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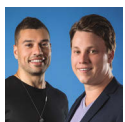
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**ON THE COVER:** Dean Elkholy, BA'12 (left) and Taylor Ablitt, HBA'10 photographed at the downtown London, Ont., headquarters of their company Dibly.  
(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)



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**SPARKLING EXAMPLE OF CREATIVITY**  
If diamonds are forever, then we'll be hearing about Edan Twena, HBA'12, for a long time.



**PATIENTS TAKE CHARGE**  
The last time you bought a car, you likely asked the dealer dozens of questions before you made a decision. Dr. David Palma, MD'04, thinks you should do the same when you receive a cancer diagnosis.

**ON SOUND FOOTING**  
Unlike his peers, who took more conventional routes after graduating, Patrick Spence, HBA'98, went off the beaten path and joined a small, Canadian wireless technology company.

## Alumni Gazette

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# Brain and Mind Institute launches world's largest sleep study

Western neuroscientist Adrian Owen has launched the world's largest sleep-and-cognition study to help researchers learn the effects of sleep and sleep deprivation on our brains.

"Many of us are working more erratic hours and sleeping less, while the pace of our lives seems to be accelerating," said Owen, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience and Imaging at The Brain and Mind Institute at Western and Chief Scientific Officer at Cambridge Brain Sciences. "We know that this sleep disruption affects us in some ways, and that some people feel the impact

more than others, but there's surprisingly little research into exactly how our brains deal with these sleep deficits."

The testing, conducted entirely online, has participants track their sleep over a three-day period, while playing a set of scientifically valid tests of brain function. They can check in after three days to see how their sleep values and performance compare with the other volunteers. Researchers will then analyze sleep and cognition data with the intention of sharing the results of the study.

To learn more and join the study, visit [www.worldslargestsleepstudy.com](http://www.worldslargestsleepstudy.com)



### CROWD-SOURCING DATA

Researchers are crowd-sourcing a huge online study to correlate our sleep patterns with our cognitive, spatial and decision-making abilities.



### YOUR BRAIN AND SLEEP

Researchers want to understand better why the brain craves sleep and what happens to our thinking abilities when we don't sleep well or don't sleep enough.



## NO STUDY OF THIS SCOPE HAS EVER BEEN UNDERTAKEN

The study is led by **Dr. Adrian Owen**, one of the world's foremost neuroscientists and head of the Owen Lab at the Brain and Mind Institute at **Western University**.



## >100,000 PARTICIPANTS ARE EXPECTED



### SEE WHERE YOU STAND

Once scientists are done crunching the numbers, results and insights will be shared with study participants and published in an academic journal.



Participants will complete online brain tests to determine how different parts of their brains work after different sleep scenarios.



Data from parents, students, older people, shift workers... all will help researchers understand the short- and long-term effects of sleep loss.

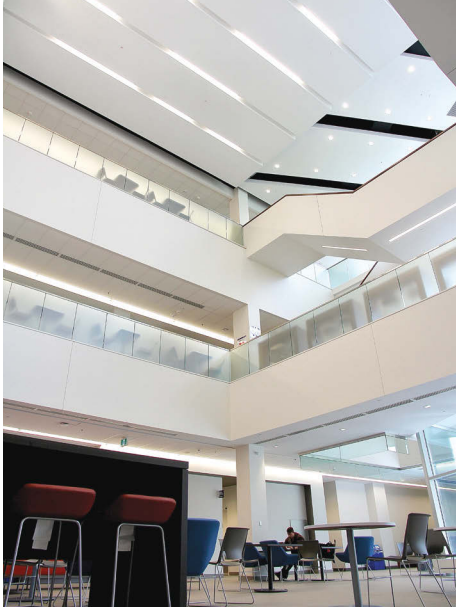
# Innovative new home for Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing opens

**WESTERN OFFICIALLY OPENED** the doors of its new Nursing building, a state-of-the-art facility combining the best of academic learning and clinical education. The Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, part of the Faculty of Health Sciences, is academic home to more than 1,200 students.

The new four-storey building — with a total of 130,000-square-feet of space and costing \$41 million — features an atrium at the nexus of its two wings and is infused with natural light and plenty of flexible spaces. One wing is the new home to the Faculty of Informatics and Media Studies.

The wing that houses the nursing-education facility includes more classroom and clinical training space, seminar rooms, graduate student research space and collaborative learning areas.

One key feature is its unique suite of 16 beds that form a simulated hospital setting. There, students can prepare for placements as they learn everything from vaccinations to advanced acute care, with live model “patients” and with computerized



mannequins that can be programmed to replicate almost any health ailment or situation.

“We are preparing students not only for practical skills they will need, but equipping them for the comprehensive layers of problem-solving, critical thinking and evidence-based decision-making that are required components of nurses’ daily roles,” said

Associate Professor Vicki Smye, director of Western’s nursing program. “We believe that this — coupled with a focus on research, leadership, information management, communication and innovation — helps make us unique among nursing programs in the country.”

Arthur and Sonia Labatt, longtime donors to health education

at Western, opened the building in June with a ribbon-cutting and tour. They were awarded honorary doctorates from Western in 2012 and Arthur Labatt was Western’s chancellor from 2004-08. Both are well-known philanthropists whose volunteer work includes arts, culture, health care and environmental causes.



courtesy of  
Ruth Buchanan  
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## Stapleton named Director (Sport and Recreation Services)



**CHRISTINE STAPLETON**, former Director of Athletics at the University of Calgary, was named Western's new Director (Sport and Recreation Services). She follows Thérèse Quigley, BA'75, BEd'77, who retired in December 2016.

Stapleton has more than 30 years of experience in university sports, serving as an administrator, coach, and competing as a student-athlete.

For the last two years, she has been Director of Athletics at the University of Calgary, leading all elements of strategic planning and program development, as well as the day-to-day operations of the Dinos program. Before that, she served as Associate Director (Athletics) at the University of Waterloo.

Prior to moving into an administrative role, Stapleton had a successful run as coach of the University of Regina's women's basketball program from 1993-2002, winning three conference coach of the year awards, CIAU Coach of the Year in 1996 and 3M Canadian High Performance Coach of the Year in 2001. She also guided the team to three consecutive conference championships (1999-2001) and five straight appearances in the CIS Final Eight, winning a national championship in 2001. She also served Canada Basketball in various capacities from 1998-2009, including as a national team head coach and as national development coach.

## London to become North American leader in 3D printing for medical and surgical solutions

Western has entered into a new \$6.8-million partnership with the London Medical Network (LMN) and Renishaw PLC to establish a new research, development and commercialization centre focused on the creation of medical instruments and surgical solutions through additive manufacturing, also known as 3D printing.

The Additive Design in Surgical Solutions (ADEISS) Centre will focus on developing proprietary solutions, sharing knowledge between partners, and will create direct employment for approximately 20 knowledge workers.

Located at Western's Discovery Park, the ADEISS Centre will create innovative instruments and products that can be marketed to the dental, orthopedic and medical device sectors throughout North America and around the world. The technology will allow for the creation and commercialization of personalized 3D-printed tools and implants like hip and knee joints.

The Centre is a unique partnership that brings together research, technical and business development teams from Western, Robarts Research Institute, the Lawson Health Research Institute and Renishaw PLC, a UK-based additive manufacturing company that creates high-precision products across a wide range of market sectors.



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# Western, London rally to #ILookLikeASurgeon

**F**emale surgeons and residents from the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London gathered recently in operating rooms across the city to add their voices to a global rallying cry for women surgeons. They did so by taking a photo and sharing it for the world to see.

In April, *The New Yorker* cover depicted an illustration of four female surgeons peering down below an operating light. Since then, female surgeons around the globe have been replicating the magazine cover and sharing their photos on social media using the hashtag #ILookLikeASurgeon. The hope is to shed light on the growing number of women entering this once male-dominated profession.

At Schulich, there are currently 35 female residents among 92 in the Department of Surgery – that makes up almost 40 per cent of the cohort.

Pictured here are, clockwise from the bottom, Drs. Marie-Eve LeBel, Muriel Brackstone, Leslie Scott and Eman Khayat (resident), all of St. Joseph's Health Care.



## Discover the World

Western Alumni's 2018 Discover the World program offers travel opportunities for Western alumni and their friends and family, faculty, staff and friends of the University.

Join like-minded travellers on one of our journeys, enhanced by knowledgeable lecturers and tour directors, offering an exceptional cultural and educational experience.

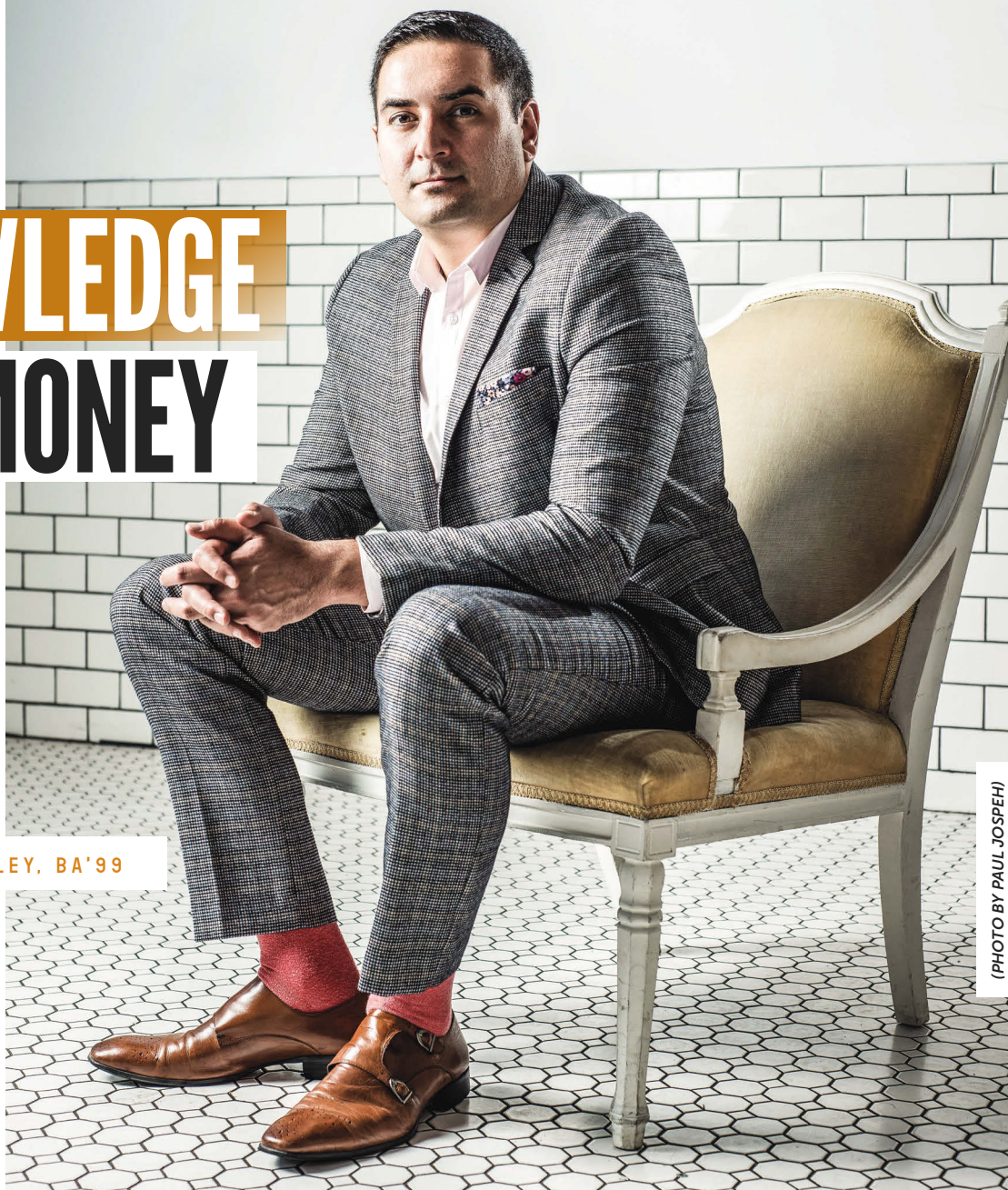
To view all upcoming trips, visit [alumni.westernu.ca/travel](http://alumni.westernu.ca/travel)

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Western  Alumni

# TIME, KNOWLEDGE and MONEY



(PHOTO BY PAUL JOSPEH)

BY STEPHEN LEDGLEY, BA'99

For entrepreneur  
Shafin Tejani,  
BA'01, engaged  
philanthropy is a  
fundamental

**S**hafin Tejani, BA'01 (Political Science), was born the son of refugees who had settled in Vancouver after escaping the brutal regime of Ugandan leader Idi Amin. He grew up among a family – uncles, aunts, cousins and other members of his Ismaili community – where nothing was taken for granted.

