sad, you’ll miss 95 percent that’s profoundly joyful.’”

Still, if he happens to be at a party and anyone asks, Williams usually just says he’s a pediatrician. That’s technically true. Finding words for his precise role requires more time...
than a passing introduction typically affords. Death and casual conversation don’t mix. What most people don’t understand is that death is only one facet of his job, and not even the hardest part. In fact, he finds helping families during their darkest days genuinely rewarding. Mostly, though, his patients don’t face imminent death. Children are more resilient than adults, and young patients facing grave illness often defy medical expectations.

That’s why he’s quick to dispel the myth that pediatric palliative care equals hospice care equals the end of life. “There are plenty of times we think a kid is going to die, and three months later, they’re still here. They have these ups and downs,” Williams said. “Very rarely do we get to a point where we’re just focused on hospice.”

Palliative care, meaning to “ease the burden,” was born of the hospice care movement in London some 70 years ago. A female physician named Dame Cecily Saunders invented the idea of special care for dying patients. She coupled pain relief with symptom management and offered her patients dignity and a chance to resolve their lives before death.

“I didn’t set out to change the world, I set out to do something about pain,” Saunders told The Daily Telegraph in a 2002 interview. “It wasn’t long before I realized that pain wasn’t only physical, but it was psychological and spiritual.”

Today, palliative care is an umbrella specialty that includes, among other things, hospice care for patients at the end of life. But there remains much confusion about what these words mean, especially when it comes to children.

“As a longtime hospice medical director, I spent decades trying to convince people that hospice is not about death and dying,” said Joe Rotella, chief medical officer at the Chicago-based American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

To further complicate the issue, some hospitals have started “rebranding” their palliative care departments. MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, for example, changed the name of its palliative care clinic to the Supportive Care Center.

Camilla Zimmermann, who practices palliative care medicine in Ontario, Canada, recently published research on this topic. She found that patients warmed to the concept of palliative care once they were familiar with it. But most never came around to liking the name and were reluctant to tell family that they were seeing a palliative care doctor for fear of alarming their loved ones.

It is wrongly associated with “giving up,” Zimmermann said. “What they’re really afraid of is death.”

Twelve years before Charlotte was born, Jillian and Steve Williams met each other at ESPN. They were technical operators at the sports network, specializing in camerawork and editing, lights and behind-the-scenes production.

Late one night at the company’s headquarters in Connecticut, they overheard a co-worker talking to his child on the phone.

All right, buddy. Have a good night’s sleep. I’ll see you when you get home from school tomorrow.

Jillian and Steve stared at each other. Something clicked. “Can we be doing this job and have children?” Jillian said to him. “How could that ever work? We’d be here at night. Who would be with our children?”

Jillian and Steve were only dating at the time, but they decided to change their lives. They quit their jobs and moved to Myrtle Beach, where Steve’s family owns a printing business. Jillian returned to school and became a teacher. They married in 2009 but struggled to start their own family. Jillian couldn’t get pregnant.

Then, after two rounds of in vitro fertilization and many thousands of dollars later, Jillian and Steve conceived a baby girl. Annabelle was born in 2014.

A year later, they decided to try again. After two more rounds of fertility treatment, Jillian became pregnant with another daughter.

That pregnancy plodded along normally until one night, while they were watching The Walking Dead, Jillian’s placenta detached from her uterus nine weeks before the baby’s due date. Steve rushed her to Grand Strand Medical Center, where Charlotte was born during an emergency cesarean section.

She would live for 93 days.

Conrad Williams met them on Day 92.

For Williams, staring down death isn’t the hardest part of his job. Yes, he said, there are patients, even some doctors, who only associate his role with the end of a child’s life, not realizing that palliative care means much more.

The nurses, chaplains, social workers, and volunteers on his team help patients make memories — handprints on canvas and baptisms at bedside. They decipher all the medical jargon thrown at families by other health care providers. They celebrate their patients’ success stories and comfort grieving parents.

