

Alumni Gazette

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SPRING 2017



WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

**KEN CHU, BACS'96, LLD'07,
KNOWS TOURISM IS CHINA'S NEXT
GREAT CULTURAL REVOLUTION**



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On the cover: Ken Chu, BACS'96, LLD'07, Chairman and CEO of Mission Hills Group, poses for a photograph at Mission Hills Shenzhen, in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, China. (PHOTO BY BRENT LEWIN)



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AROUND THE WORLD IN 40 DAYS
Bob and Steve Dengler, BA'93, are set to be the first father/son team to circumnavigate the globe – in a Bell 429 Global Ranger helicopter.

DEAR, MR. FANTASY
Get Rob Silver, LLB'00, talking politics and you might be a while. Get him talking about baseball and you'll need to grab a seat.

INTO THIN AIR
Illina Frankiv, BSc'11, MES'13, is taking on the Seven Summits – seeking to climb the tallest peaks on each of the seven continents.



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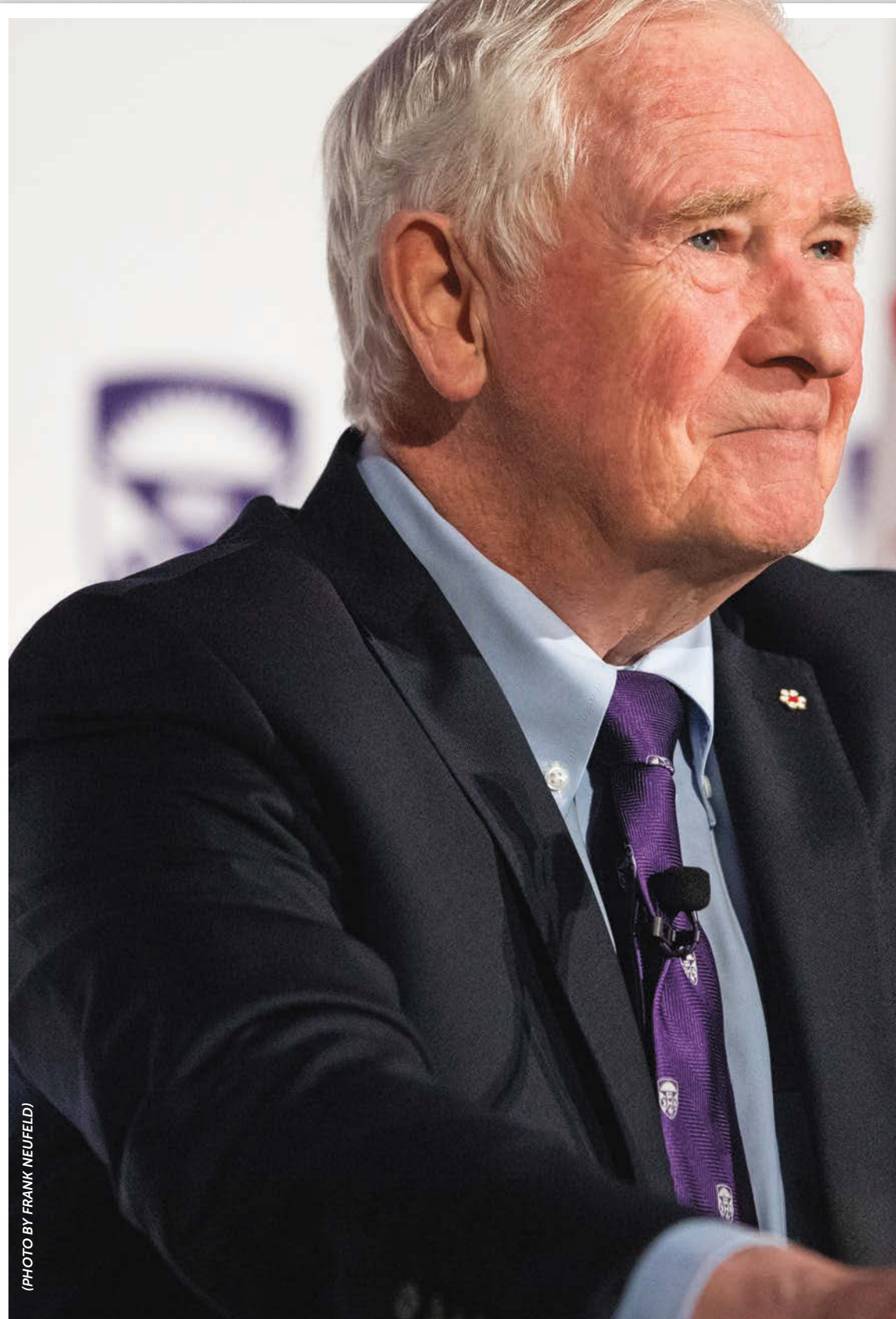
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(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

Johnston: Answer call for a new era of civic engagement

Trust is the glue that sustains a democratic society and we must work together to protect against its erosion, David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, told a packed Alumni Hall audience March 8. Johnston's address, the third iteration of Western's President's Lecture Series, was part of the university's celebration of Canada's sesquicentennial.

"We can't be complacent," he said. "Like democracy, a healthy social contract requires our active involvement. It's not about the few, but the many. How do we restore, reinforce and build trust in our society?"

Earlier that day, Johnston, who served as Dean of Western's Faculty of Law from 1974-79, visited Western's campus. While there, he toured the Robarts Research Institute's concussion research and imaging laboratories and visited the Wellness Education Centre to participate in a round-table discussion on student mental health.

Across the city, Sharon Johnston, BSc'79, health advocate, author and wife of Johnston, visited the Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre to meet with its leadership team and patrons to better understand how the organization helps families and children in crisis.

Alumni Association Annual General Meeting

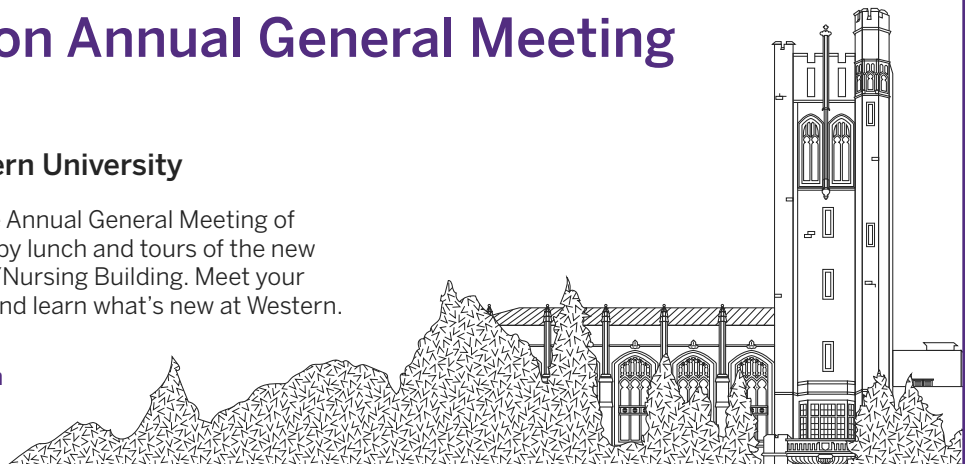
Friday, June 16, 2017

12:00 – 1:30 pm

FIMS & Nursing Building, Western University

Western alumni are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of Western's Alumni Association, followed by lunch and tours of the new Faculty of Information & Media Studies/Nursing Building. Meet your Alumni Association Board of Directors and learn what's new at Western.