“I watched my uncles and my dad working two jobs – a job to pay the bills and, on the side, they were setting up an electronics store,” Tejani said. “They were entrepreneurs in Uganda before they had to leave and lost everything. From an early age, I was exposed to a work ethic of working 16-17 hours a day. They didn’t have much, but they grew this electronics store.”

Tejani’s father, a pharmacist in Uganda, worked at the store on weekends

while simultaneously completing his pharmacy exams to work in Canada. Tejani spent much of his time with his uncle in the electronics store.

“When a lot of people are walking down the street, they are not paying attention to what’s around them. My uncle would be looking at the buildings and thinking about the real estate and looking at the businesses and seeing what was missing,” Tejani said. “I was programmed to identify opportunity because I spent so much time around him from an early age.”



Tejani identified his first entrepreneurial opportunities by watching other neighbourhood kids.

"I would buy and sell baseball cards," he said. "I watched people spend dollar after dollar after dollar trying to get a specific card in a pack. So, I would go to The States and buy boxes of them at a discount and sell them. I started to think from an early age how to create opportunities for profit."

But making profit was only one side. Tejani was also taught the importance of giving back.

"At a young age, even with my allowance or anything I made, I gave some away. My parents were very philanthropic. My dad reinforced the idea that you have to be humble and help others. It was just a natural part of what we did."

As a teenager in the early 1990s, Tejani began organizing party events, turning a profit while providing a safe place for neighbourhood youth to have fun away from the city's growing gang problems. Eventually, he partnered with high school students' councils and sharing profits.

While at Western in 1996, Tejani moved his entrepreneurial pursuits online, leveraging high school contacts to launch an online dating quiz and match service that served as a school fundraiser. Founded in his Huron University College residence, the start-up generated almost \$3 million within a few years.

For his next project, helping schools sell merchant discount cards as fundraisers, he recruited more than 60,000 merchants to participate. This led to a new enterprise creating retail loyalty programs, which he eventually sold for profits in the millions.

For the next several years, his business pursuits included an online dating site, Internet gaming and eventually an online tracking and referral tool that compensated the owners of other websites for sending visitors his way.

In a relatively short time, Tejani had amassed a solid track record of entrepreneurial success, launching more than 20 companies around the world, investing in many more and turning \$125 million in profits.

These days, Tejani has refocused his entrepreneurial pursuits leading a venture called Victory Square Technologies. He's not only investing in innovative start-ups, but coaching them. Not only turning profits, but also giving back.

'Venture philanthropy,' as he branded it, is core to Victory Square's mission.

"In the Ismaili community, we talk about time, knowledge and money. You can give

any of these; all can be valuable," Tejani said. "That philosophy works in our philanthropic model, but also works in our for-profit model."

In founding Victory Square, he looked at other so-called 'angel investors' and saw something missing.

"I would see an angel investor cut a cheque to a small company and hope that company would do good things with those dollars. But they might not be actively involved in the day-to-day business," Tejani explained. "But the most valuable thing is the combination of time, knowledge and money."

"On the business side, if we are going to fund a company, we want to be actively engaged in that company. Sometimes the expertise we can offer a start-up is more valuable to them than the dollars. It helps a young entrepreneur improve the chances of their business being successful and of our investment being successful."

"On the not-for-profit side, these organizations are often so focused on 'doing good' that sustainability and financial planning gets pushed aside. Treating those grassroots organizations like I would a tech start-up, working with them on capacity building, creating a sustainable fundraising model in the Digital Age, crowd-funding, and increasing their donor base, showed me the biggest benefits I could give to a non-profit were the same as I could give to a for-profit."

## "I WAS PROGRAMMED TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITY..."

When it comes to philanthropy, Victory Square is "hyper-focused" on helping vulnerable children and youth reach their potential. The company contributes an eighth of its profits to philanthropic endeavours and encourages members of its team to invest 40 hours per month, lending their knowledge and skills to help these organizations.

"My parents came here as immigrants. We didn't have a lot of money, but I had love and support and education – all the basics. There are a lot of kids that are born into situations here in Canada or abroad who don't get to choose their environment or situation. If they don't have the basics, there's no way for them to break that cycle of poverty."

For a long time, Tejani's philanthropy was focused in developing countries in South Asia and Africa, but when he moved back to Vancouver seven years ago, he saw an opportunity to affect change closer to home.

"Our office is in Gastown, a great area where a block away you've got one of the highest poverty rates in Canada and some of the highest drug use. You've got this dynamic where there's \$12 cold-pressed juice and then, across the street, you've got heroin and fentanyl being sold and used."

Victory Square has been working closely with KidSafe, an organization that provides essential programs and services, such as meals and recreational activities, to more than 450 referred Vancouver children and youth each year. Tejani also funds athletics programs, literacy programs and coding camps for kids.

"These kids wouldn't normally have access to these types of things, which I believe can give them a competitive advantage," he said. "We've taken a targeted approach, working with several organizations that will target the same kids. I want to focus on this and show the impact of what can happen if we work with these families from the beginning."

"Most funding these types of organizations receive goes by program and year to year, but there's nothing currently that says we're not going to take care of these kids for the next 12 years and make sure they have what they need at home and school." **WAG**

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# Signature Homecoming Events

## Friday, October 20

### 43<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL ALUMNI AWARDS DINNER

5:30 p.m. Reception

6:30 p.m. Dinner

The Great Hall

Join us as we honour our extraordinary Alumni Award of Merit, Don Wright Faculty of Music Alumni Award and Western Mustangs Athletic Alumni Award honorees.

**\$90 per person (registration required)**

### TAKE THE STAGE: MUSTANG TALENT REVEALED

9:00 p.m.

The Spoke

Gather your friends, grab your guitar, order a pint and take the stage to share your talent with fellow alumni.

**\$10 per person  
(registration required)**



## OPEN MIC NIGHT

### SOUTH END ZONE LUNCH AND FOOTBALL GAME

Lunch 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Game time 1 p.m.

TD Stadium

Join us for eats and cleats at field level in the South End Zone. Watch the Mustangs play the Ottawa Gee-Gees in what promises to be great football action. Includes lunch off the grill, access to a private cash bar and game ticket.

Lunch and Game ticket prices:

**\$40 General admission**

**\$25 General admission (Youth 6-17)**

**\$45 Reserved seat in Section D**



### FOR FOOTBALL TICKETS ONLY:

Call **519.661.4077** or order online  
[westernmustangstickets.ca](http://westernmustangstickets.ca)

## Saturday, October 21

### THE GAME: WESTERN MUSTANGS VS. OTTAWA GEE-GEES

#### ALUMNI TAILGATE BBQ

10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Huron Flats Parking Lot

Live music, kids activities, a visit from JW, commemorative photo opportunity and free giveaways. Dry event.

**BBQ lunch available for \$5**

### GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY DINNER

5 p.m. Reception

6 p.m. Dinner

The Great Hall

Join your classmates from 1967 and earlier for an elegant evening featuring a three-course meal and musical entertainment. Plus, receive your golden reunion pin!

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A photograph of Melanie Teed-Murch, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a black jacket with white trim and a red dress, sitting on a black office chair in a Toys 'R Us store. She is smiling and has her hands clasped. The store is filled with various toys, including a white unicorn, a black and white penguin, a brown rocking horse, and a giraffe. In the background, there are shelves of toys, including a Star Wars Stormtrooper figure and a red car. The title 'Toy story' is overlaid on the image in large, white and blue letters.

# Toy story

BY JASON WINDERS, MES'16, PHD'16

## PARK THE EGO AND LISTEN TO WHAT MELANIE TEED-MURCH, BA'95, HAS TO SAY

**M**elanie Teed-Murch, BA'95 (English Language and Literature), has seemingly taken every life lesson to heart. And she has the scars to prove it.

Thick skin. Wide eyes. Big heart. And a willingness to park the ego. She is proud of every scar earned learning those lessons. And now today, Teed-Murch, President of Toys "R" Us Canada, is happy to share the story behind each in hopes of helping the next generation.

"I watched my parents work hard. Work ethic is something that is strong and instilled in me. Whatever I do, I am

going to do a good job. I am going to give you 1,000 per cent of my effort, because that is who I am."


Teed-Murch is fourth generation Thornbury, Ont. One of two sisters growing up on an apple farm. To this day, she can still handle a combine harvester or a tractor, with or without attached disk harrow. (Not every national retail chain president can say that.)

The work was hard.

The days were long.

But she loved every minute.

"What a great way to grow up. It was super simple – and I don't mean simple in a demeaning way. I have a humble background. And I am proud of that."



Melanie Teed-Murch, BA'95, President of Toys "R" Us Canada, tried on different things at Western. Journalism. Pych. Sociology. Business. English. But she fell in love with the arts and all it offered her in helping her organize and communicate her ideas. (PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

Finances were always tight; the family stayed together. They always broke bread together – even if that meant 10 minutes in the bed of a pickup during her dad's break in the fields. They made time for one another.

Every Christmas, the sisters got one really great gift. "I can tell you what they were from every year. Every year. I never remember thinking I didn't have things. I never remember being envious of others."

Truth be told, the toy tastemaker for an entire country never owned a Barbie – a fact she admitted when she first met Mattel product representatives. But why would she? Her dad was one of three boys. She was a farm girl. Her favourite toy was a Tonka truck that she used to cultivate earth in a sandbox.

She married her high school sweetheart, Paul, who went to the University of Waterloo. She didn't need to forgive him for that – it was her plan all along. She wanted him to pursue the path that was right for him.

"I tell my kids now, 'If you're meant to be together, it will happen.'"

She came to Western – the first person in her family to go to university. There was a lot of pride around that fact. Her father told her if she could get in, they would find a way to help her pay for it.

Coming from a town of 3,000 to a campus of 30,000 was eye-opening. Yet, she felt immediately "at home" – an admittedly "corny-but-true" statement. She can still see UC Hill in her mind, as well as in a sketch that hangs on a wall in her Concord, Ont., office.

From her earliest recollections, she

wanted to be a lawyer. But at Western, she kept "trying on different things." Journalism. Psychology. Sociology. Business. English. She fell in love with the arts and all it offered her in helping her organize and communicate her ideas.

During all that time in school, she never knew a career in retail existed. "I knew there were stores – I would shop at stores," she laughed. "But I didn't understand the backend of what we do here today – how we source products, build assortments, do planograms. I had no idea."

Straight from university, Teed-Murch joined Toys "R" Us in 1996 as a store manager in Kitchener, Ont. Since, she has been promoted through a variety of senior leadership, merchandising and operational roles, including her most recent position as Canada's Chief Merchant before moving to President one year ago.

Coming up within the same company, one that operates 70 stores across the country, she valued mentors who guided her through an unfamiliar industry. These were the people she models herself after today.

"I credit my quick progression to having people who I worked for who weren't scared. When you have young, eager, high-potential young people working for you, don't be scared. You should not be road-blocking people from taking your job; you should do the inverse.

"People can be so concerned about themselves. Well, park your ego. The people who park their ego are the most successful. Coaching and mentoring. I love that part. When you are a leader who can truly empower your team, you are highly successful, you are highly regarded and you have a positive culture."

During her career, she worked harder for those who believed in her. She liked to be pushed. She was told she had "greatness in her," but ...

She needed to learn to listen.

To work smarter.

To be open to ideas from others.

Sometimes those criticisms hit hard. There was a bit of frustration, anger, maybe even a few tears. But she learned. "People tend to get wounded. But you need to be open to hearing these teachable moments as opportunities. Treat them as such. I took those criticisms to heart."

She forgot that being eager was not enough. Hungry to impress, she still needed the help of others.

"In the journey to take the next step, I forgot some of the people around me had been in the business a long time. When I took the opportunity to listen, I realized I had people who had been selling for 30 years. The knowledge base that came back to me was 10-fold from what I thought I knew – and I actually didn't know that much."