But Williams also holds a desk job. As the pediatric palliative care team’s medical director, he must figure out how to float a program that doesn’t generate a profit for his employer.

MUSC and thousands of other hospitals in the United States tie physician salaries to productivity — how many patients they treat and how many surgeries they perform. But Williams does little of that. At work, he mainly talks to people. No medical billing codes exist for sending a condolence card or attending a funeral.

And while he’s convinced that pediatric palliative care is meaningful, even essential, for children and their families, he also understands, from the hospital’s perspective, that it’s not lucrative. He gives MUSC credit for spending money it knows it won’t get back.

“Two days ago, I was with a family, pretty much all day, at the end of life,” he said recently. “In a month, I could come back and tell you what I actually was able to bill from that — from a money standpoint — and what we actually collected,
Jillian and Steve held onto each other, crying, as Williams walked into the Grieving Room and introduced himself. He asked them to recount what they’d already been told by other doctors.

Then, they had questions. What would Charlotte look like when they took her off life support? How would this work? When would it happen?

Williams told them Charlotte would probably sound like she was gasping for air when they removed the breathing tube. It would sound terrible, he warned them, but she wouldn’t suffer.

“It’s basically like synapses going off, involuntary,” Jillian remembered him explaining.

Williams also said that Charlotte might turn purple before she died. That she might start making a sound called “the death rattle,” an effect of fluid in the airway and weak respiratory muscles.

“I can’t be certain,” he told them, “but based on what we know about what’s wrong with her, she’s probably not going to live more than a few minutes or a few hours.”

They were terrified.

A nurse took Charlotte off the ventilator at noon the next day. A few minutes passed. Then, an hour.

Two, three, four, five hours. Charlotte held on.

Several times that afternoon, Jillian and Steve thought their daughter had taken her last breath, only to hear her gasp for air once more.

Two, three, four, five hours. Charlotte held on.

They both cried. They asked Charlotte to let go. They told her she’d been fighting for so long.

“It’s OK,” Jillian told Charlotte. “We’re going to be OK.”

It started getting late. Hanna Epstein, a nurse practitioner who works with Williams on the pediatric palliative care team, came into the room.

“Can you give her more morphine?” Jillian said.

Charlotte sounded like she was in such pain. A higher dose of morphine would speed up their daughter’s death, but Epstein warned them not to rush this moment. They would linger on these last few hours long after Charlotte was gone.

Jillian and Steve listened. They decided to wait.

***

During his residency training, when Williams was struggling to decide what kind of doctor he wanted to be, a mentor suggested he consider pediatric palliative care. But he didn’t know what she was talking about. It was so obscure.

“My understanding,” he said, “was that it was hospice and that it was for old people, and that’s where they go to die. Like, literally, a place where they go to die.”

But he knew he loved working with children. And he had a gift for talking to them.

Throughout his residency training, one mother kept calling Williams back to her daughter’s bedside.

“I walked into the room, and she was like 4 or 5 years old, all dressed up in pink. She had this bed that was nicely made by her mom,” Williams said.

“You must like pink,” he told her.

The child was too sick from a fatal mitochondrial disorder to answer him, but Williams talked to her anyway. And he came back, year after year.

He eventually asked her mother why she wanted to see him.

“I’m just an intern,” he explained.

“You’re one of the only ones who actually talked to her,” she said.

Williams’ wife Kelli — back then his fiancée — said she understood why he was drawn to palliative care and told him that he would do well practicing it. But she predicted it would “be hard on us and you.”

That proved true. Williams finished a yearlong fellowship in Akron, Ohio, in 2013, then moved to Washington, D.C., to join the pediatric palliative care program at Children’s National Health System. He became the hospital’s first full-time palliative care doctor for children. Back then, he would leave the house early, stay late at work, and unwind on the walk home through Northwest D.C. He lost almost 30 pounds. Kelli worried he had cancer. It wasn’t cancer, only stress.

He “was running around like a crazy person,” Kelli said.

These days, Williams tends to compartmentalize his work at the hospital and life at home.