Please register online by June 11:
www.westernconnect.ca/alumni_agm



Feds back Western project addressing domestic violence

Led by Western professor Marilyn Ford-Gilboe, an international team of researchers has received \$3 million in funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada to deliver a community-based program with the potential to help improve the lives of women who have experienced domestic violence.

The research team, which includes four other Western researchers, will be co-led by partners at the University of British Columbia and the University of New Brunswick, and includes researchers at McMaster University, University of Montreal and Johns Hopkins University.

The study will examine the impacts of an intervention called iHEAL, specifically designed to meet the needs of women who have separated from an abusive partner. iHEAL is delivered by community health nurses and a community partner working with women over a six-month period. Women take part in workshops that introduce them to aspects of the intervention in a group setting, along with one-on-one meetings with the nurse that focus more specifically on each woman's concerns and priorities.

"Women who make the decision to separate from an abusive partner do so to work toward safer, more satisfying lives, but this is often a difficult transition," said Ford-Gilboe, Women's Health Research Chair in Rural Health at the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing. "For many women, the violence does not end after separation, and can even increase, and they face other challenges that can feel overwhelming, especially if they have few supports."

The team has tested iHEAL in three smaller studies in Ontario, New Brunswick and British Columbia, and found it showed great promise. Women who have completed the program say that they are more confident, stronger and hopeful about the future.

Capacity crowd quizzes the prime minister

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau brought his London Town Hall event to Western's Alumni Hall on Jan. 13. The capacity crowd questioned Trudeau on everything from the needs of veterans and those with mental health issues, to disgust over what some call the Liberals "overspending issues" with regards to fiscal policies.

(PHOTO BY PAUL MAYNE)



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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE UNDERGOING RENOVATIONS



Western’s iconic University College is in the middle of a major overhaul.

Built in 1922, University College was one of the first buildings to grace Western’s campus and is currently home to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities’ more than 1,200 students. While there have been a few

upgrades and additions to the building over the years, most notably in the 1960s, much of the interior has stayed exactly the same as it was when it was first constructed.

“After 90 years, the building was run down and the infrastructure was in need of repair,” said Michael Milde, Dean of Arts & Humanities. “We have a real commitment to creating student space, which was lacking in the former configuration, and we want to upgrade all of the services in the building to bring it into the 21st Century and, generally, to allow for a lot more light, to open it up and make it far more accessible.”

All this while preserving UC’s unique heritage.

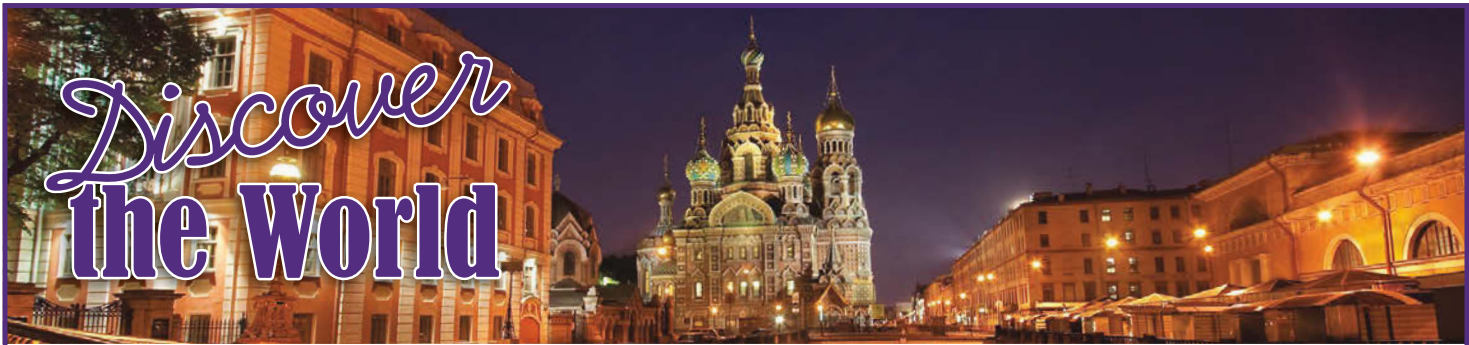
Until the summer of 2018, the building is undergoing a

\$34-million renovation to prepare it for a modern learning experience:

- Open-concept lounges and an atrium will connect three levels;
- Classrooms will be outfitted with new technology;
- Student gathering spaces will offer collaboration;
- Crucial infrastructure (read: plumbing, wiring, ventilation) will be upgraded; and
- Better accessibility will provide more freedom of movement.

“The sense of bringing everything up to current standards shows that Arts & Humanities is not, somehow, mired in the past, but we’re keeping abreast with contemporary developments,” Milde said. “It’s a reminder that Arts & Humanities is at the heart of the university, that the things we do are central to the university’s mission and, indeed, to maintaining a civilized society.”

Alumni can participate in the renewal of this extraordinary place by sharing a #myUC memory or making a gift to restore UC. Visit giving.westernu.ca.



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Western  **Alumni**



Taking flight

Michael Rubinoff, BA'98, LLB'01, brings
Canadian story to the Great White Way

BY KRISTA HABERMEHL, MA'05



Although Michael Rubinoff, BA'98, LLB'01, still pays his law society dues – “never, say never” about returning to the legal realm – he’s feeling “enormously fulfilled” right now.



ven after following a career path he called the “responsible thing to do,” Michael Rubinoff, BA'98, LLB'01, simply could not shake the draw of the big stage.

“I had multiple ambitions when I came to Western. Politics is a passion of mine. My father is a lawyer and has been a very positive role model,” said Rubinoff, now Associate Dean of Visual and Performing Arts at Sheridan in Oakville, Ont. “But, even at Western, I was involved in theatre on campus. I produced and directed a musical called *Blood Brothers*, which was performed at the Paul Davenport Theatre. That re-ignited this desire to pursue the business of producing.”

In parallel to his day job as a Bay Street lawyer, Rubinoff managed a production company for off-Broadway shows and mid-sized theatre in Toronto. “It was a challenging existence to take on both of those tasks. But it was something I needed to succeed at – and fail at – in order to learn,” he said.

During this time, Rubinoff guest lectured on the legal aspects of the business for musical theatre and performance students at Sheridan. In 2010, the college offered him the opportunity to take on the role of Associate Dean of Visual and Performing Arts.

“On Dec. 31, 2010, I worked my last day on Bay Street. In January 2011, I walked onto the Oakville/Trafalgar campus of Sheridan College. On that walk from the car to my office, I thought, ‘What the heck did I just do?’ Law was a pretty lucrative profession and here I was going into the unknown,” Rubinoff said.

In short order, however, he launched the Canadian Musical Theatre Project, an incubator involving students in the honours Bachelor of Music program working with professionals in the field to develop new Canadian musicals. One of the musicals workshopped was *Come From Away*, a tale of kindness and generosity in the face of tragedy surrounding 9/11, conceived by Rubinoff.