For the next generation, she hopes to be the same kind of mentor she depended upon. She sees the mistakes they make – some of the same she made. And her lessons are universal.

There doesn't seem to be much she cannot overcome. She speaks of the lessons learned when her father died in a car accident more than two decades ago. "I don't believe life hands you more than you can handle. At the time it may feel that way, but as you work through it, you will figure out how to get back to your path."

He father never saw her rise in the corporate world. But the lessons learned on the family farm keep her rooted in family tradition today. "Don't be afraid of hard work. Don't be afraid of risk taking. Don't be afraid of being a dreamer. Be positive. There is no reason not to be positive even when life throws you curveballs." [WAG](#)



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

# SHOOTING FOR THE MOON

BY KERI FERGUSON



## Founding duo pushing *Diply* to new heights

**I**n February 2013, Dean Elkholy and Taylor Ablitt were holed up in a Western classroom. As Elkholy described an opportunity to create viral content that would leverage a massive number of followers on social media, Ablitt scribbled numbers on a chalkboard.

“After about eight hours, we took a step back and looked at this wall of numbers,” Elkholy recalled. “We said, ‘Holy shit, if what we’re seeing here is true, we’ve got ourselves a business.’”

Four years later, that business is Diply, one of the fastest-growing social content platforms in the world. Second only to BuzzFeed, Diply reaches more than 70 million fans who generate 1.4 billion video views and five billion social impressions monthly. Their editorial and video teams publish content designed to engage readers and ultimately derive revenue through display ads and product integration campaigns directed at target audiences through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat.

While Ablitt, HBA’10, was working as a financial analyst for Trojan Technologies and Elkholy, BA’12 (Kinesiology), was applying to dental school, they were also finding early success online in the DIY space, popular with millennial females.

“We published ‘How to make things’ a million times with unique hacks of how to do things in a different way,” said Elkholy, 28. “We were getting a lot of traction; we were able to grow the community very quickly.”

**THE COMPANY GREW** to a half a million fans within a three-month period. It's a community they continue to grow today through videos produced in-house for their Crafty (DIY), Delicious (food) and Flawless (beauty and makeup) channels.

"The key to our success has been connecting audiences to content that creates an emotional attachment. There is a science as much as there's an art as to how to drive engagement, and, in turn, to get people to share the content. The average Facebook user today has about 300 friends. So, when they're enticed by something they see and share it with their friends and family, you get this viral or social network effect," said Ablitt, who grew up in an entrepreneurial family.

"Once you have a user base or a sense of community, you can take them places, you can get them to buy things, consume more content and be brand advocates."

Creating that engaging content involves a lot of testing.

"That's been imbedded in our blood since Day One," Elkholy explained. "We hypothesize if a piece of content's going to work for a new audience segment on a new Facebook page that we want to start. We're constantly testing to figure out what's going to work on a piece of content that goes out. "We manipulate the images and titles, trying 'A/B' tests (comparing two versions of a particular piece of content) to see what works better and then that's how we'll publish it."

They also know when to bring in the right people, with the right strengths, at the right time.

"We had all these great ideas, and this opportunity at hand that we wanted to go after, but Dean and I are not coders. We were running into big problems. So we began actively looking for someone on the development side," said Ablitt, 30.

At that point, they teamed with Diply's third co-founder and local tech entrepreneur, Gary Manning, a top mind on social media-based applications, and who took them to the next level.

Feeling confident, Ablitt left Trojan and Elkholy abandoned his plans for dental school. But they underestimated the costs of building their website, and had to pitch Ablitt's parents for the money.

"We got all suited up and thought we'd give them a 20-minute presentation. It turned into an eight-hour

“ The average Facebook user today has about 300 friends. So, when they're enticed by something they see and share it with their friends and family, you get this viral or social network effect. ”



whiteboard session," Ablitt laughed. "We told them we thought we would become one of Canada's Top 1,500 sites – an insane number."

"At the end, my parents looked at us with blank faces. My father said, 'We don't have any idea what you guys are talking about. The numbers sound great, but we're going to invest in you guys because it's the entrepreneur and the people that drive success.'"

It was a smart decision. The site cracked the Top 10,000 sites in the world within the first 30 days.

As they've grown their company to employ 150 people globally, with offices in Toronto, New York and Chicago, in addition to their headquarters in London, Ont., Ablitt said his father's comment on investing in people has stuck. "We've surrounded ourselves with a leadership team of people who are smarter than we are, who've 'been there and done that' in many respects."

That includes Dan Langoni, President and Chief Revenue Officer, who has helped transform some of the world's largest digital media brands, and Kirstine Stewart, a former VP at Twitter.

"When I decided to leave Twitter, I had many opportunities in front of me," Stewart said. "They were all exciting and located in different cities and countries. What drew me to Diply was the potential of this fabulous social media publishing business that Dean and Taylor had brought to this stage. Diply is the unsung hero in its space and well-positioned to take a huge leap forward."

Their goal is to become the No. 1 social entertainment site in the United States within the next 24 months, and build on that momentum.

"After North America, there's the European markets, Spanish markets, Asia and India. There's opportunities where people are wanting content. So, if we can do what we are doing in the toughest market in the world, we can localize it and be well positioned to go after those markets," Ablitt said.

"We go where the people go, so if there's a new platform, we're always going to be on top of that," Elkholy said. "We kind of try and disrupt ourselves, because if we don't, someone else might."

"From Day One, since that first presentation, we've always shot for the stars," Ablitt added. "If you land on the moon, I guess that's not the worst of things." [WAG](#)



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# Pride and Joyus

## ENTREPRENEUR CHANGING THE NARRATIVE IN TECH

BY KATHRYN KINAHAN,  
BA'86, MLIS'93

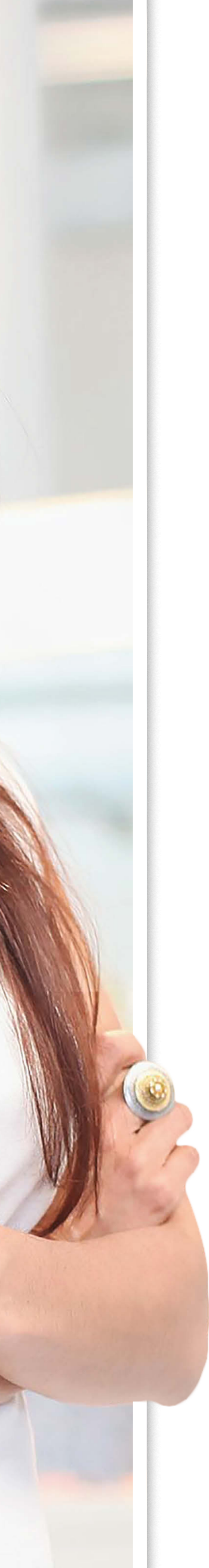
From St. Catharines to Silicon Valley, the journey wasn't always easy or straightforward for Sukhinder Singh Cassidy, HBA'92. But throughout her career, the tech world power player has put herself in a position to succeed by both seeing what is next and understanding the diversity of talent needed to help her get there.

Singh Cassidy grew up in St. Catharines, Ont., with two sisters and her parents, both doctors. She chose Western because it offered unlimited opportunity: business, medicine, law. The number of available programs and freedom to choose was a perfect match for someone still deciding on a career path.

At Western and the Ivey Business School, she learned to think broadly and laterally.

"I was able to get my toes wet on really creative problem-solving and consider an issue five different ways," she remembered. "It opened my eyes to all the opportunity out there. I mean, when I started my HBA, I didn't know consulting from investment banking from entrepreneurship. The business school gave





me the confidence to pursue all those different opportunities and feel like they were actually achievable. That was a big factor for me.”

During her fourth year, when everyone else was in recruiting for jobs, Singh Cassidy went to Belgium on exchange. “When I came back, recruiting season was done. I had a difficult time getting started because most of the jobs I wanted had already come and gone.”

She persevered, staying in London, looking for work and waiting for the next recruiting cycle. When a job still didn’t materialize, she began to get discouraged.

Through a friend, and fellow Ivey graduate, her resume found its way to Merrill Lynch in New York City. She received a notice from the company suggesting an information interview if she was ever in the city. Thinking it a form letter, Singh Cassidy didn’t pay it much heed.

“Then my father said to me, ‘What have you got to lose? Why don’t you book yourself a train ticket to New York and just go meet them?’ So I headed to New York,” she said.

From that initial information interview, she was fast-tracked through the recruiting process and ended up with a job on Wall Street. “Basically, a year after I graduated, I started my dream job. I credit Western for my education, as well as a combination of persistence, timing and luck.”

After a stint in investment banking, Singh Cassidy moved throughout the tech world, including Amazon.com and News Corp’s BSKyB, eventually spending almost six years as Google’s President of Asia-Pacific and Latin American operations. In between, she co-founded Yodlee, a financial-services company and later served as CEO of the fashion site Polyvore.

After Google, she spent time with a venture capital firm studying everything in e-commerce – an area, she believed, was on the brink of reinvention. She was interested in the idea of integrating lifestyle interests within e-commerce. Think merchandise, fashion, beauty, home, interior design.

An added dimension she considered was the emerging power of video.

“Watching the rise of YouTube, it was very clear to me that video and commerce had yet to be married. And you only need to look offline at QVC and HSN (Home Shopping Network), both multi-billion-dollar businesses, to realize there was going to be a shopping channel for the Internet at some point,” she said.

In 2011, Singh Cassidy founded Joyus, an online retailer that operates an e-commerce video platform that allows customers to purchase products directly from the company’s website or video player.

Starting any new company carries a certain degree of risk. “Consumer Internet companies are high risk because people are really trying to create a new category,” said Singh Cassidy, who serves as Chairman of Joyus.

There are a lot of factors at play: consumer adoption,

timing, serendipity, luck. “But there is also an ‘X’ factor in consumer Internet businesses. Sometimes the first player is the first and biggest. Sometimes it’s not just about the idea – it’s about timing. Is the consumer ready? Is the market ready? I mean, before Facebook, there was Friendster and Myspace,” she said.

Being an entrepreneur was second nature to Singh Cassidy.

My father loved being an entrepreneur as much as he loved being a doctor. He always told me to work for myself and showed me what entrepreneurship looked like,” she said.

When she was in school, she was taken with the notion of being an executive. Although she was content working on Wall Street and with BSKyB in the executive suite, her father’s words kept coming back to her. By her mid-20s, the idea of entrepreneurship was percolating. She visited a friend at Stanford Business School and fell in love with the Bay Area.

**“The argument that because ‘we don’t have enough girls in STEM, there’s a problem with women in tech’ didn’t make sense to me.”**

Two decades later, Singh Cassidy is a powerful voice in the tech world advocating about the importance of diversity among its ranks.

She has also spoken out against U.S. President Donald Trump’s executive order on immigration and changes to the H-1B visa program. Herself a beneficiary of the U.S. foreign worker program, she stressed its importance in bringing – and, potentially, keeping – talent in North America.

By 2013, she was tired of hearing complaints with no solutions for the lack of women in the tech industry. “The argument that because ‘we don’t have enough girls in STEM, there’s a problem with women in tech’ didn’t make sense to me. There are numerous examples of successful female leaders at tech companies: Susan Wojcicki, CEO of YouTube; Sheryl Sandberg, COO at Facebook; or myself at Google.”

Given the large number of private companies in Silicon Valley, she recognized their board rooms as a golden opportunity to include more women.

In 2015, Singh Cassidy started theBoardlist, a curated, exclusive peer-to-peer site that helps tech companies find qualified, experienced women for their corporate boards. The company currently has 1,600 women listed, all recommended by their industry peers. In April 2017, she rang the opening bell at the Toronto Stock Exchange to mark the Canadian launch of theBoardlist.

“To me, starting theBoardlist was a way to give back and a way to change the narrative,” she said.

Today, Singh Cassidy lives in the Bay Area with her husband, Simon, MBA’94, and their three children. [WAG](#)



# Shani Mootoo blooms as artist, author and activist

BY KERI FERGUSON

**A**s a child, her words landed her in trouble. But, as a ‘masterful storyteller,’ Shani Mootoo’s words have also landed her on the shortlist for the Giller Prize, the longlist for the Man Booker Prize and, most recently, as the winner of the Lambda Literary Award for Outstanding Mid-Career Novelist.