In the morning, Williams and his wife glide past each other, two people accustomed to routine. They wake up at the hospital and life at home.

In the evening, Williams and his wife glide past each other, two people accustomed to routine.
too — an allergy and immunology specialist. They met on the first day of medical school at Tulane University. First anatomy lab partners, then friends.

“He didn’t say much,” Kelli said, “but when he did say something, it made me laugh.”

After work, Williams starts dinner as his wife makes her way home. He doesn’t tend to talk about his patients with her and admits that he sometimes struggles to empathize with Kelli if she’s had a bad day. His bad days are always worse.

“I think there’s this exhaustion that I have that I don’t fully realize,” he said.

Five hours after Charlotte’s breathing tube had been removed, Hanna Epstein, the palliative care nurse practitioner, bent down, put her arms around Jillian and Steve and asked them if they wanted to lie down with their daughter in a hospital bed.

They hadn’t even considered it a possibility. Charlotte had always been hooked up to tubes and machines. Of course they wanted to lie down with her.

So they did. Just Jillian and Steve and Charlotte.

It was summertime, still light outside that evening, but their family and friends had gone home. The room was quiet.

Jillian fell asleep for a few minutes. When she woke up, Steve slept. Their daughter had stopped gasping for breath, and her heartbeat had regained its rhythm. Charlotte dozed between them.

“How long is she going to live?” Steve asked Williams the day before.

“There are some pretty distinct signs of dying,” the doctor said. “But the truth is I don’t really know.”

He’d prepared them as best he could. There was no script, but Charlotte’s last day played out almost exactly as Williams warned them it would. At least they knew the nightmare they were walking into.

Six, seven, eight, nine hours.

Charlotte finally died when both of her exhausted parents fell asleep together for the first time, 10-and-a-half hours after she’d been taken off life support.

“We finally relaxed,” Jillian said. “We were finally at peace.”

A nurse who had been monitoring the baby came into the room and woke them up. She couldn’t hear a heartbeat. Charlotte was gone.

Jillian hugged her daughter.

“You did so good,” she told Charlotte. “We’re so proud of you.”

“It was the most peaceful thing that could have happened,” she recalled. “We were able to do it together.”

As the Medical University of South Carolina constructs a new $385 million children’s hospital — the most expensive in state history — administrators recently hired another full-time pediatrician to join the pediatric palliative care team.

Jillian and Steve Williams are helping the program grow, too. They held a golf tournament in fall 2017 and raised more than $20,000 in Charlotte’s memory. All of it will be donated to the pediatric palliative care team at MUSC. Their gift was the single largest amount the program has ever received from one of the families in its care.

And more good news: Jillian and Steve are expecting another child in 2018, a baby boy.

This article is reprinted with permission from The Post and Courier, a newspaper in Charleston, South Carolina. It originally ran in the paper’s Dec. 3, 2017, issue. Where necessary, we have made minor edits to reflect the later date of our reprint and to match the magazine’s style guide.
National Spider Day
March 14 fell during Spring Break this year, but that didn’t stop Spiders from celebrating. So much goes into what it means to be a Spider: tough classes, Robins buzzer-beaters, faculty who mentor, late nights at Boatwright, annual giving, regular reunions — and, of course, Spider Pride show-and-tell.

Reunion almost here
More than 2,000 alumni and guests are expected on campus June 1–3 for Reunion Weekend 2018. If your graduation year ends in a -3 or -8, this is your year. You’ll be amazed by how young you still are (and how much younger the students that you meet get every year). It’s a party you don’t want to miss. For more information, go to reunion.richmond.edu.

Two among 507
Here’s a love story.
Kelsey Dochelli, ’13, met Jeff Calhoun, ’13, junior year when they were lab partners in professor Michelle Hamm’s biochemistry class. Kelsey went on to get her degree in biology with a minor in health care and society, Jeff in biochemistry and microbiology.
They also stuck with each other. This past September, they got married at St. Luke’s in Chicago. That’s them, above, kissing in one of half a dozen photos they sent from their big day. In a lot of them, they’re surrounded by Spiders with the kind of big goofy grins that can’t be faked. You can see one of the photos on Page 63. Plus, there’s a great story starting on Page 62 about why their biochem textbook was at their reception.