Currently playing on Broadway in New York City, the show is only the fifth Canadian musical to make it to the famed stage.

In March, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau surprised the cast and audience by taking the stage ahead of the show to speak, touting the importance of friendship between the U.S. and Canada. “The world gets to see what it is to lean on each other and be there for each other through the darkest times,” said Trudeau, who invited U.S. First Daughter Ivanka Trump to join the assembled Canadian dignitaries in attending the show four days before the official opening night.

In May, the show was nominated for seven Tony Awards, including for the coveted title of Best Musical.

“It’s still surreal,” Rubinoff said of his brainchild. “If you’re in any profession and you look at what is the pinnacle of that profession, as corny as it sounds, this is The Dream come true.”

Rubinoff conceived the musical in the aftermath of 9/11. At the time of the attacks on the United States, 38 planes were grounded at the airport near Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador, for six days with 6,579 passengers on board. The passengers nearly doubled the population of the community for the duration of their stay and, without hesitation, the locals welcomed passengers into their homes to rest, gave them hot meals and showers and entertained them as well.

That outpouring of kindness and humanity during such a



The musical *Come From Away* tells the story of the people of Gander, N.L., who opened their hearts and homes to stranded plane passengers on 9/11. It was nominated for seven Tony Awards in May. (PHOTO BY MATTHEW MURPHY)

frightening time inspired Rubinoff. He felt others would respond to the story in a similar way.

"The best way I know how to tell stories is through musical theatre. When developing musicals, you need a compelling story and a compelling reason to musicalize it. Music is in the DNA of Newfoundlanders. I tried to buy every Great Big Sea recording so I could get the soundscape of Newfoundland," he laughed. "These Newfoundlanders made me so proud to be a Canadian. To be able to honour them by sharing their story in this way is really powerful."

He continued, "This is a story we need to hear. People need to know that at this very dark point in history there was this story about humanity and the best of our values and human kindness. It's just as relevant today. It's always a good time to share a story about human kindness."

To pen the musical, Rubinoff enlisted Canadian writing team David Hein and Irene Sankoff, who travelled to Gander during the 10th anniversary of 9/11, staying for nearly a month to interview returning passengers and members of the community. When they came back to Ontario, they workshoped the musical

with Sheridan students.

Since, *Come From Away* has played record-breaking engagements in La Jolla, Calif.; Seattle, Wash.; Washington, D.C. and at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto, Ont., where Rubinoff's love of musical theatre was first sparked.

"The best way I know how to tell stories is through musical theatre."

"For anybody involved in the theatre, there is always a moment in time when you see something that strikes you as wanting to be a part of it," he said. "For me, it was seeing the Canadian company of *Les Miserables* at the Royal Alexandra when I was 13. It struck me as something I wanted to be a part of in some way."

While both American and Canadian audiences have been enthusiastic, Rubinoff said it was interesting to note the differences in responses.

"Americans had no idea about this story. It catches them by surprise in a beautiful way. It's comforting to them

to know that there was this outpouring of humanity on that day. Our Canadian audiences reacted in a way that's quite rare for Canadians. They said the show made them so proud to be Canadian. We don't usually talk like that. We have quiet patriotism. That resonated with me."

Although Rubinoff still pays his law society dues – "never, say never" about returning to the legal realm – he's feeling "enormously fulfilled" right now. "I'm realizing my full potential," he said.

"When you work in postsecondary, you mentally go back to your own experiences. You relive a lot of good memories," he explained. "My point of reference has always been Western. Western was very influential in my career and gave me so many opportunities. At every Sheridan convocation I attend, I have on my velvet purple and white hood – I am representing the colours of Western. It's a wonderful reminder of my academic history." **WAG**



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Kevin Vuong, BMOS '11

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MALLORIE BRODIE, BA/HBA'13,
AND LAUREN LAKE, BESC'13, ARE
CONSTRUCTING A FUTURE THROUGH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

BY KRISTA HABERMEHL, MA'05



Lauren Lake and Mallorie Brodie have been constructing a future since Day One.

In 2014, the Western-grads-turned-business-partners founded Bridgit, a start-up technology company that helps the construction industry with some of its trickiest job-site issues. Since, the Kitchener, Ont.-based company has built an impressive list of residential and commercial construction clients in Canada and the United States.

"It started with just the two of us as Western students, waking up early before our 8:30 a.m. classes to talk with construction teams and figure out what was causing them pain," said Lake, BESC'13, the company's Co-Founder and Chief Revenue Officer. "Now, working with a staff of 30 people, it's exciting to see everybody get as passionate about these construction issues as we are and see customers talk about how much time we've been able to save them and how we've changed the way they manage their projects.

"It's been pretty awesome."

The business partners first met in Toronto in 2013 as participants in The Next 36, a program for aspiring young Canadian entrepreneurs. Lake and Brodie were in the final year of their degree programs; the former studying Structural Engineering and the latter studying at Ivey Business School.

Neither knew each other prior to the program.

They were teamed up on Day One.

"We honestly got lucky. We hit it off right away," said Brodie, BA/HBA'13, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer. "For business partners to have a sustainable relationship together – because there are so many ups and downs – there

must be complete alignment on where you're trying to go. We got aligned so early in the game. We weren't doing it as a side project or a resume-builder. We wanted to build a business."

The pair soon honed in on an industry, thanks to Lake's summer co-op experiences on construction sites, as well as a name for their as-of-yet undefined venture.

"Lauren was working on a bridge design project (at school), so I think bridges were generally on the mind," Brodie laughed. "We knew there was potential for some resistance to a software product on the construction base, so we wanted to humanize the product. It came together into Bridgit. It was a pretty quick decision, but it has worked well for us."

Brodie and Lake then began an intensive six-month period of on-site research – or "crane hunting." They got up at dawn, searched the skies for construction cranes, drove to job sites and asked if they could conduct interviews with the workers. In total, they interviewed more than 500 people. One of the sites they frequented was the new Ivey building on Western's campus.

"We asked: 'What is frustrating?', 'What costs more money than

"WE ASKED: 'WHAT IS FRUSTRATING?', 'WHAT COSTS MORE MONEY THAN IT SHOULD?', 'WHAT TOOK YOU THE MOST TIME?' AND SO ON."

it should?', 'What took you the most time?' and so on. From there, we took a quantitative approach to the research and discovered what was costing people the most and what was the most frustrating ended up being the job site 'punch list,'" said Brodie.