Mootoo, BFA’80, was 10 years old when she shared one of her poems with her parents. In them, she described an idyllic world in which, much to her parents’ discomfort, “man loves man, man loves woman, woman loves woman.” What quickly followed was a lesson on ‘who could love whom,’ and the societal mores of her homeland, Trinidad, which still, to this day, criminalizes homosexuality.

This was not the first time her words provoked a strong reaction, having been silenced by her grandmother years before for telling of a family friend who touched her inappropriately.

Saddened, she pushed her words aside, and chose instead

to explore her ideas through a more ambiguous medium – art. And it was her art that brought her to Western.

“The whole world of Trinidad at that time was close-knit and young people tended to do what their friends did,” Mootoo explained from her home in Prince Edward County, Ont. “I wanted to study art, whereas people my age wanted to go into business, medicine or law. So, I was seen as the one who was not going to amount to very much.”

Her parents insisted she apply to the University of West Indies for Law.

“I did it – I was incredibly unhappy,” Mootoo recalled. “It caused a lot of trouble at home. I wanted to go to Goldsmiths in England, and I was accepted at Concordia. But my parents said, ‘No.’ Eventually, they spoke with friends whose children were



Shani Mootoo's, BFA'80, breakout novel, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, thrust her into the national spotlight as it was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, among other national and international awards.

all going to Western to study business, and said, 'If you are going to do art – which we don't want you to do – you will go to the university that we want you to go to.'"

Her father contacted Duncan deKergommeaux, then Studio Arts head, who, upon seeing Mootoo's portfolio, immediately accepted her over the phone.

When she arrived at Western on a student visa, she chose not to associate with her Caribbean peers.

"That was partly because we were of a really different mindset. They were on a track of making money, taking over their family's businesses. I was off on my own; I didn't want to be the odd man out. The other thing is, I didn't want my queerness, which I knew about, to become public knowledge because it would spread back home."

Instead, she "ensconced" herself in the art department where she encountered teachers like deKergommeaux, painter Paterson Ewen and sculptor Robin Peck. "Paterson and Robin took me under their wings, and that was a big deal for me," she explained. "The world opened up for me at Western. We had travelled a lot in my family, but at Western, I was actually meeting people and becoming friends with them."

Mootoo was born in Dublin, Ireland, and moved to Trinidad at three months old. She immigrated to Canada a year after she graduated from Western, and worked as a visual artist and video producer in Vancouver, Alberta and New York City, creating work that's been exhibited internationally.

Getting published as an author, "was completely accidental," and came about when her private writings were shared, unbeknownst to her, with Press Gang Publishers, who eventually persuaded her to write *Out on Main Street*, a collection of short stories, in 1993.

She soon learned how far her written work would reach, but nothing prepared her for the attention she would receive three years later, when her breakout novel, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, thrust her into the spotlight.

"It got shortlisted for the Chapters First Novel and the Ethel Wilson Book Prize Award, and longlisted for the Man Booker," she recalled. "When I got the phone call about the Giller, I didn't know what it was."

At the Giller ceremony – where Mootoo stood alongside nominees Mordecai Richler (who won for *Barney's Version*) and Carol Shields – Canadian literary icon Mavis Gallant remarked on Mootoo's future potential. McClelland and Stewart saw it too, approaching Press Gang to buy the rights to *Cereus* and her next novel.

"I actually panicked and couldn't write for eight years, because this was not actually something I had intended to continue. But, I did enjoy writing it tremendously. Every line was a struggle. A delightful struggle."

### "WHEN I GOT THE PHONE CALL ABOUT THE GILLER, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS."

Although the book was published in 14 countries outside of Canada, *Cereus* wasn't embraced by everyone. Back in Trinidad, a student at the University of West Indies was forbidden by her parents to do her thesis on Mootoo's work, and during a conference at that institution, Mootoo was "torn to pieces on stage for exposing the lesbian stuff," she said. "There were professors in the audience who had taught my work, who would not stand up for me."

Mootoo wasn't bitter, having learned from her politician father that, "you have to put the personal aside to see the bigger value. If you change things or other people, I think the discomfort you experience is minor. Homosexuality is still illegal in Trinidad, but there's a great deal of conversation about it, there's a lot of talk about childhood sexual abuse – all kinds of things that were part of my work."

She added, "People can read fiction, and talk about fiction more openly than they can talk about things that are actually happening in society. Step-by-step it goes from the fiction, to conversation about the fiction, to the little revelations that, 'Well, you know, that happened to so and so,' or, 'This actually happened to me.'"

Her novels since *Cereus – He Drown She in the Sea*, *Valmiki's Daughter* and *Moving Forward Sideways Like a Crab* – have kept her on prestigious literary award lists. In 2011, she was invited back to the University of West Indies as a writer-in-residence. That was particularly significant, she said, because, "I love my country very, very much. My three countries – Ireland, Trinidad and Canada." [WAG](#)

# Finding dance in everyday movements

BY SONIA PRESZCATOR

**D**r. Paul Winston, MD'02, was born to move.

"The stretch from dancer to doctor isn't as far as you might think," said the Victoria, BC, practicing alumnus. "As a dancer, I had a personal understanding of how the body functions. As a physiatrist, I treat problems that impact those functions, ranging from sore shoulders to spinal cord injuries to disorders caused by brain tumours and accidents."

Starting at 10 years of age, Winston embraced a life of dance. He was a natural – his body was flexible, his limbs beautifully co-ordinated. After being encouraged by family to pursue the dream, what followed was eight years at the National Ballet School of Canada in Toronto and six years with the National Ballet of Canada.

He was at the top of the game. While admittedly not the best dancer in the troupe, hard work pushed him to the forefront. He loved every minute. The stage. The travel. The audiences.

At 24, however, a freak cycling accident ended everything. He was left unable to lift his arm. His elite performance days were ending. It was at that moment, encouraged by conversations with National Ballet School Director Betty Oliphant, that Winston "rather naively decided to go to university and become a doctor."

After three years of undergrad, he applied to medical school at Western.

"I was over the moon to secure an interview at Western on my first attempt. It was the third interview question that made me realize they knew nothing about me and I had to find a way to make myself interesting," Winston said.

"The question was, 'Who is your favourite famous person?' Madly searching my mind in an effort to perform well in my only interview, I quickly blurted out 'Karen Kain.' This was the absolute truth – I was always impressed by how someone who was such a game-changer for dance, who could be so internationally accomplished and famous, still treated all her colleagues with respect and kindness. It was at that point the panel learned I used to dance professionally alongside her and even lift her on occasion."

He found medical school overwhelming. But in that challenge, he also found similarity to his



(PHOTO BY CHAD HIPPOLITO)

earlier life.

"The volume of information and workload is extreme. But I cannot say enough about my classmates and faculty. It was very much like being in the dance company – we all had the same purpose and wanted each other to succeed," Winston said. "We encouraged and coached each other and even circulated study notes online."

His dance background and later injury informed his choice of specialty. He landed on becoming a physiatrist, a doctor who works on the physical, neurological and functional aspects of illness and injury. "Modern medicine is very good at stopping disease progression, but then what? As physiatrists, we practice maximizing potential and restoration of function."

Winston brings to his practice an expert understanding of how the body moves, even at the highest level of performance.

Now in his 40s, Winston considers himself lucky to have found his second vocation early.

"I'm very happy to have left a proud dance career with few regrets," he said. "At this age, some of my friends would just be retiring from dance and building the next phase of their life. For me, I am still seeing dance in everyday movements, now it is a routine that helps others move and enjoy life again." **WAG**



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# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

ANDREW S. NEVIN, BSC'80, MA'81, FINDING CANADA'S ECONOMIC PLACE IN THE WORLD

BY KERI FERGUSON

(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)



**A**ndrew S. Nevin came to Western keen to complete his honours degree in three years instead of four. He did it – earning a 91 per cent average in his final year. The day he graduated, he was awarded the Gold Medal in Computer Science.

He was 17 years old.

Today, one of Western's youngest-ever graduates is helping Canada find its economic place in the world by combining his education, expertise and passion to understand.

Growing up in modest circumstances in London, Nevin, BSc'80, MA'81, enrolled as perhaps the university's youngest-ever student at 13, after racing through elementary and high school.

"When I was at South (Secondary School) and before I became full-time at Western, I did one course – *Computer Science 20*. The next year, I came and continued on in Computer Science and Mathematics."

He had no trouble fitting in on campus. He had reached his full height by the time he was 14 and he played soccer for the London FC U23. But, it wasn't all smooth sailing.

"In 1978-79, my parents moved away for a year. I was 15 and living with my older brother. I partied a bit too much and didn't get very good grades. The Associate Dean called me in and said, 'Andrew, this isn't good enough. You have to do better.' It had a big impact on me. The next year, my parents moved back and I did seven courses instead of five. I never went out once. It was a great lesson for me. I was always very focused after that."

Focused enough to set up his own summer internship in Copenhagen, he helped design software for the Danish Space Research Institute, before returning to Western to earn his Master's Degree in Economics. At 18, he moved to Harvard to pursue a doctorate in economics, stepping away for two years to attend Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar from Western.

"I grew up with my father telling me that the greatest thing that could happen would be to become a Rhodes Scholar."

During his time at Western, he was too young to apply for the elite scholarship.

He turned 20 at Harvard, but like all U.S. schools, they only allow senior students to apply. So, he returned home and Western nominated him.

"It was an incredibly important event for Western to say, 'You have two degrees from here and we're happy to support you.' It all began here. Western gave me everything, equipping me to go out and do all sorts of things."

Nevin was the youngest student in his class at Oxford, too, where he earned his Master's Degree in Philosophy and Politics. He played for the Balliol College 1st Club football team and the Oxford University Ice Hockey Club, scoring two goals in the 5-1 win over Cambridge in the 100th anniversary game of the world's oldest ice hockey competition. He travelled extensively throughout Europe and Asia during his final year – a sign of the adventures ahead.

**"I've studied all this and I could become a professor, but I don't know very much about the world, so let me go and have a look."**

"At the end of my PhD, I said, 'I've studied all this and I could become a professor, but I don't know very much about the world, so let me go and have a look.' I thought I would just go for a few years; it's been more like 30."

His career path since included consulting for McKinsey & Company of Toronto and Paris; working as a discount broker for TD Waterhouse in Hong Kong; and running businesses in Tokyo, Shanghai and Sydney. As President of United Family Hospitals in China, Nevin was part of the team that led the hospital and expat community through the SARS crisis of 2003. He also comfortably cites "failed entrepreneur" as part of his resume, referencing his e-learning start-up, LanguageCalls, his last venture before leaving Hong Kong.

"For 20 years, I never used my Economics degree. And then, I came to London (U.K.) and joined PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on Sept. 15, 2008,

the day that Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. I was completely new to the U.K. since Oxford. I had no clients. But I had a PhD in Economics, so it cascaded down to me to say what was going on.

"That's when I discovered that while I had been away doing other things for 20 years, economics had led us to this point of this great financial crisis."

As he deconstructed the crash, spearheading PricewaterhouseCoopers' perspective on global megatrends professionally, he also began recording his personal thoughts on the failing global economy. To this day, he shares his takes – self-dubbed 'Nevinomics' – on his website, [nevinomicscanada.ca](http://nevinomicscanada.ca), where he explores fundamental issues in economics and society to understand where Canada fits within the world economy.

Nevin currently lives in West Africa, residing in Lagos, where he is a Partner, Financial Services Advisory Leader and Chief Economist with PricewaterhouseCoopers Nigeria. He regularly comments in the media on the country's enormous economic potential in the face of huge challenges as its population burgeons in a land fraught with corrupt governance, regional conflicts and a huge "branding problem."

"I come from the country with the No. 1 brand; I'm working in the country with the last. I couldn't have imagined growing up in small town Canada that I'd end up being the No. 1 economist in Nigeria at this point in history, when Nigeria is such a critical part of the world because of the scale of it and what's happening in Africa. It's a long way from Canada, but it affects us."

Nevin hopes to return home in the near future, to share his global economic perspective and engage in the Canadian debate on how to deal with the issues of our rapidly changing times, including our aging population, robotics and artificial intelligence. He has a book in the works – one "very much focused on Canada" – that will present his writings from Nevinomics in a structured fashion.