The words “marry,” “married,” and “marriage” appear 21 times in class notes this issue. The first instance, from the Class of 1950, describes a bride and groom who were wedded for 62 years. Spiders in this issue also welcomed more than a dozen babies to their families, including a set of twins.
Spiders do all sorts of things. This issue’s class notes include the names of 507 alumni with something to share, big and small. Add your news to the next issue by emailing us at classnotes@richmond.edu.
A public servant

In March, Virginia’s House of Delegates honored William Howell, B’64, for 30 years of public service, including 15 as the legislative body’s speaker. He is the second-longest-serving House speaker in Virginia history. Howell, a Republican, represented the 28th District, which lies mostly east of Interstate 95 stretching from Stafford to Fredericksburg. When he took the gavel in 2003 after a scandal and the resignation of his predecessor, he picked up the nickname “the accidental speaker.” There was nothing accidental about his leadership over the next decade and a half.

During much of his tenure, Republicans dominated the 100-seat House, at one point by a margin of 68-32, though the margin has narrowed in recent years. He had a reputation as a deal-making pragmatist, shepherding, for example, two major pieces of transportation legislation through the house, one under a Republican governor and the other under a Democrat. To hammer out the first one, a $5.9 billion deal, he met with the minority leader to work on a bill that could garner bipartisan support.

“We differed on how to address the problem, so we got together and worked across party lines,” Howell told Governing magazine. “A lot of my conservatives hate me saying that. But I think at the end of the day, it was the right thing to do.”

He also butted heads when he thought necessary. He blocked Gov. Terry McAuliffe’s attempt to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act but also bucked his own party when some members tried to push through a controversial redistricting plan.

At his retirement celebration in March, colleagues throughout the House highlighted his commitment to “doing what he thinks is right, even if it’s going to be difficult,” as one colleague from the Senate put it.

Others concurred. “Beneath the affable demeanor was one of the most savvy and intelligent leaders Virginia has ever known,” one delegate said.

“I knew the world would be a better place if he was in it.”

ERIN FOX, ’98, on her decision to donate a kidney to her friend and classmate Juan González Casares. They both plan to be on campus in June to celebrate their 20th class reunion and the first anniversary of the transplant.
“They’re my heart,” says Kelly Wease Chenault, W’91.

She’s talking about the first- through fifth-graders she works with weekly at Cashell Donahoe Elementary School in eastern Henrico, Virginia.

Donahoe Elementary is a Title I school, meaning it’s been identified by the U.S. Department of Education as having a high percentage of students from low-income families. Title I schools like Donahoe receive supplemental funding to help struggling students meet the state academic standards. While these schools have many of the same teaching resources as any other school, one thing they’re often lacking is adult mentors in the classrooms.

That’s where Chenault comes in. She founded #TheALEXProject, a program that matches an adult volunteer with each classroom at Donahoe Elementary to mentor and build positive relationships with students. Named in memory of friend Alex Moore, who died in June 2015, ALEX stands for “Actively Loving & Encouraging Xcellence.”

An “ALEX,” as the volunteers are called, spends at least one hour per week in the classroom — many of them far more — supporting the teacher and encouraging the students to be the best they can be by working as hard as possible on their daily tasks.

“We just love them,” Chenault says. “And we just encourage them. We show them that we believe in them.”

Another element is steady fundraising. In recent years, Chenault has raised approximately $5,000 a year for the school through social media. The money goes toward purchasing books, funding field trips for students who need help, and buying classroom supplies for the teachers, whom Chenault calls the real heroes of the school.

“I have so much respect for them,” Chenault says. “Not only do they have to meet the same state teaching requirements as any teacher anywhere, they’re often meeting social needs, nutritional needs, and emotional needs. It’s unbelievable.”