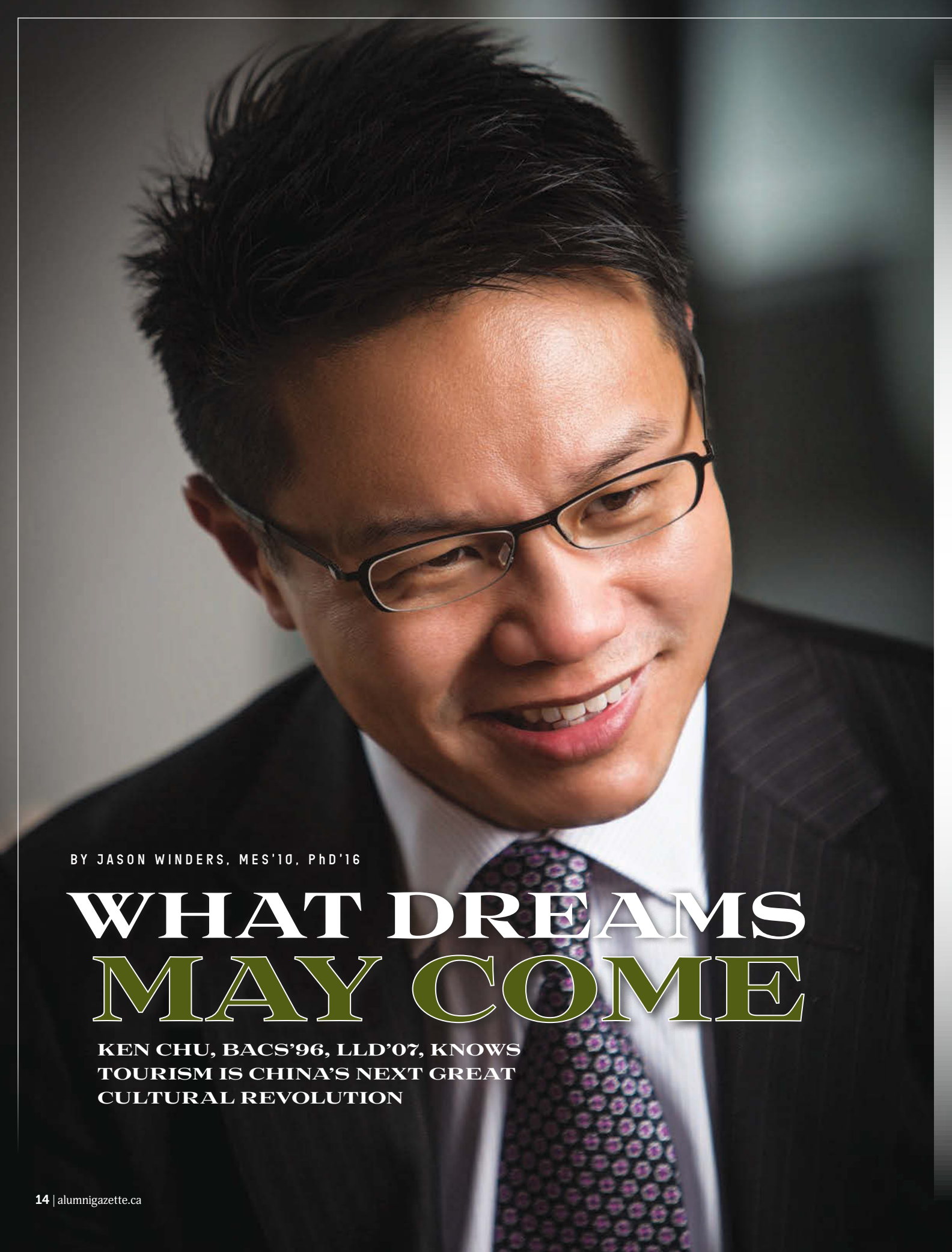
A punch list is an inventory of issues arising during the construction process that must be fixed before the project can be considered complete. With a general contractor overseeing the moving parts, and sometimes up to 50 different subcontractors handling the various tasks assigned via clipboard, Excel spreadsheets and verbally, there's great potential for miscommunication, not to mention wasted time and money.

Bridgit's software, called Closeout, allows users to take photos of issues, log them in a central system, assign the task to the appropriate contractor and track the process through to resolution. It's user-friendly and easy to learn how to use – a major benefit on a fast-paced construction site.

"Once we started to have some of the initial onsite interviews and truly saw the frustrations teams were experiencing, we could not just walk away and do nothing. The problem looked so solvable. It would have been really hard to say 'never mind,'" Brodie said.

Currently, the majority of Bridgit's sales are to large general contractors or developers in the United States, with users in New York, Chicago, Miami and Seattle. Bridgit's business development focus in 2017 is to continue to grow its sales team to achieve aggressive revenue targets and launch new product features for Closeout to increase engagement on the job site.

"Overall, The Western Experience for us was a great foundation for knowing we could have a challenge in front of us and we would figure out a way," Lake said. "We had a lot of persistence and were just ready from the beginning. Once we had a feeling we were on to something, that's where the motivation came and every obstacle that we had, we were able to problem solve around it." **WAG**

A close-up portrait of Ken Chu, a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking down and to the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

BY JASON WINDERS, MES'10, PHD'16

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

**KEN CHU, BACS'96, LLD'07, KNOWS
TOURISM IS CHINA'S NEXT GREAT
CULTURAL REVOLUTION**

Of all the long shadows that fall across the region tucked between the Nanling Mountains and the South China Sea, perhaps none are more daunting than those cast by the audacious dreams of his father. Yet, Ken Chu knew what needed to be done when, as a young man taking over for his ailing father, the fate of those dreams became his responsibility.

"With a lot of companies in Asia, you see a second generation inherit the business and only sustain it. I was not going to do that; I was going to be an entrepreneurial second generation," said Chu, BACS'96, LLD'07, Chairman and CEO of Mission Hills Group.

"I realized that if you don't advance, you stand still. And if you stand still, you fall behind. You cannot just sustain a business. You have to grow a business. You have to take it to the next level. I wanted to position myself not as someone to sustain the portfolio, but to have that entrepreneurial spirit to grow, to diversify. I wanted to be innovative, to be courageous; I wanted to have a new vision, a new mission for life."

Today, Chu has found that mission in leading a sport and entertainment empire unrivaled across the globe. Yet, despite its success, he sees a future even more limitless than anything his father ever dreamed.

KEN CHU ARRIVED on campus from Upper Canada College, a private all-boys school in Toronto, where he first heard of Western's expertise in business education. He embraced university life quickly – with one exception. Originally from Hong Kong, he found the expansive greenspace of campus took some adjusting to. Home was concrete and steel; Western was green grass and open spaces.

He embraced a university academically challenging, but socially comfortable. "Western's learning is global, but it is a small community. You make a lot of friends. You live and eat and study together all year round. So, the friendships are for a lifetime," he said.

A former President of the Chinese Student Union, Chu was an active student, yet still managed to complete his Administrative and Commercial Studies degree in just two years. "I crash coursed," he laughed. "Two summers. No holidays. During the school year, I did correspondence courses. I did it all to fill the required credits.

"There were a lot of tough times – all those extra classes in a tight timeline. My only fun was doing those extra clubs. But I learned a lot; I learned time management. Even today, I never say I am 'busy.' If you care about somebody or something, you can always make time for it."

Chu moved quickly through university because his father was initiating a new business venture and needed help, especially from people who could speak English, people who understood China, people who understood his vision. Chu wanted to graduate quickly to return to help him.

Chu's father, David Chu, was a giant. He had already built one successful company, Shun Feng Corrugated Carton Factory, when he was inspired by his first round of golf played in the 1980s in Toronto. The elder Chu returned to China and purchased a massive piece of land to the north of Shenzhen in the Guangdong Province. He saw lush fairways where others saw remote wastelands. It took vision – and a lot of courage – to see the future in that locale.