"When you've seen as much as anyone can of the planet, how much more you treasure what Canada has managed to do. It's just extraordinary. We need to make sure we are taking the right steps so that we don't lose it, and go further." [WAG](http://WAG)

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# On a stage of her own

Law career won't force Maia Bent, LLB'96, out of the spotlight

BY JASON WINDERS, MES'10, PHD'16



**T**urns out, it was a role Maia Bent was born to play – even if it wasn't a role she initially wanted.

Today, the California-born, Edmonton-raised Bent, LLB'96, is a Partner at Lerner's law firm in London, Ont., where she works on personal injury, fatality, disability and insurance cases. A former President of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association, she has garnered a host of honours during her career, and serves as an Adjunct Professor with Western Law.

Funny thing is, this was all "the backup plan."

Always a lover of stories – be they on stage, screen or page – Bent started studying theatre at the University of Victoria. She followed her dreams to York University on the advice of a professor/mentor, but never connected there. After a year, she went home and finished her degree at the University of Alberta.

"And then there I was, I had this endless degree and, in the end, didn't really have anything to show for it."

She stayed home, worked and performed in community theatre with hopes of joining a professional company. She married, moved to London to be closer to her parents, started a family and then reviewed her career goals.

"I was 28 – and I realized this theatre thing wasn't going to happen for me."

She decided to continue her education. She was accepted into Western's English Literature graduate program, "but at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, I started thinking. I had always toyed with this idea of law. My mom was a family law lawyer. So, I thought, 'I'm going to write the LSAT.'"

For those unfamiliar, the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a half-day, standardized test that people study for months to take. It is not usually an impulse move.

By the time she called to register, there was only one more test being offered to qualify for fall. She called on a Tuesday; the test was that Saturday.

Taking the test in Kitchener, she nearly opted against going because of a blinding white-out making roads difficult to travel. But she went. She took the test. And she scored in the

98<sup>th</sup> percentile of all who took it.

"If you don't know what you don't know, sometimes that helps," she laughed. "Going in a little blind wasn't so bad. I had no stress. I was just like, 'This will be an interesting thing. Let's see how it turns out.'"

She entered Western Law and loved every moment. "When I was trying to be an actress, I wasn't very good at it. I was always struggling, always feeling someone was doing it better or it was coming easier to them. But when I got into law, it made sense to me. Everything fit together in my brain."

She began her career at Lerner's soon after graduation. She embraced the new career, but hated leaving her theatre skills behind. "When I decided I was going to go into law, I thought, 'Ugh, that is a lot of wonderful training wasted.' I thought I would never use those skills again. But honestly, I use them all the time."

You see, the skills didn't leave her; she was simply performing for a different audience.

"I use everything I learned on stage. Theatre is about being able to stand and speak confidently in front of people. Using that in a courtroom is obvious. But a trial is also a play of sorts; you are telling a story, communicating with a jury, a judge."

In her first year of Law school, she won the school's client counseling competition – a rarity for someone new to the program. The competition involved interacting with actors portraying clients. To win, she needed to listen, analyze and advise. "And that's exactly what we did in theatre – it's improv, it's reacting."

Theatre also gave her the ability to get into the heads of her clients.

"I do personal injury work – working with everyone from the most educated people you can think of to those who have had very hard lives. You must be able to understand where they are coming from; you have to be able to relate on a human level. That is what you do when studying a character you may be portraying." [\*\*WAG\*\*](#)

BY ANGIE WISEMAN

# Giving life a try

Barb Mervin  
finds success on  
and off the pitch



**FOR MUSTANGS RUGBY LEGEND** Barb Mervin, BA'06 (Art History), a simple but powerful conversation with her coaches changed the trajectory of her education – and her life.

Dealing with a learning disability, she never thought university was an option. Mervin credits coaches Natascha Wesch and Mike Hopper for encouraging her to attend university after coaching her in the Under-19 Ontario division of women's rugby. The pair later coached her at Western, as well.

"They asked me if I was interested in coming to Western, which might sound silly, but it was really a powerful moment in my life. I thought, 'You actually want me? You want me to come your school?'" said Mervin, born in St. John's, N.L., and raised in Peterborough, Ont.

"(Wesch) got a lot of negative feedback for recruiting. Someone said how awful it was and asked me how I felt about it. I was so grateful because had she not approached me and said, 'You should come to this university. You can have a future here.' I might not have gone. In fact, I wouldn't have."

Today, Mervin has used her lengthy, successful career within the Canadian rugby union to springboard into a career as an entrepreneur and fashion designer helping her fellow athletes in a new way.

Inspired to pursue rugby and university deeper, Mervin was determined to succeed at both. She returned to high school to upgrade her courses so she could apply to Western. "I didn't apply to any other university. I knew I wanted to go there. Thankfully, I was able to get in."

Once here, her education continued both inside and outside the classroom.

She was a standout on the pitch, winning the *Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS)* Rookie of the Year Award, CIS National Player of the Year honour, as well

as a pair of national titles. She also credits her time as an Arts & Humanities student for giving her an appreciation for design, a skillset that laid the foundation for the next iteration of her life.

"I learned so much at Western. Most of my education came from being part of the Mustangs program and Mustangs family. Natasha and Mike really instilled the skills in me that I needed to take rugby to the next level. They didn't just do that for me; they did that for so many athletes," she said.

After university, Mervin moved to Victoria to pursue rugby and join the Women's National Rugby team, a squad she has been a part of for more than a decade.

In 2010, Mervin made the World Cup team after being placed on the reserve list for the 2006 squad. In 2013, she joined the Sevens Program, an elite program where athletes train for five to six hours a day, six days a week. While grateful for the opportunity, she saw the grind taking its toll on her body. She was cut from the team.

She decided to retire from rugby for a year and focus on her career. "At the time, I thought, if rugby isn't my future, I need to build my future. It was a bit like a punch in the gut realizing that rugby wasn't going to last forever," she said.

She poured herself into a company she had started years earlier, but never dedicated herself to full time. Aptoella Design House specializes in clothing for female athletes. Mervin came up with the clothing line as a result of a need she saw on tour; the women on her team were given men's rugby clothing that weren't the right size or fit.

"When you get that red (national team) jersey and you put it on your body, it's so special. It means so much because of all the sweat and choices you've made to make that happen. It should fit



you perfectly," she said.

With her company finally hitting its stride, Mervin realized she was lacking balance in her life. She often worked 14-16 hour days without a break. It was then her friends and former teammates encouraged her to come out with them to do some training.

"I noticed I was singing to the radio on my way to training and it just really made me so happy to be training again, and as odd as it sounds, training for the national team brought more balance to my life. I'm a bit of an extremist so I can do the training and come back to work and be so much more productive that way," she said.

**"IT WAS A BIT LIKE A PUNCH IN THE GUT REALIZING THAT RUGBY WASN'T GOING TO LAST FOREVER."**

Without the pressure, Mervin pushed again for the 2014 World Cup. She made the team, but suffered a broken hand in the first game. "While I didn't get to perform with those girls, I still felt I was part of the team. And to go on and do so well, it showcased how wonderful women's rugby is. What a great sport it is. To have the country behind us, it was really the perfect storm," she said.

Mervin continues to make her mark internationally both as a player and CEO of her clothing company. The now 35-year-old Mervin once again took part in the World Cup in Ireland this summer. She continues to build her brand with success in more than 15 countries across the world.

"The clothing you put on for sports should celebrate the athletic body you have and support that body in a world where you feel powerful," she said. [WAG](#)

# BUILDING CHAMPIONS

Together we can fuel the next generation of Mustangs!



Eriq Jenkins  
Basketball

Melissa Langegger  
Volleyball

Jonathan Laser  
Hockey

Olivia Murphy  
Rugby

Olivia Cirillo  
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**For further information, please contact Western Annual & Leadership Giving at 1.800.423.9631 or 519.661.4200.**

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Western Annual & Leadership Giving, Westminster Hall, Suite 110, London, ON N6A 3K7. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations (Donation code 000000363RNCALIPMAY2017).

# Marnie McBean

INTERVIEW BY JASON WINDERS, MES'10, PHD'16

ONE OF THE MOST DECORATED ATHLETES IN CANADIAN HISTORY - MOST NOTABLY AS A THREE-TIME OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST - MARNIE MCBEAN, BA'97, LLD'03, SHARES WHAT SHE LEARNED FROM A LIFE ON THE WATER AT WESTERN AND BEYOND.

## **My ultimate thing was not to win, but to get better.**

Getting better all the time meant attention to detail, to learning, to figuring things out. And all that - that attention to things - took care of winning.

**I was not a star athlete.** I always made teams. But I was never the star. I was not a scorer or a playmaker. I was a grinder who moved things along. But I have come to understand that everyone is excellent at something; it is the lucky few who find what that is.

**I had great water feel.** I wasn't a great rower at the beginning, but somebody saw something about me on the water. And that was me - it was being on the water, how rowing boats moved, knowing how a team moved together. I loved it from the first day.

**Get a feel for your water.** I cannot hit a three-pointer. I don't have that kind of coordination. But I have water feel.

**When you find that thing you are great at,** it is easy to put time into it. It will always feel like a choice. It will always feel like you are choosing to be more.

**Every day won't be perfect.** There were days I wanted to quit. But, at the end of those days, I ended up loving it more. The number of times I woke up and didn't want to get out of bed - maybe it was a crappy day out, pouring rain. But I did get up because I had an obligation to my crew waiting at the lake. And after those two-hour rows, I came in saying they were the best rows ever.

**Don't expect your motivation to come from the same place** every day. On some days, commitment doesn't come from the fact you love it. On some days, it comes from obligation. On some days, it comes from the fact I love to win. On some days, it comes from the fact I hate to lose.

**Loving to win** is different than hating to lose. There is a thrill to winning - that comes from pushing. Hating to lose comes from being pulled. With hating to lose, you are using the people around you to motivate you. You are not going to let them beat you. That comes more from ego.

**Understanding and accepting that any day** can be a good day, but might also be a great day or be a bad day. On great days, you are out there to win. On bad days, you are trying hard not to lose.

**Train for the bad days.** Real champions are the ones who dig down when they are competing terribly. That stubborn determination does not let the bad days take over.

**You can train your mind** the same way you train your body.

**I came home from Barcelona** - I was only 24 - and a journalist asked me, 'OK, Marnie, you are an Olympic champion. How will you ever top this?' I remember staring at him. That was the saddest question I ever heard. I had never thought to limit myself. I had never thought that I had come to the end of my journey.

**There is always so much to learn.** Once you have achieved everything you wanted to in your career, what does that mean? Are you done? If you achieve your five-year business plan, does that mean you close in year six? Of course not. You have to come up with a new plan. You become a bit visionary. What motivates me on a daily basis is learning, being curious. There is so much left to learn.

**There are thousands of things** that you can do wrong in any given rowing stroke - there are thousands of things you can do right, as well. If you can come to grips with that as your motivation, then it doesn't matter what you have achieved. So, as soon you achieve your personal best time, you're instantly thinking about every bit you did wrong, thinking you could have been a second faster, a stroke better.

**When someone asks me** what I am going to do next, I know that is a ridiculous statement. There is always room to improve.

**Surround yourself with people** who are committed to the same lifestyle you are, who have a commitment to work hard.

**You are always tightest** with your crew. Your boat is your immediate family.





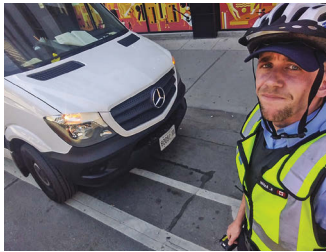
A woman with short, curly, light brown hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark blue, long-sleeved top. The background is a bright, out-of-focus outdoor setting with green foliage and a white wall on the left.

### **ROWING CELEBRATION**

The Mustangs Old Oars Club invites all former Western Rowing team members to join in celebrating 60 years of rowing excellence, Sept. 15-17 in London, Ont. There will be events for all generations and their families, including the chance to cheer on the current Mustangs team at the Western Invitational Regatta, a formal alumni dinner, and the annual Old Oars Regatta and boat christening.

Visit [alumni.westernu.ca](http://alumni.westernu.ca) and click on Events for details and tickets.