The program is having a big impact on the students. In June 2017, just a little more than a year after the start of #TheALEXProject, Donahoe Elementary became state-accredited for the first time in 40 years. #TheALEXProject wasn’t solely responsible, of course, but the school’s superintendent gave it some of the credit.

“It was rewarding to know that the extra bodies, the extra encouragement, helped to make that happen,” Chenault says.

Chenault’s daughter Courtney, ’19, knows firsthand the impact that the program is having. The leadership studies and political science double major takes time away from campus to be an ALEX herself.

“Education, starting in elementary school, lays the foundation for everything you do,” Courtney says. “Having an increased number of adults inside the school showing the students that they care and want to see them succeed is really impactful for them.”

The experience has been impactful for Courtney, too. As a result of her involvement with the program, she has decided to pursue a teaching career, specifically at a Title I school.
A visitor to Puryear

On a blustery day at the beginning of March, the wind was strong enough to knock out the power to Puryear Hall, but it wasn’t enough to keep Garnett Ryland, R’68, from coming by our offices to tell us a remarkable story.

He started by talking about some old friends he’d recently seen at a funeral. Then, he pulled out the photo above. I squinted to read the sign at the front of the room: “Warsaw Elem School / Grade 2 / 1953-54 / Mrs. Anderson.” This was his second-grade class, he told me.

“This tiny little school,” as he called it, was in Warsaw, a town in Virginia’s Northern Neck, tucked between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers.

Census figures from the time of the photo put the town’s population at a little more than 400 back then. What was remarkable to Ryland about his photo is that five of the kids from this class — himself (inset, left), Beverly Delano Motley, Benjamin Franklin, James Lowery, and John Lewis (inset, from left) — remained classmates throughout their educations. They stayed together through primary school, then through secondary school, and then until they all graduated from the University of Richmond in 1968.

In June, they’ll celebrate their 50th reunion. We wish them all a joyful time.

—Matthew Dewald
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.

IN MEMORIAM
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IN MEMORIAM
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For information about photos, see:
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2. Jody Buffington Aud, ’81
3. Geoff McDonald, L’89
6. Joe Horowitz, ’01
7. Brook Weaver Jakubowski, ’01
8. Beth Parker Visscher, ’01
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University of Richmond

Magazine

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SEE YOU AT REUNION WEEKEND

JUNE 1–3, 2018

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Today, the distant whistles of passing trains bring the only reminder of UR’s proximity to the tracks. One hundred years ago this spring, the trains were bringing veterans of World War I to campus, which had become Debarkation Hospital No. 52.

On April 25, 1918, in a national atmosphere marked by surging American patriotism, the board of trustees voted unanimously to grant the property of Richmond and Westhampton colleges to the federal government. On June 1, the campus officially came under federal control for 13 months in exchange for $150,000 annually.

"The propaganda was intense," said Eric Yellin, associate professor of history and American studies. "The sense that this was a chance to prove one's patriotism, loyalty, and masculinity is upfront and pervasive."

Though it was common for college students to drill and prepare for war, the community at Richmond seemed especially eager. Even before America formally joined the war in April 1917, President Frederic Boatwright was steadfast in his commitment to help.

"Richmond College stands ready to support you heartily in all measures you may adopt to protect American citizens and to defend the honor of our country," he wrote to President Woodrow Wilson on March 22, 1917. "I have today inquired of the Secretary of War how our faculty and students may render the most effective service."

Located at the end of the rail line from Norfolk, the second-busiest port city during World War I, Richmond was a prime location for transporting wounded from Europe to a stateside hospital. Richmond students, meanwhile, returned to the city campus at Grace and Lombardy streets. Westhampton students relocated to rooms rented at St. Luke's Hospital.

"We the students of Richmond College in session this 25th day of April 1918, desire to express ourselves as deeming it not only our war-time duty, but a patriotic privilege to give our campus and buildings unreservedly to the needs of the government for her convalescent soldiers during the time of the war," the Richmond College class presidents resolved on May 3.