No infrastructure connected it to civilization; the short drive from the city took two hours. And what the rural setting lacked in accessibility, it lacked even more so in aesthetics. "It was like a garbage dump," Chu laughed.

"But my father's vision was to put the Chinese flag on the world map of golf. He was very patriotic; he wanted to do something for the city, to help the city grow. And he was right. If it wasn't for my father, golf would not be where it is today."

David Chu knew it was the right time for a golf revolution in his changing country.

In December 1978, Chairman Deng Xiaoping implemented his *Open Door Policy*, a set of initiatives and policies with the goal of modernizing the country via direct foreign business investment. In the early days, the main vehicle for this investment was through Special Economic Zones, areas on mainland China of that adopted more flexible economic and government regulations to be more attractive to foreign investment. The first of those four zones was set up in Shenzhen.

It proved an amazing economic success. From 1981 to 1993, the region experienced 40 per cent annual growth – compared to 9.8 per cent for the entire country.

David Chu knew all that business would require infrastructure beyond roads and bridges. He knew that meant five-star hotels, fine dining and, of course, golf courses. He knew that was where Westerners conducted business – he was certain that would hold true in China, as well.

It was a vision not immediately shared by his son.

"I hated golf when I was studying at Upper Canada College – I thought it was a slow, retirement sport," said Chu, who today is known worldwide as 'Mr. Golf.' "But then I learned from my father that the golf course could be an extension of the office. It could be an immediate link between the East and the West. On the golf course, you build friendship; you build trust; you strike deals. Once I realized golf was a business language, a social tool, my interest grew."

He also grew to see it as a transformative element for a community.

"Golf can transform a destination. We have seen it happen everywhere else in the world. We have seen golf transform a rural area into an urban development. We knew it would happen here, too. But when it all began, there was a lot of investment, a lot of money poured



into the project. It was tough in the beginning," Chu said.

"Back then, people thought we were trashing money, that we were throwing money into the ocean. It was so rural, so rural we had to move mountains and build mountains."

Golf has had an uneasy history in China. Mao Tse-tung, the Father of Communist China, banned the sport – a "sport for millionaires," he called it – until an Arnold Palmer-designed course opened in 1984 in China. Even then, interest was limited. Governments and potential players needed its value proven to them.

"The government needed some incentive, some reasoning to invest millions of dollars in infrastructure. They needed something that was worthwhile," Chu said. "Mission Hills was going to be a showcase, an example of how an investment in a megaproject can expedite other investments into infrastructure. That then attracted other investors into the region."

**"SOMEONE ONCE SAID
MISSION HILLS IS LIKE
THE 'DISNEY OF GOLF.'"**

Three years into the Mission Hills project, the government installed a road and reduced the two-hour travel time to 20 minutes.

Mission Hills recruited golfing legend Jack Nicklaus to design his first course, which hosted the World Cup of Golf in 1995. This was the first international tournament ever hosted in China. The course was finished only days before tee off.

"We were rushing," Chu said. "It was courageous of my father to bid on the World Cup while the course was still under construction."

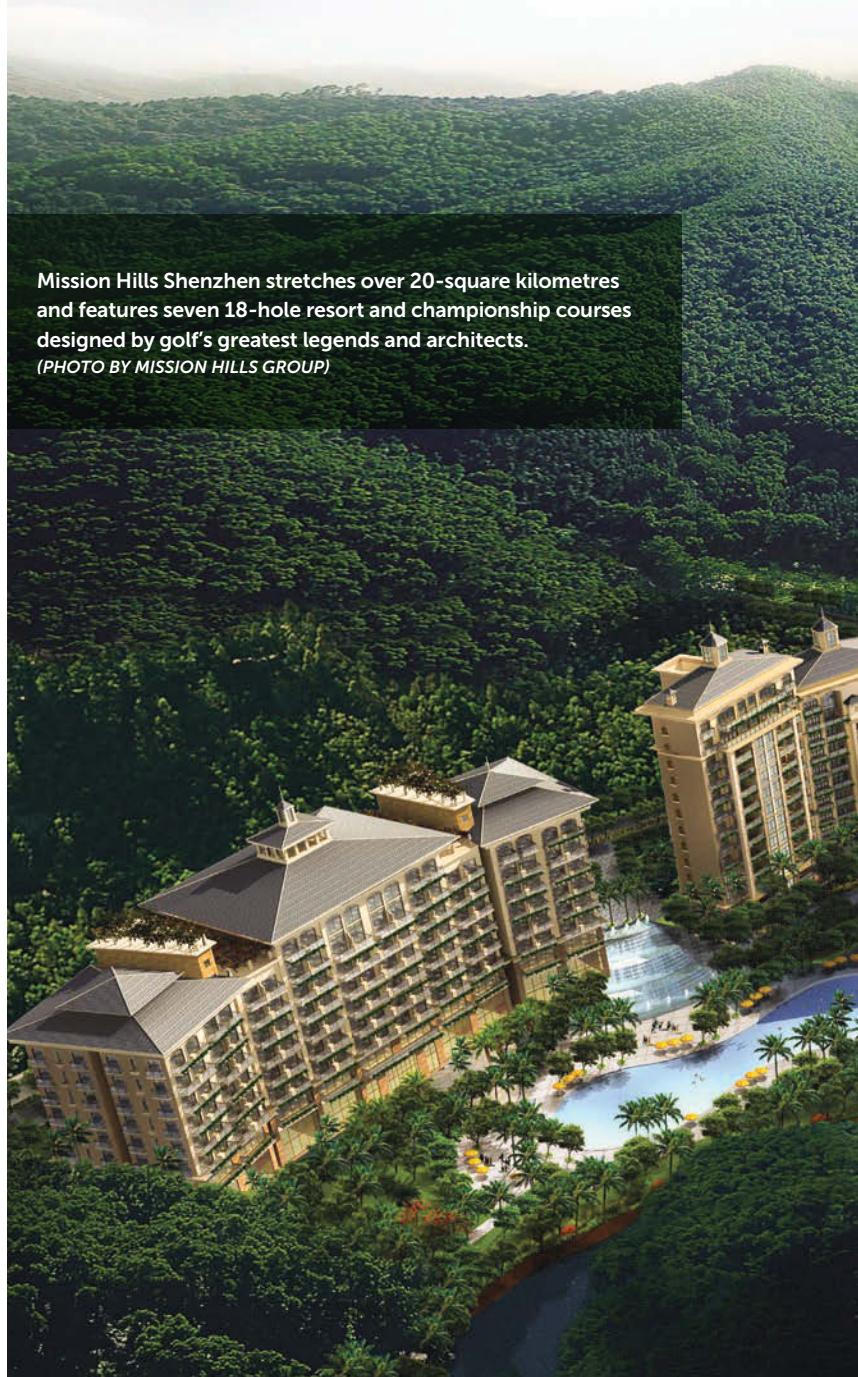
The World Cup was televised across the country – and around the world. From there, the sport's popularity grew in the Chu's homeland. Mission Hills has been the site of more than 100 international tournaments, as well as celebrities by the score, notably playing host to Tiger Woods on his first visit to China in 2001. That sparked even more interest in the sport.

Less than a decade after that first tournament, the *Guinness Book of World Records* certified Mission Hills as the World's Largest Golf Club in 2004. Quite an accomplishment for a project that sprung from a "garbage dump."