# Alumnus' blitz making TO streets safer



BY ADELA TALBOT, BA'08, MA'11

**IN JUST ONE DAY** on the job, in less than two minutes, Kyle Ashley had issued six tickets – at \$150 a pop – to drivers stopped or parked in bike lanes nearby the Eaton Centre along Toronto's Shuter Street. And that's just a tiny glimpse into the #BikeLaneBlitz campaign initiated and carried out by Ashley, BA'12 (Psychology and Anthropology), a parking enforcement officer with Toronto Police Service, this summer.

"This past May, I noticed there was a huge gap in the service we were delivering to the community. The sides of our cars say, 'To Serve and Protect,' yet people think of parking enforcement as a collection scheme to make money," Ashley said.

Cyclists in Toronto have felt especially alienated in this regard, frequently voicing concerns over vehicles parking and stopping in designated bike lanes, jeopardizing cycle safety.

"My commander sent me to the Toronto Police College for social media training. I was told,

'Here's the tools; here's how you use them. Find your voice, find your community and be a part of it.'"

Ashley reached out to Toronto's cyclists over Twitter, under the handle @TPS\_ParkingPal. Soon, responses, requests and praise flooded his account. Cyclists were requesting his presence on streets where drivers, taxis and companies making deliveries frequently stopped and blocked bike lanes. They sent photos of stopped vehicles. They thanked him for what he was doing.

In May, Ashley snapped a selfie with a driver he ticketed for stopping in a bike lane. The driver, a cyclist herself, agreed to the photo, which Ashley shared on Twitter, attracting widespread media attention, ultimately sparking the #BikeLaneBlitz that would follow next month.

"The cycling community previously felt ignored by the Toronto Police Services and the city. I tapped in with them to show I'm there, and I'm listening. The response has been positive to parking enforcement and that people feel we are making a difference is nice." [WAG](#)



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# Progress on campus happens because of relationships, shared values



My Western experience was not always easy.

I faced my share of discrimination. Much of it unintentional, born out of ignorance and unfamiliarity, but discrimination nonetheless.

I remember one colleague explaining how excited she was to have a friend with a minority

background, then offering the ‘compliment’ that I wasn’t really ‘black.’ That was amplified when I shared that I was gay. Wait, you’re black AND gay?

Experiences like these can make it easy to feel progress is eroding. Watching events unfold like the recent tragedy in Charlottesville, Va., make it easy to feel like universities aren’t safe spaces for difference. Don’t believe it.

Universities drive social progress – campus communities facilitate new values and change beliefs. Today, Western celebrates diverse identities in ways I could have only dreamed of as a first-year student.

Our administration and student leadership are

examples of what deliberate leadership can do to advance inclusivity, including the powerful image of our University President, Alumni Association President, and University Students’ Council (USC) President all being persons of colour, for the first time.

This year, we embraced Pride celebrations like never before, hosting events for alumni, students, faculty and staff in London and Toronto. Rainbow crosswalks were painted on campus as a reminder of the importance of diversity. In the shadow of hateful acts in Charlottesville, the University President publicly resolved that Western would be “a campus community that doesn’t simply tolerate our many differences, but one where they are respected and celebrated.”

## Today, Western celebrates diverse identities in ways I could have only dreamed of as a first-year student.

We can always do more. We must weed out systemic discrimination where we live and work, enabling all individuals to reach their full potential, and thus individually creating an even stronger workplace, university and society.

Despite these realities being hard to imagine when I started at Western, I now see that much of our progress happens because of the relationships and values shared at Western. Through diligence and continued support, we can create even better experiences for students in the future.

Western is increasingly a place where students, faculty, staff, and alumni can think openly and make meaning with the goal of social justice.

That makes me purple and proud.



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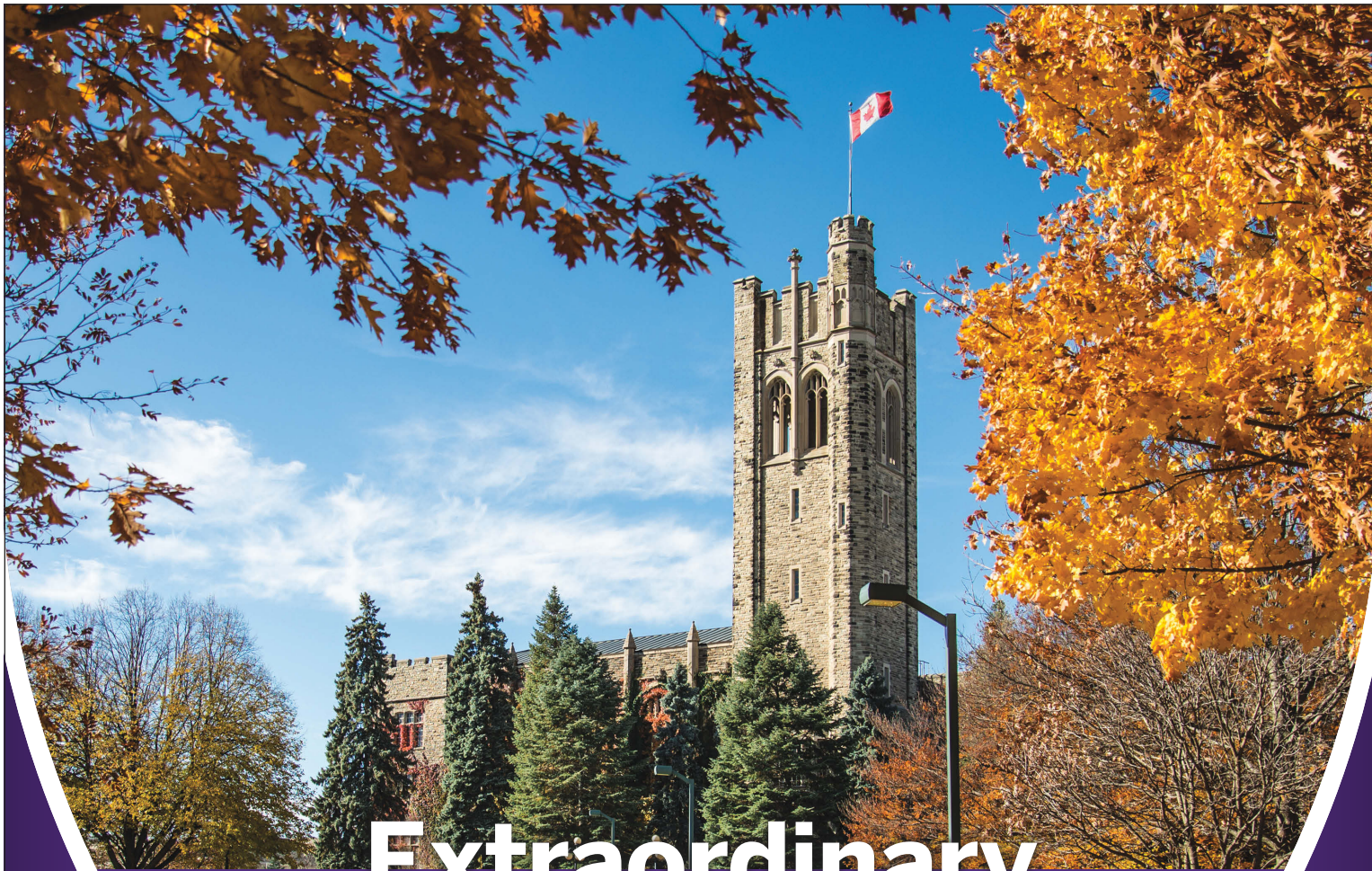
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# Extraordinary Engagement



Western University Alumni Association  
Strategic Plan

In 2016, the Alumni Association's Board of Directors conducted a strategic planning exercise to reaffirm its vision and mission and provide a forum for alumni to share their views. The resulting plan, centered around five pillars of engagement, guides the work of the Board of Directors, volunteers and dedicated staff partners into 2022.

**VISION:** To inspire all alumni to share a lifelong commitment, pride and passion for Western.

**MISSION:** We are the catalyst for building a vigorous alumni network and a lifelong relationship among Western and its constituents, including students and graduates, and for supporting the University's mission locally, nationally and internationally.

## Five Pillars of Engagement

A focused and deliberate effort to increase alumni engagement will lead to a greater alumni voice in university life and improved pride in Western with measurable impact.

### **EXTRAORDINARY STORIES**

Inspire pride in alumni and inform members through compelling storytelling, engaging awareness campaigns and proactive social media supports.

### **EXTRAORDINARY BENEFITS**

Provide services and benefits that renew alumni affinity with the Association. Steward the endowed Legacy Funds and remain committed to leaving a lasting alumni legacy on campus through the allocation of the funds across campus priority projects.

### **EXTRAORDINARY LEADERSHIP**

Foster a vibrant volunteer experience from front line to board leadership and ensure the Association continues to be relevant in its service to alumni. Listen to alumni voices and deliver a clear role for valued volunteers

### **EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES**

Design, deliver and promote programs that provide alumni meaningful ways to engage with the University over their lifetime.

### **EXTRAORDINARY NETWORK**

Provide alumni access to a growing network of peers and facilitate their interactions amongst one another and with Western. Strengthen relationships with Affiliated University College alumni and with those alumni who present with strong affinity for their home faculty, a varsity team or shared experience.

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**For more details or to share your feedback on the plan:**

Visit: [www.alumni.westernu.ca/get-involved/association/](http://www.alumni.westernu.ca/get-involved/association/)

Email: [alumni@uwo.ca](mailto:alumni@uwo.ca)

Call: 519-661-2199 or 1-800-258-6896



**Western**  
Alumni

BY DAVID SILVERBERG

# Cracking the code



## Melissa Sariffodeen, HBA'10, opening the doors of tech to all

**MELISSA SARIFFODEEN, HBA'10**, wasted no time on video games or chat rooms when she got her first computer at 11. She went right to work – producing an e-newsletter for her London, Ont., neighbourhood – even though it required self-taught graphic design and website maintenance skills.

Since those early days forced to train herself, she has opened the doors to tech world skills for those who have long been bypassed by it.

Sariffodeen is the co-founder and CEO of Canada Learning Code, formerly Ladies Learning Code, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to teaching Canadians technical and programming skills via hands-on workshops. Operating more than 80 chapters across Canada, the organization has taught digital literacy skills to 70,000 Canadians – learners as young as 8 and as old as 80 – since it began in 2011.

“We grow because of how accessible we want to be,” said the Toronto-based Sariffodeen. “People sign up who have no skills, or very few coding skills, because they want to learn how to do something they couldn’t before.”

Canada Learning Code offers workshops on programming languages, such as JavaScript and HTML, WordPress, photo-editing and custom-training programs. Some classes are tailored for women, others for youth. Every workshop is run by an experienced instructor, as well as volunteer mentors, and 60 per cent of instructors and mentors are women.

The group’s original name – Ladies Learning Code – was built on the premise that launched the founders’ mission: ensuring women in Canada are given the opportunity to learn the tech languages of the present and future.

According to recent data, women currently hold less than 25 per cent of all technology roles in Canada.

“I wish we could stop talking about this problem – but we can’t yet,” Sariffodeen said. “Until that narrative of ‘women in tech’ goes away, I want to see our country leading the way to give women, and youth, the opportunities to thrive in this economy.”

Giving Canada Learning Code the breathing room to operate is funding largely given by sponsors, such as Telus, Google and Microsoft. Around 35 per cent of the organization’s revenue comes from registration fees for workshops, which cost \$55 for adults and ‘pay what you can’ for youth for full-day sessions. “But no one is turned away, unless there physically isn’t a seat available,” she added.

Sariffodeen quickly dispelled a misconception about the organization, which inspired their shift away from Ladies Learning Code. Men are welcome to attend, but they are encouraged to bring a female friend or partner “to expose someone new to the workshop.”

As CEO, her tasks vary day to day, but Sariffodeen is generally responsible for business strategy, hiring, brand recognition and the summer-long work to shift Ladies Learning Code to Canada Learning Code. In fact, the organization began as a week-long initiative and coalition supported by Shopify CEO Tobias Lütke, Version One Ventures’ Boris Wertz and Georgian Partners’ Justin Lafayette.

“We want to be that champion for coding and coding education in Canada,” Sariffodeen declared.