Jeter Hall became home to nurses and medical personnel as North Court, Ryland Hall, Thomas Hall, and a former building called the Playhouse became military barracks and medical rooms. Part of North Court became an operating room. The Red Cross also constructed a new building for recreation in 1918 that would later be used by Westhampton women for 17 years.

By December 1918, 950 soldiers, 60 nurses, 325 enlisted men of the medical department, and 25 officers occupied campus.

"This is the beginning of rehabilitation and orthopedics, the fixing of bones and limbs," Yellin said. "Those who are injured with injuries that are beyond the brain are met with a developing medical system that's really psyched and ready to get everybody back to work."

For those soldiers who stayed on campus for extended treatment before discharge to general hospitals, students created a reading room by gathering several hundred books from alumni. Campus was transformed into a fully operating military hospital.

Although the armistice ending the fighting was signed on Nov. 11, 1918, the hospital operated through the spring of 1919. In fall 1918, the grounds were once again home to students, and rightly so. As one soldier wrote, the expansive property was better equipped as a college campus than a hospital anyway.
IN MEMORIAM

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SEEE YOU AT REUNION WEEKEND
JUNE 1–3, 2018

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University of Richmond

MAGAZINE RICHMOND.EU

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When Chris Powell, ‘05, and Meredith Clarke Powell, ‘06, first met at Richmond, they had little in common. Chris admits to being a bit of a partier, while Meredith was more academically driven. Yet, they somehow ended up on a first date and, like a lot of first dates, they went to dinner. Over Mongolian barbecue at Graywolf Grill, they experienced a simple truth about breaking bread together that has tied them to each other ever since.

“The value of slowing down and sitting with other people is really what’s so precious about sharing food with other people,” Meredith said. She describes the most depressing food experience as when people physically sit together but are absorbed by their phones.

“Usually, there doesn’t have to be a whole lot of weight or baggage to the act of sharing a meal together,” Chris said. “It should be trying to let your guard down — just enjoy and be together.”

The couple — now married — took this insight and ran with it as their relationship developed, in everything from home-cooked meals in their tiny Boston apartment to dinner at a top-50 restaurant in Sweden. In 2015, they started what they called the Orange Door Supper Club, inviting four friends into their home for a meal and asking them to invite four people they didn’t know.

Twenty-two supper club dinners later, Chris and Meredith left their day jobs — she in interior design, he as a consultant for a nonprofit — to focus on developing Orange Door Hospitality, an umbrella business and catering company.

Whether it’s tradition, taste, or the simple fact that eating is something everyone has in common, the Powells say food brings togetherness like nothing else.

“We had received so much good feedback from the supper club about having friends and family in the comfort of your home with good food, good music, and a relaxed atmosphere,” Meredith said. “People really loved doing this in our house, so we wanted to bring this to other people’s homes.”

Even as Orange Door Hospitality expanded their food careers, their love of cooking together hasn’t dissipated. The couple is opening Orange Door Kitchen, a commercial kitchen and event space, in May. They hope to create a setting for small food businesses, chefs, mixologists, culinary instructors, and food enthusiasts to create a thriving culinary community in eastern Massachusetts.

“Food is almost secondary to the experience,” Chris said as he described Orange Door Hospitality’s space while it was still being remodeled. “Though good food is important, [people] are looking for something different than just going out, ordering something off a menu, and then leaving.”

With a demonstration kitchen, room for pop-up events and cooking classes, and a licensed commercial kitchen, the new facility will be able to support 15 to 20 food entrepreneurs looking to grow out of their home kitchens and expand their businesses.

“There’s a real need that we discovered firsthand,” Meredith said. “If you can’t find space to rent, then you’re looking for space to build on your own, and that’s a huge financial hurdle for a small food business.”

Meredith and Chris’s menus are influenced by everything from colors to poems, ingredients to TV shows. Each dining experience at Orange Door Kitchen will be an opportunity to try something new. They plan to serve an 11-course feast inspired by their meal at that restaurant in Sweden for the first dinner served in the new space.

And with meals like that, who’d want a phone at the table?
IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM
American picker

A love of history and DIY inspires this Spider to put her own stamp on vintage pieces.