David Chu died after a long bout with cancer in 2011. He was 61.

Ken Chu took over the company soon afterward. He was 32. And ready to cast his own shadow.

Mission Hills Shenzhen stretches over 20-square kilometres and features seven 18-hole resort and championship courses designed by golf's greatest legends and architects.
(PHOTO BY MISSION HILLS GROUP)



MR. GOLF IS no longer just in the golf business. "Someone once said Mission Hills is like the 'Disney of Golf,'" Chu laughed. "Maybe. But if variety is the spice of life, we have that, too."

Chu touts his 'Golf and More' vision for the Mission Hills Group – stressing the importance of his company evolving into a leisure and tourist destination for the whole family.

In 2010, Mission Hills Haikou opened on Hainan Island with 10 golf courses, each incorporating the native lava rock formations, a 518-room five-star hotel, golf academy, and aquatic theme park with 168-pool volcanic mineral springs. That year, *Guinness* listed Mission Hills Haikou as the World's Largest Spa & Mineral Springs.

Missions Hills properties have expanded to include international hotel brands, such as Ritz Carlton and Hard Rock; shopping, entertainment and leisure centres; trendy restaurants, cafes and bars; IMAX theatre cinemas; ice skating rinks; bowling alleys; racing centres; auto showrooms; and conference facilities.

In 2014, Mission Hills Haikou opened Movie Town. In association



with director Feng Xiaogang, and the country's leading studio, Huayi Brothers Media Corporation, the 930,000 square-metre facility features six professional movie studios.

Despite this success, Chu sees unlimited potential for growth. And he knows the numbers by heart. China's population of 1.3 billion traveled domestically 4.4 billion times and spent \$690 billion – last year alone. By 2020, those numbers are expected to grow to 6 billion domestic trips spending \$860 billion.

Tourism, Chu understands, is the country's next great cultural revolution. And he wants to be ready for it.

"If I just focus on golf, I will reach the ceiling some time. But now, I am diversifying into the greater tourism market. You just have to understand the trends."

True to his father's vision is that growth is tied to the community around Mission Hills properties.

"I always thought everything had to be win-win. But

when doing business in China, you have to look out for all to win. Win-win is not good enough. It has to be more than the two contracting parties. You have to make sure the government wins; you have to make sure the community wins. It has to be win-win-win-win," Chu explained.

"To succeed in China, you must be responsible to the community. You need to be a good corporate citizen. You don't only want your guests, who are having a good time here, cheering for you. You want the community as a whole to be proud of you, to cheer for you. You want to convert them from a regular neighbour into a fan, and then convert them from a fan into a raving fan. You want people to cheer for you. That is my mentality.

"In my job, I get to see a lot of smiling faces. Interacting with people who are happy – that is a lot of transferring of positive energy, a lot of sharing positive energy. And that only gives me more momentum." **WAG**

StrawberryFrog *Forever*

AD AGENCY LEADING A CULTURAL
MOVEMENT WITHIN INDUSTRY

BY KATHRYN E KINAHAN, BA'86, MLIS'93

Ready. Set. Leap. Scott Goodson, BA'85 (History), has followed that philosophy since his days at Western. The CEO and Co-Founder of StrawberryFrog, a “cultural movement” advertising agency located on Madison Avenue in New York City, finds inspiration in the belief that when you make the leap, life takes you places you never expected.

Goodson grew up in Montreal in a close-knit family with four sisters. After attending Bishop's College School in Lennoxville, Quebec, he chose Western for a variety of reasons – perhaps, most notably to his then-teenaged mind, “it was far enough away from home that I could just be a young student finding my way in the world.”

At Western, he connected with an “amazing group of people” at Sydenham Hall residence (he stays in touch with many to this day). Goodson also connected academically and still recalls a class with History professor Craig Simpson, an “amazing, incredibly inspiring thinker. He was instrumental in helping me learn to deeply understand and communicate emotionally and powerfully. The way he was able to bring words on a page to life just made me feel changed as a human being.”

In his final year at Western, he met Sondra Gibbons, who mentioned her intention to run for University Students' Council president. He got involved in her campaign and everything crystallized. In collaboration with a team of people, he helped Gibbons go from also-ran to winning the majority vote.

“It changed my life. I thought, ‘This is what I want to do. I realized that we could make a huge impact.’”

After completing his BA, Goodson worked at his father's publishing and printing business in Montreal for a short while before taking time off to travel and work throughout Asia. When he was growing up, his father travelled to Japan frequently for business so this seemed a logical place to start.



When the year was out, he had visited Japan, Korea, China and India.

On his way home to Canada, he stopped in Greece where he met Karin Drakenberg, a Swedish woman who would later become his wife and company co-founder. As she was not able to work in Canada, they relocated to Stockholm, Sweden, where Goodson secured a 10-year work visa.

He quickly became part of a team that started to make waves in the marketing world: launching both Bjorn Borg's fashion line – the first professional athlete to do so – and the Ericsson mobile phone, when mobile technology was just beginning to take off.

Goodson worked with major Scandinavian companies who were breaking out and becoming global brands (e.g. IKEA). He eventually became co-owner of a successful Swedish advertising agency. However, when his dad developed cancer, he sold his stake in the company and moved back to Canada. After his father passed in 1999, Goodson moved back to Europe and started a new company – StrawberryFrog.

“I'D LOVE IT TO BE KNOWN AS THE WORLD'S FOREMOST PLACE TO COME IF YOU WANT TO START A MOVEMENT.”

The distinctive moniker was chosen as a direct contrast to the huge corporate advertising dinosaurs that controlled the marketing world at the time. To rally clients, he looked for something that represented the antithesis – something small, lithe, quick and unique. He heard about the rarest frog in the world. The strawberry frog.

“It's small, red with blue legs like a rebel with jeans. If you lick it, it's toxic. So it's highly effective. It's the perfect symbol for a challenger or rebel who wants to turn the global marketing world upside down.”

He set up shop in Amsterdam, The Netherlands – just in time for the city to emerge as the creative capital of Europe.

“We were in the right place at the right time,” Goodson said. “We were doing the type of work clients around the world were looking for – that meant doing the complete opposite of what a traditional advertising agency would do. Instead of coming up

with a creative way of pushing products at consumers, trying to convince them to buy something they don't need, I wanted to be part of doing something that makes the world a better place.”

And the cultural movement agency was born.

“Business benefits if the world is better,” he explained. “It's in the best interests of corporations to try to do more than just deliver shareholder value. If they want to be relevant and they want to be purposeful, the best way is do that is to align with the values of their consumers. Those big corporations that create jobs for millions, support the economy, and manufacture daily consumption products that touch people's lives can make a massive difference.”

Today, StrawberryFrog employs just under 100 people at offices in New York and the United Arab Emirates.

Goodson sees a specific future for his company.

“I'd love it to be known as the world's foremost place to come if you want to start a movement,” he said. “People are starting to realize we are living in this age of movements; that only creates opportunity for us. In the past, I'd sit down with clients and talk about 'living in the age of movements' and point to Egypt or an uprising in Syria and it wouldn't resonate. But now, if you look at what's transpired in the United States in the recent elections, people realize there are movements, backlashes, marches, etc. They start to realize we are living in a time of movements and if you're a brand and you stick your head in the sand, you risk becoming irrelevant in a revolutionary time.”