Such lofty goals aren’t unfamiliar for anyone who knows how ambitious Sariffodeen can be. Besides being named school president in Grade 7, she discovered her entrepreneurial spirit in her first year at Western, launching a side business to let students store their stuff over the summer.

She valued her Western courses that had her working with teams on projects that challenged and excited her. Most importantly, she was working with students the professor chose, which taught her “how to negotiate effectively and create a community focused on a goal where money isn’t a factor.”

After graduation, she dabbled in accounting but soon lost interest. “It just wasn’t entrepreneurial enough,” Sariffodeen said.

She then got a job at Freshii to quarterback their franchise expansion efforts, which gave her important experience that segued into her work at Canada Learning Code.

When she and three co-founders – Heather Payne, Laura Plant and Breanna Hughes – made Ladies Learning Code a reality, the first workshop sold out within a day. The buzz began circulating in the tech space. The second workshop sold out within seven minutes, and then the third one was completely full within 30 seconds. No hyperbole.

That kind of learner enthusiasm inspired the founding team to expand their operations, launch chapters in cities such as Vancouver and London, and begin hiring instructors in those cities to best serve their students.

On where Sariffodeen would like to see the organization in 10 years, she said, “We want to reach 10 million Canadians. We want to support the next evolution of Canadians who really know these crucial technical skills.” [WAG](#)

# ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

**PLEASE NOTE:** Class Notes notices, like all portions of the print magazine, appear in an online version of *Alumni Gazette* and the contents may turn up during a web search. Publicly available personal information may be collected for the purpose of updating alumni records as well as for the purpose of recognizing outstanding achievement or distinguished service by alumni in University publications. Western respects your privacy. At any time you have the right to request that your personal information cease to be used to recognize outstanding achievement or distinguished service in University publications. For more information or to make a request about the kinds of contact you would like to receive, please contact the Operations Administrator, Advancement Services, 519.661.4176 or 1-800.420.7519, fax 519.661.4182, e-mail [advser@uwo.ca](mailto:advser@uwo.ca).

## Top 40 Under 40



Five Western alumni were named to Canada's Top 40 Under 40 for 2017:

- **Kristen Wood**, BA'02 (Philosophy, Huron University College), Creator and CEO, THE TEN SPOT Beauty Bars;
- **Matt Switzer**, BSc'02 (Computer Science), Senior Vice-President, Strategy & Corporate Development, Hootsuite;
- **Michael Katchen**, HBA'09, Co-Founder and CEO, Wealthsimple;
- **Aristotle Voineskos**, BSc'99, Director, Slight Family Centre for Youth in Transition, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and an associate professor (Psychiatry) at the University of Toronto; and
- **Taylor Ablitt**, HBA'10, Co-Founder & CEO, Dibly.

Founded in 1995 by Caldwell Partners, Canada's Top 40 Under 40 is an awards program that "identifies young achievers in Canadian business, visionaries and innovators changing the way things are done."



**57** **Barbara (Kindersley) Wood**, BA'57 (Modern Languages), and **Ian Wood**, BA'57 (History), celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in Ixtapa, Mexico. All 39 members of their extended family, including 24 grandchildren, were present at the event.



**1957**  
First electric watch introduced



**49** **Mariko (Tokunaga) Abdulah**, BA'49, celebrated her 91st birthday on June 22. After graduating Western, she went on to do post-graduate studies in social work at the University of Toronto where she met her future husband, Clive Abdulah. This September, her granddaughter, Zoe Abdulah, entered Western to pursue her BA in Management and Organizational Studies – 71 years since her grandmother first entered Western in 1946.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

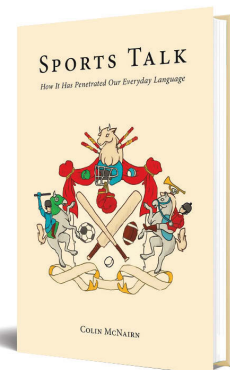
### ORDER OF CANADA

Four Western alumni were named among 99 new appointments to the Order of Canada, David Johnston, Governor General of Canada announced on June 30. The Western honourees included:

- **Joseph Arvay**, BA'71 (Huron), LLB'74, named an Officer for his contributions as a prolific litigation lawyer in the field of public law, particularly on matters of civil rights;
- **Mary Eberts**, BA'68, LLB'71, DCL'99, named an Officer for her visionary leadership as an advocate and litigator advancing equality and women's rights;
- **Paul Mills**, BESC'68, MESC'72, named a Member for his extensive contributions to Canadian folk music as a performer, engineer, producer and advocate; and
- **Sharon Walmsley**, BSc'79, MD'83, named a Member

for her advancement of HIV/AIDS research that has led to a broader understanding of the disease's effects on women as well as to improved treatment options.

## 1960s



**63** **Colin McNairn**, LLB'63, released a new book, *Sports Talk: How It Has Penetrated Our Everyday Language*, published by Friesen Press.



**1949**  
RCA introduces 45 RPM record



**1966**  
John Lennon says "We (the Beatles) are more popular than Jesus"

**66** John Kalbfleisch, MA '66, has written a historical murder-mystery, *A Stain Upon the Land*, published by Shoreline Press. The book focuses on the actual shooting of prominent Montrealer Robert Watson in 1827. No one was ever punished for the crime.

**66** In some ways, the story of Teresa Harris, the youngest member in one of London's first pioneer families, dovetails with that of **Penn Kemp**, BA'66, CertEd'68.

"I see a direct parallel with my own life. Things have changed so much. When I was growing up, London was so white-bred, and, I felt, so colonial, with its military history. There was more similarity between my upbringing in 1950s London and her upbringing in 1850s

colonial London, than there would be now. Things have changed that much; I identified with her very much," said Kemp, the first Poet Laureate of London and former Writer-in-Residence at Western.

Local history remembers Teresa Harris as a free-spirited, adventurous Victorian woman who went on to become one of the greatest explorers of her time. The connection Kemp felt with her was among the driving forces behind her 2013 processional play, *The Dream Life of Teresa Harris*. And this year, to commemorate Canada's 150th anniversary, Kemp reunited with Teresa, writing a full-length play, *The Triumph of Teresa Harris*, that was performed at The Palace Theatre in March.



**84** Rosemary Pahl, MBA'84, has published a new book, *Departing Details Workbook*, a step-by-step workbook that includes everything you need to ensure your estate is in order. A digital download is available at [estateworkbook.com](http://estateworkbook.com).

**67** Paul D. Thompson, BA'67, recently retired after three years of semi-retirement in Pompano Beach. Now in full retirement in Port St. Lucie, Fla., he said he does not "seem to miss winter at all."

## 1970s

**74** Michael Janigan, BA'74 (Science), LLB'78, was appointed a Member of the Ontario Energy Board.

**78** Francis Okwuasaba, PhD'78 (Pharmacology), is involved with research in Phythomedicine at the University of Jos, Nigeria. The institution was recently named a Centre of Excellence in Africa by the World Bank as a result of the research in Phythomedicine. "It has been an incredible journey from Western," said Okwuasaba, who is married with four children. "I look forward to keeping in touch and sharing more of this amazing journey."

**79** Charles Robert, MLIS'79, was appointed new Clerk of the House of Commons in June.

## 1980s

**84** Lee Bice-Matheson, BA'84, MLIS'86, coauthored *Shine Your Light, Book 3, Paige Maddison Series*, with her son, J.R. Matheson.

**85** Clem Guthro, MLIS'85, was named Dean of the Library, California State University at Fullerton. Guthro began his new role on March 30. His daughter, Rachel Guthro, will graduate with an MLIS from Western's Faculty of Information and Media Studies in October.

**88** Paul Harte, BA'88, LLB/MBA'92, has been named plaintiff honouree for the 2017 Ontario Trial Lawyers Association Celebration of the Personal Injury Bar Dinner in recognition of his leadership in the field of medical malpractice.

## 1990s



**94** Laurence Applebaum, HBA'94, was recently named Chief Executive Officer of Golf Canada. The Toronto native, who spent the last five years as Executive Vice-President of the Women's Tennis Association, succeeds Chief Sport Officer Jeff Thompson in the position.

**1985**  
First use of DNA profiling to aid in a criminal investigation.



**77** Dennis Anderson, PhD'77 (Business), the longest-serving Brandon University President since the institution received its charter in 1967, was honoured with the title of President Emeritus at the university's Spring Convocation on May 26. Anderson served as President and Vice-Chancellor of the university from 1990 to 2000.

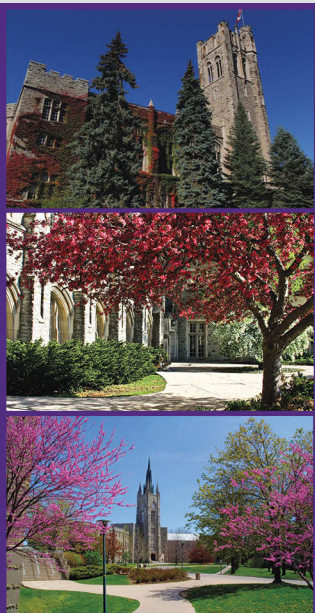




**96 Lisa Dadd**, BA'96 (Hons. Phys. Ed.), MSc'98 (Kinesiology), author of *Finding Fabulous: Paving the Path Between Paycheck and Passion*, delivered her first TEDx talk, *The Two Most Liberating Words You'll Ever Say*, at TEDxChathamKent in December 2016.



**1996**  
After 27 years, Betty Rubble debuts as a Flintstone vitamin



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## 1990s

**92** Former Mustang varsity soccer and track-and-field athlete **Nick Bontis**, HBA'92, PhD'99, was named Vice-President of Canada Soccer Board of Directors in May.

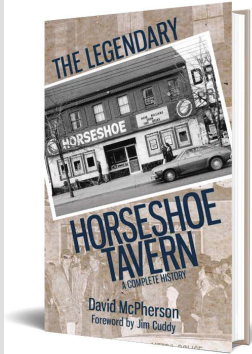
**92** **Paul Gentile**, BA'92, and **Carrie Ann Channon**, BA'90, got engaged April 9 on the pathway in front of University College. The groom-to-be wanted the occasion to happen somewhere that meant something to both of them.

**93** **Phil Andrews**, MA'93, managing editor of the *Guelph Mercury* when the 149-year-old daily newspaper closed in January 2016, served as editor of *Guelph Mercury Rising* in May 2016. Published by Vocamus Press of Guelph, the publication is collection of short stories by former *Mercury* journalists with proceeds benefiting a Guelph non-profit that promotes literacy. Andrews now works as a communications consultant with the Ontario government.

**93** **Neil Parmeter**, BA'93, has been appointed President and CEO of the Canadian Bankers Association.

**94** **Ryan Rodrigues**, BA'94, MBA'07, has been appointed Associate Vice-Principal, Alumni Relations & Annual Giving, at Queen's University.

**94** **James Stensil**, BA'94, completed his master's degree in medical dosimetry and has taken a position as an adjunct professor in the Medical Physics and Medical Dosimetry programs at Radiological Technologies University in South Bend, Ind.



**96** **David McPherson**, BA'96 (Honors English), MA'98 (Journalism), released *The Legendary Horseshoe Tavern: A Complete History*, published by Dundurn Press, on Sept. 23, to coincide with the tavern's 70th anniversary.

**97** Olympic rowing champion, author and speaker **Marnie McBean**, BA'97, LLD'03, was inducted into the Ontario Sports Hall of Fame as part of its Class of 2017.

**98** **Patrick Spence**, HBA'98, was named CEO of Sonos, a Santa Barbara, Calif.-based wireless speaker and home sound system company.



**09** **Dr. Thea Treahy-Geofreda**, BHSc'09, and partner **Dr. Brian Lanoue**, BHSc'08, recently opened their first chiropractic practice, The Powerhouse, in Vancouver, BC. After visiting Vancouver during one of their Reading Weeks while attending Western, Treahy-Geofreda and Lanoue knew the West Coast would be the perfect place to share their vision, passion and excitement.



**1993**  
Bill Clinton inaugurated as 42<sup>nd</sup> US President



**2009**  
US Airways Flight 1549 makes an emergency landing on the Hudson River

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Western Alumni



**2014**  
Water vapour is detected on the dwarf planet Ceres



British Columbia & Yukon Rising Star Award. Joining the HR function at Omicron Canada Inc. in 2012, it was three years later that a major restructuring thrust McKissock into a new leadership role for the Vancouver-based architecture, engineering and construction firm and its Victoria and Calgary locations.