It was hideous. The dark yellow paint was peeling. The drawers stuck. The top’s finish was chipping off. Plus, no one had any idea what “it” actually was. A desk? A table? To Hilary Martin, W’84, that didn’t matter — she had to snatch it up.

Martin has a knack for looking past the hideous. As the founder of Housemade By Hilary, Martin crafts one-of-a-kind home goods from pieces of Americana — taking old, forgotten items and giving them a contemporary spin. Old pennants are made into pillows. Metal coolers are transformed into fountains, and feed sacks take on new life as cushions. And that ugly yellow mystery piece? It’s now a bar cart.

“I love things that are old — old pieces, vintage fashion, the old-fashioned way of doing things,” Martin said. “I was probably born in the wrong decade.”

Martin grew up in Connecticut, where her mother taught her how to make a home by hand, sewing table linens, curtains, and clothing. Martin carried this on when she moved into her own home and eventually turned that craftiness into her business, starting with totes made from vintage sewing pattern envelopes. As she sold her goods at craft fairs up and down the East Coast, she saw what other people were selling, and it opened her eyes to what she could do with her company.

Housemade By Hilary is not your typical antiques business. Martin buys items, focusing on those from the late 1800s through the 1970s, then adds value to each piece by customizing it for a modern lifestyle. She visits flea markets, attends auctions, combs through old barns, or raids factories, schools, and churches that are being shut down to find her pieces. Martin’s husband, who helps her execute many of the projects, once said to her, “Honey, the things you buy baffle me.”

Martin buys just the things that “speak” to her. She once purchased a set of tennis rackets because she plays. When Martin looked closer, she saw that a name and a little drawing was engraved on each racket. It’s these details and craftsmanship that she wants to preserve, which she did by turning the tennis rackets into a coffee table base. The table was recently featured in Country Living, where Martin was named to the magazine’s list of the country’s 100 Most Creative People.

“I want to celebrate these old things and bring them out of basements and attics,” said Martin. “I want to show how beautiful they are and get them back on the front porch or back in kitchens and living rooms.”

Martin recently launched a new aspect to her business, Housemade Flips, where she works with clients to find and rehab pieces to fit their particular tastes or needs. Housemade By Hilary will also be opening a Richmond storefront early this summer. For Martin, who lives in an old clapboard house just inside the city limits and still walks around the university’s campus with her husband, Richmond is the perfect place to showcase her work. With lofts going up in industrial buildings and the renovation of homes in the city’s older neighborhoods, Martin said the people buying these places are interested in a variety of furnishings she can offer.

“I’m excited to share all my finds and the creativity behind what we’ve done to them,” said Martin. “And I can’t wait for customers to leave with a piece of history — something old that they didn’t realize could be so stylish for their own home.”
WHO ARE ALL THESE PEOPLE?

With 6,492 fans per game in 2017–18, the Spiders set a 25-year high for average home attendance. That adds up to nearly 100,000 fans over the season, 7,201 of whom were at this Feb. 7 win over VCU.

But most of the courtside seats go to another group of people — those at the game for their jobs, everyone from coaches to media, the shot-clock operator, and the public address announcer. There’s even someone charged with providing water to referees during timeouts.

Much of their work we take for granted. Consider, for example, the process by which viewers watching the game at home get their steady diet of statistics:

• A game official on the left side of the court (1) calls the stats out loud live.
• A stats inputter (2) sitting next to him transcribes the calls to create the official game record.
• A CBS employee (3) sitting on his other side feeds stats to a production truck outside.
• The production team makes graphics and edits relevant replays.
• The information is relayed to a production assistant (4) on the right side of the court.
• The production assistant feeds the information to, in this case, CBSSports announcers Tom McCarthy (5) and Jordan Cornette (6). They present this collective expertise to viewers.

And that’s just stats.

In this shot, we’ve highlighted more than 80 of the people working courtside — a number that doesn’t even include ushers, public safety, and others. Here’s a look at the roles the highlighted people play.