Goodson is more than comfortable wearing the mantle of an entrepreneur.

“I've always loved to work for myself. And I learned that on the knee of my father, who was an entrepreneur. My grandfather, originally from the UK, also owned his own business in the early 1900s. Part of being an entrepreneur is being able to live with a certain level of uncertainty.”

Goodson found studying the humanities, philosophy and business ingrained in him an understanding of how to analyze and communicate ideas.

“You have to have a certain self-security, that you learn from places like Western, that allows you to be fearless. If you have that security, if you have that strength behind you, then you can be fearless. It's when you have no structure that you become fearful.” **WAG**



Endless opportunities

Governor General's Award celebrates the work of Shelley Niro, MFA '97

BY KRISTA HABERMEHL, MA '05

Shelley Niro can't see herself doing anything other than making art. "It's such a deep need to create," said Niro, MFA'97. "Art is creative. You get your mind going. You get your brain going on something. If nobody did art, if nobody decided to make something new, what a boring world it would be."

Niro was awarded the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in March. The award was created in 1999 by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Governor General of Canada, an honour that comes with a \$25,000 prize and recognizes outstanding career achievement in visual and media arts.

The need to create is something that's proven to be the impetus in her work for three decades. Because of it, Niro has amassed a catalogue of multimedia works – paintings, photography, sculptures, beadwork and films – which contribute and look to re-define Indigenous identity in Canada. She often features family members in her works and uses art to explore myths about Indigenous people, making playful commentary about contemporary stereotypes. Her multimedia visual artwork has appeared in exhibits across North America and has received numerous accolades which, in addition to the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, include being named a fellow of the National Museum of American History and a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

(PHOTO BY ROSALIE FAVELL)

"I feel quite honoured to receive this (Governor General's) award. They told me in October, but asked me not to tell anybody. It was really hard because you're so excited, but you can't tell anybody. It was a long stretch," Niro said with a laugh.

A member of the Six Nations Reserve, Turtle Clan, Bay of Quinte Mohawk, Niro was born in Niagara Falls, N.Y., but grew up on the reservation near Brantford, Ont. Her passion for art was sparked early on, thanks to growing up in an artistic community.

"There were a lot of creative people around me. I could see that people made things with their hands and I followed that example," she said.

"I COULD SEE THAT PEOPLE MADE THINGS WITH THEIR HANDS AND I FOLLOWED THAT EXAMPLE."

By the time she arrived at Western, Niro was already well established in her career. She was encouraged, however, by Sheila Butler, a professor in the Faculty of Visual Arts at the time, to pursue her master's degree.

"I was impressed by Shelley's creative ability to link her Aboriginal heritage to contemporary visual art modes of expression and presentation," said Butler, MA'93, now a professor emeritus. "At that time, I felt participation in our MFA program would give her the encouragement and information that would help her to continue to make and exhibit her important work."

Niro found the Western experience demanding, but positive in terms of deepening her appreciation for the value of research as it relates to the creation of art.

"It was a lot of work. A lot of intense, concentrated effort," Niro said. "When I did graduate, it took me a long time to calm down from the whole experience. But, it opened my eyes to a lot of things about research and how much work you have to put into something to really understand what you're trying to talk about. It gave me the opportunity to look more closely at history and myth and perspectives of Iroquois history."

While still a student at Western, Niro shot one of her films, *Honey Moccasin*, with the help of a Visual Arts class. Students helped design costumes and parts of the set, and also filmed a scene in the movie. *Honey Moccasin* won Best Experimental Work at the Dreamspeakers Festival in Edmonton, Alta. and Best Feature, Best



Waitress (1986) – oil on canvas

Actress, Best Actor and Best Director at the Red Earth Festival in Oklahoma City, Okla.

"She's a very bright and creative person. And also, very grounded. Because she was already an established artist, and it was the early days of our graduate program, she came across as having artistic maturity, wisdom and an awareness that was really remarkable," said Patrick Mahon, Visual Arts professor and graduate chair, who remembers Niro well.

Her art, and the messages contained within, reflect what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is encouraging, he added.

"Some of her work has been directed towards healing and telling a story related to Indigenous people that is not understood, and hasn't been understood, but telling it in a way that often involves humour and has a gentleness of spirit."

While Niro knows it's important and worthwhile to break barriers, she also stressed oftentimes there's value in simply finding levity in art.

"The world is a great place; it's a fun place to be in. You can't really get stuck in a rut thinking about all the horrible things going on in the world. The opportunities are endless. I think that's one of the best parts of making art and looking at art." **WAG**



BY TODD DEVLIN, MA'09

STEPPING INTO

ALUMNI COUPLE FIND SUCCESSFUL LANDING AFTER LEAPS OF FAITH

Farah Perelmutter can still hear the silence on the other end of the line.

She had just called her mother to break the news: Farah and her husband, Martin, were preparing to quit their jobs and start their own speakers' bureau, an industry the young couple knew nothing about until a few months before that telephone call. The silence that followed lasted quite a while.

"Then, just as I pictured my mother trying to be patient and keep her cool, she replied, 'Well Farah you know you can't live on love alone.' Then she asked, 'And what exactly is a speakers' bureau, anyway?'"

June 1995. Within a single month, Farah and Martin Perelmutter married, moved into a new home, quit their jobs and launched a new business. The then-25-year-olds went from two solid incomes – Farah was in advertising, Martin in corporate law – to zero. Farah's mom was correct – they could not live on love. Instead, they made huge lifestyle changes, cutting out extras and going back to living like students.

But they believed. They ran the business out of a spare room in their Toronto apartment, with a shared phone and a two-drawer filing cabinet. Between the two of them, they did everything. They stayed in that apartment for four years. And then slowly grew.

Today, the alumni couple credit that leap of faith – or, actually, that series of leaps – for landing them in the Spotlight.

That backroom business eventually blossomed into Speaker's Spotlight, one of the largest speakers' agencies in the world with offices in Toronto and Calgary booking more than 20,000 speaking events in more than 30 countries. The company was selected by Profit Magazine as one of the 100 Fastest-growing Companies in Canada, and co-founders Farah and Martin have twice been named finalists for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of The Year Award.

Profit Magazine ranked Farah as one of Canada's Top 100 Women Entrepreneurs for seven consecutive years. She was also selected as one of Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 through the Women's Executive

THE SPOTLIGHT

Network, and named among Canada's Top 20 Women of the Year by The Women's Post.

Farah, BA'91 (Psychology), serves as CEO; Martin, BA'90 (Economics), serves as President.

Still, all these years later, they remember well the early days of the company, when drumming up business was no small feat. "We'd make 50 or 75 cold calls a day. We'd try to get out and network, meet speakers, attend events and meet with potential clients," Martin said. "I was doing sales, accounting, sent out invoices. I was even the company courier, getting on my bike at the end of the day and riding around the city dropping off packages."

In its first year, the company booked 40 speaking engagements – a few "out of sheer hustle."

"In the early days, we managed to find 18 speakers who sort of felt sorry enough for us to let us represent them," Martin said. "It was pretty slow growth for the first five years, but then we hit a tipping point where, all of a sudden, things really started to snowball."