**14 Crystal Bastin-Nantel**, BScN'14, recently became a certified oncology nurse. She has completed her chemotherapy and biotherapy certification and secured employment in cancer care.

**15 Thomas Doherty**, MEd'15, a teacher with the Keewatinook Okimakanak Board of Education has been recognized by the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence and is currently on a leave of absence from the Kenora Catholic District School Board. Doherty received the award from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a ceremony in Ottawa May 3 to celebrate Canada's top teachers and early childhood educators.

Inspired by a strong enthusiasm to share his Métis heritage with his students, a respect for the land and a regard for the Ojibwa culture and language, Doherty shows students how 'to think outside the box.' By encouraging collaborative and independent online learning, he creates a stimulating learning environment and engages his

students in projects that broaden their global perspective and enhance their understanding.

In 2015, Thomas was recognized nationally by Inspire for his work in Aboriginal education receiving the 2015 Inspire Innovating Teaching Practice Award.

**03 Eric Yao**, BMus'03, travelled to Easter Island in March 2017 and used the skills he learned in Western's Piano Technology Program to tune and repair the pianos at Toki Rapa Nui Music School. At Toki, free music and cultural educational opportunities are provided to the local children on this tiny, isolated and ecologically fragile island.

2000s



**02 Amanda Ross-White**, MLIS'02, has published her second book, *Joy at the End of the Rainbow: A Guide to a Pregnancy After a Loss*, a resource to guide women from trying to conceive through the first month with your newborn for women who have previously experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. In addition to evidence-based medical information, it includes the journeys of six women as they go through the difficult emotions of a pregnancy after a loss.

*the Rainbow: A Guide to a Pregnancy After a Loss*, a resource to guide women from trying to conceive through the first month with your newborn for women who have previously experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. In addition to evidence-based medical information, it includes the journeys of six women as they go through the difficult emotions of a pregnancy after a loss.

2010s

**10 Ryan Dagg**, BSc'10, welcomed his family's newest Mustang, Auston Scott Dagg, born Feb. 14, weighing 7 pounds, 3 ounces. He was welcomed with open arms by his big brother, Jaxon, 2.

**11 Joel Freudman**, JD'11, established Resurgent Capital Corp., a Toronto-based institutional activist investor, in April, after more than six years as a practicing securities and mergers and acquisitions lawyer.

**11 Courtney McKissock**, BMOS'11, a Senior Human Resources Advisor at OmiCron Canada, recently won the CPHR



**17 Mason Kadem**, BSc'17, started a new business, MRI (Management Reinnervation), solving the discrepancy between what neuroscience knows and what business does.



**2002**  
Switzerland, traditionally a neutral country, joins the United Nations



**2013**  
Meteor  
breaks  
up over  
Chelyabinsk,  
Russia



**13 Shiu Ming Jeffrey Lo, BA'13** (Criminology), graduated from correctional service training in Regina and is entering the law enforcement sector.

**16 Katelyn Reed, BScN'16**, has been hired by London Health Sciences Centre as a full-time nurse. "I loved my time at Western and look forward to warmer weather where I can drive my road bike through the

trails by Western. A wonderful way to reminisce on some of the best times of my life. I have one sibling younger than me and I am already doing my very best to encourage him to attend what I know is the

best university in the world – Western."

**17 Sumar Chams, BSc'17**, got a new job as a dietary aide at McGarrell Place Long Term Care Home in London.

### IN MEMORIAM

**Mary-Alice Nolan, BSW'84** (King's), died Dec. 12, 2016, in London. She was 69.

**D. Keith Johnston, MD'52**, died March 22, in Fridley, Minn. Following several years of general medical practice in Saskatchewan, Johnston completed his residency in anesthesiology at the University of Minnesota in 1965. He practiced anesthesia chiefly at Abbott Hospital and Minneapolis Children's Health Center and was instrumental in developing the anesthesia program for Minneapolis Children's when the hospital opened in 1973.



**Ida Elizabeth "Beth" (Skinner) Ferguson, C.P.H.N.'45** (Certified Public Health

Nursing), died March 31, 2016 in Toronto.

**Fred Bradley, BA'51** (Business), died April 4, in London, Ont.

**J. Brian Johnston, LLB'67**, a member of Western Law's first graduating class, died April 10 in Toronto after practising law for almost 50 years, first with the Ontario Securities Commission and the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, and then in private practice.

**Lt. Col. Richard Gottfried Larsson Holt, BA'01, MA'02, PhD'12**, died April 14, in St. Marys, Ont. He was 69. His study of the Canadian Expeditionary Force evolved into his book, *Filling the Ranks*, published and released in March.

**Omer Carbonneau, BA'53**, died April 28 of cardiac disease. He was 85.

**John C. Carroll, HBA'56**, Ivey Business Leader Award recipient and former Molson Breweries President & CEO, died April 29, 2017.

**Ronald Derral Armstrong, MD'57**, of Toronto, died May 4. He was 88.

**Sheila (Dick) Morris, BA'63**, died May 7 in Almonte, Ont.. She was 75. Morris was a high school teacher of French for 35 years, mostly at M.M. Robinson High School in Burlington, Ont.

**Nancy E Searle, BA'81**, died May 25, in London, Ont.



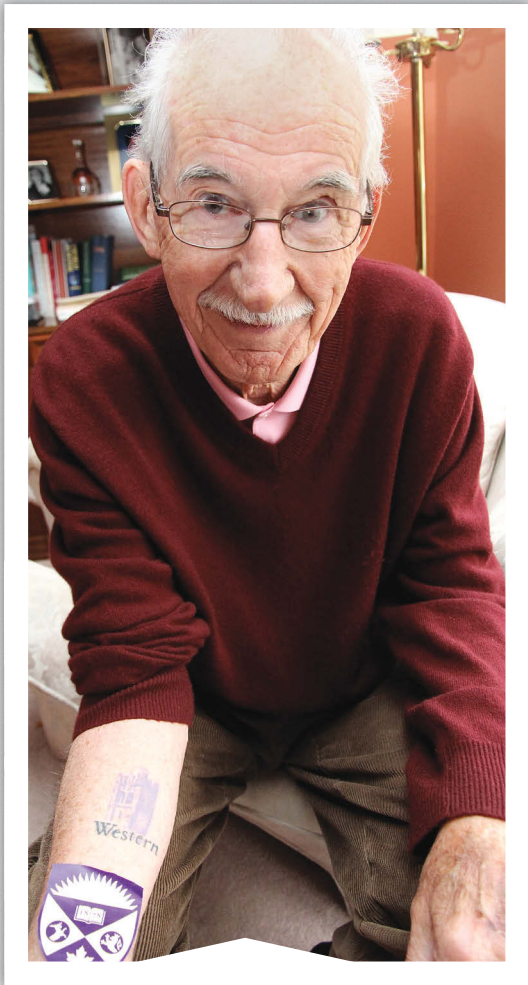
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**John 'Dawson' Winchester, BA'01** (Film Studies), died June 17 after a brief battle with cancer. He was 87. After quitting high school in 1946, in his hometown of Saint John, N.B., Winchester worked in newspapers for 46 years. Beginning as an office junior at *Saint John's Telegraph-Journal* and *Evening Times-Globe*, becoming advertising manager of the *St. Thomas Times-Journal* in 1964, he retired in 1992 in the sales department of *Business London* magazine.


He was accepted to Western as a mature student at the age of 62. He earned his Film Studies degree and graduated with distinction in June 2001, at age 71.

"It took me nine years to get my degree, and that was basically because I wasn't in any hurry and I was enjoying myself too much," he told *Western News* in January 2012. "I took a couple courses each year and was really enjoying it. For me, it was more 'could I have done this?' I thought the worst thing that could happen to me was that if I failed and can't pass, so I studied hard."

Nearly every year during and after his studies he attended Homecoming with his son **John Winchester, BA'84**, and enjoyed his 'unofficial status' as one of the oldest graduates on campus – and at The Ceeps – wearing one of the newest leather jackets. He proudly wore his jacket on many other occasions, along with other Western paraphernalia, largely because he truly had come to appreciate the value of education during his working career. He also regularly attended Western Alumni Picnics (Elgin County Chapter) at the homes of many local alumni over the past 16 years.

Just over a decade ago, he had the Western logo tattooed on his right forearm.

"I thought about it quite a lot before I did it. As you know, the idea is if you get a tattoo it's not going to be removed," laughed Winchester, who had other tattoos at the time – two cap badges from the First World War (his father's and his great uncle's). "I finally decided to do it because I graduated, and I was quite proud of that." So he ventured to a tattoo parlour in London with plans of having 'UWO' tattooed. But on the way over, he thought, "Why would I do that, they don't call this place UWO. It's Western. When they say 'Where do you go?' you don't say UWO, you say Western."



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# The Final Say

With Lauren Pelley



I recently reflected on why I chose to attend Western, instead of one of the other picturesque and well-respected campuses across the country.

I recall doing some research, of course, on the program selection and reputation of various schools, under the watchful eye of my parents. Toronto-area ones were ruled out quickly; I wanted an adventure away from my hometown. I mulled over Queen's for a while — god forbid — because after attending a drama camp there in my early teens, I had an affinity for the place.

Then I visited Western.

A strange and wonderful feeling came over me as we drove up Western Road in my parents' Volvo station wagon. It was springtime in 2006; I was 17. As our car wound through the campus, I stared out the window wide-eyed at the ivy-covered buildings, the lush green lawns, the hodgepodge of student residences. It felt like something out of a movie, or perhaps every movie ever made about college life. It felt inexplicably right.

I was accepted to a few different schools that year, but I chose Western — partly because it had a student newspaper, partly because of the diverse program selection, but mostly because a gut feeling told me I'd found my new four-year home.

Little did I know I'd stay there for undergrad, then come back for a Master's Degree, then attend alumni events in Toronto and regularly reminisce about our "Western days" with many lifelong friends from my days living in Delaware Hall and hanging out at The Spoke.

I know many people picked Western for specific reasons. For some growing up in London, it was the most financially prudent choice. For others, having advanced entry to the Ivey Business School out of high school made it a no-brainer. But I also know plenty of alumni like me — people who went with their gut.

The notion of gut feelings and intuition fascinates me. I explored the science behind it for the *Toronto Star* last year. Researchers say intuition is a product of both your brain and body, acting as a 'best guess' that's based on a lifetime of stored information about past decisions — and their outcomes.

It's not a conscious process, but something going on behind-the-scenes, as your mind rifles through storehouses of information: Smells, sights, sounds, tastes, feelings of familiarity or the unknown, someone's body language and tone, long-buried memories.

"All the parts of your body are constantly gathering information and learning about the environment and putting things together and, at some point, it comes into consciousness," Julia Mossbridge from Northwestern University's psychology department told me.

One bit of research from Leeds University Business School deemed intuition a "real psychological phenomenon" that stems from how our brains store and process information on a subconscious level. "People usually experience true intuition when they are under severe time pressure or in a situation of information overload or acute danger, where conscious analysis of the situation may be difficult or impossible," explained researcher and professor Gerard Hodgkinson.

*"If a particular job, home, opportunity, or even person, feels inexplicably right — or wrong — then, more often than not, they are."*

Experts say intuition isn't necessarily a replacement for logic — think pro-con lists — but can be a supplement. It may also improve with age, as we accumulate more life experiences.

I've certainly found that to be true in the decade since I started Western as a wide-eyed first-year student. My path through life has taken me to different cities and different jobs, often guided by self-reflection and analysis, coupled with intuition as a compass. It hasn't steered me wrong. In fact, I've grown to appreciate it more over the years, and rue the times I've ignored it. If a particular job, home, opportunity, or even person, feels inexplicably right — or wrong — then, more often than not, they are. We just have to listen to our gut.

There's a line I adore from *Sleepless in Seattle*, that dreadfully sappy-but-wonderful 1993 rom-com with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. "It was like coming home, only to no home I'd ever known," Hanks' widowed character says while explaining why he was in love with his late wife.

That's how I felt driving through campus that spring day in 2006.

It felt like coming home. And I was right.

*Lauren Pelley, BA'10, MA'11, is a Toronto-based multimedia journalist and reporter at CBC.*



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