The couple credits a trio of early clients for accelerating the company's success – Paul Henderson, the Canadian hockey player who scored the winning goal in the 1972 Summit Series against the Soviet Union; basketball coach Jack Donohue, who coached Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in high school and the Canadian men's national team from 1972-88; and the late Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter, the boxer wrongfully convicted of triple homicide who spent nearly 20 years in prison and whose life story was portrayed in the 1999 movie 'The Hurricane,' starring Denzel Washington.

That trio was having their moment in the spotlight – all at the right time for Spotlight.

Whether a speech motivates, inspires, or expands people's knowledge in particular subject areas, the Perelmutterers believe a great speaker can be the spark needed to create change and cause people to take action in their lives. "Our speakers have some amazing messages to share," Farah said. "It feels great to know that people all around the world are being affected and impacted by our speakers."

"A speech can change the world."

The company grew quickly, adding staff each year, moving into larger office spaces in Toronto and expanding its roster of speakers. Today, Speakers' Spotlight sets up hundreds of speaking engagements with clients all



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

over the world each year, drawing from its roster of about 500 speakers.

"My initial goal was to fill one entire drawer with files of clients," Farah said. "Now, we have a room full of filing cabinets, and every time I walk into that room I think about the drawer I was so determined to fill. I can't believe this is our life now. It's mind-blowing."

Over the years, the company has represented politicians (Prime Minister Justin Trudeau) and power players (environmentalist David Suzuki), astronauts (Chris Hadfield) and starship captains (William Shatner), those who play (Olympians Clara Hughes and Silken Laumann, BA'88, LLD'13) and those who pretend (actors Michael J. Fox and Martin Short), as well as Dragons (Kevin O'Leary, MBA'80, and Arlene Dickinson) and those who *Do The Right Thing* (director Spike Lee).

The company is approached by more than 1,000 speakers annually, but only

"THE VALUE WE BRING TO CLIENTS IS WE NARROW IT DOWN AND PROVIDE THE RIGHT SPEAKER FOR THEIR AUDIENCE."

takes only a handful of new clients each year. They will also reach out to non-clients, if the fit works.

"We can book virtually anyone," Farah said. "The value we bring to clients is we narrow it down and provide the right speaker for their audience. That's where our wisdom comes into play."

The biggest test for speakers, the couple stressed, is not the ovation at the beginning of the speech, it's the ovation – or lack thereof – at the end. "People like Chris Hadfield and Clara Hughes routinely get a standing ovation at the beginning just because of who they are," Martin said. "But they'll get an even bigger ovation at the end because they're really phenomenal speakers."

Though Farah and Martin both attended Western, and lived in the same three-bedroom apartment on Proudfoot Lane, they never met. When Martin and his roommates graduated and moved out of their apartment, three girls moved in. On the night those girls came by to look at the



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

place, only two showed up. The third – Farah – had a night class. The couple found this out during a conversation when they met at a mutual friend's cottage a year and a half later.

Today, the couple are the parents of two teenage children. And though they didn't cross paths at Western, both have fond memories of the university.

"Everyone I associated with worked hard; the professors I had were fantastic at inspiring me to want to work hard," Farah said. "I remember studying at the library with friends. I remember it closed at 11 p.m., so then we'd all switch over to the Medical Sciences Building and study there.

"Then we'd all go to The Spoke and go dancing. It was so much fun. We talk about Western all the time with our kids. It really was the perfect combination of fantastic education and great friends." **WAG**

LENDING HIS VOICE TO A GENERATION

BY PAUL MAYNE

If it was not for a lengthy line at the student *Gazette* office in 1985, Dan Shulman may have had an entirely different voice.

Wanting to write for the student newspaper in his first year at Western, Schulman went into the University Community Centre early in Frosh Week to volunteer. However, the line-up for the *Gazette* was out the door and down the hall.

"I said, 'Well, screw this.' I looked across the hall and it said, 'Radio Western CHRW,'" Schulman laughed.

"Nobody had ever said to me that I had a nice voice or anything. So I knocked on the door. I said, 'Do you guys do sports?' They said, 'Yep, we do sports.' I said, 'You need volunteers?' They said, 'Yes.' I said, 'I would like to volunteer.' They said, 'You want to come to Windsor Saturday for a football game?'"

And that's how it started.

Today, Shulman, BSc'89 (Actuarial Sciences), is an ESPN play-by-play announcer for Major League Baseball and NCAA Men's College Basketball. Since 2011, he has been the voice of ESPN's *Sunday Night Baseball*, alongside Jessica Mendoza, Aaron Boone and Buster Olney. On top of his already busy schedule, Shulman joined the Sportsnet broadcast team where he will call at least 30 Toronto Blue Jays games in 2017.

"It was not meant to be a career; it was just for fun. I didn't even do CHRW my fourth year. I stopped to concentrate on my marks and exams. For three years, I don't think I ever once thought I'm going to turn this into a career," Shulman explained.

"But I was in that place (CHRW) more than when I was just working. It became a hangout, more than the classroom sometimes. It turned into a huge part of my life, obviously."

After graduating from Western, Shulman worked as an actuary for six months. ("I didn't enjoy that as much as I thought.") He then made a deal with his parents.

"I said, 'Give me two years and let me try this – if this doesn't work out then I'll go back to Western and go to business school.' They didn't know many people who said they wanted to get into radio. They were nervous, but they were fine."

His first job was in Barrie at CKBB.

For the first three months, he was an actuary Monday to Friday and did weekend radio for \$6 an hour. When an employee went on maternity leave at the station, he got a full-time job. "I knew then I loved it," he said. "Emotionally, I

was hooked."

Prior to ESPN, the Toronto-born Shulman worked for CTV at the 1994 Winter Olympic Games in Norway and called the 1994 FIFA World Basketball Championship in Toronto. He began play-by-play duties for the Blue Jays on TSN (1995-2001) with former Blue Jay Buck Martinez, who is once again his broadcast partner on Sportsnet this year. He also covered the Toronto Raptors and Vancouver Grizzlies as part of the network's NBA package.

"THEY DON'T TEACH YOU HOW TO HANDLE SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THE PLAY-BY-PLAY HANDBOOK."

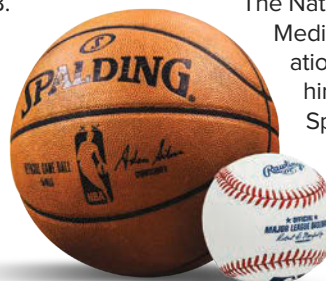
Outside sport, he is perhaps best known for announcing the death of Osama bin Laden live on ESPN *Sunday Night Baseball* in May 2011.

"They don't teach you how to handle something like that in the play-by-play handbook," Shulman said. "I will freely admit, of however many thousands of games I've done, when that happened there was the most nervous I've ever been because I'm not trained to do that. I played it very, very safe."

"That was the biggest story in the world; it was surreal because there was a game going on, too. You have an obligation to call the game and you have an obligation to the news, so you're juggling."

Shulman is the first two-time winner of the Sports Media Canada Broadcaster of the Year award (2000 and 2007). The National Sports Media Association named him National Sportscaster of the Year in 2011.

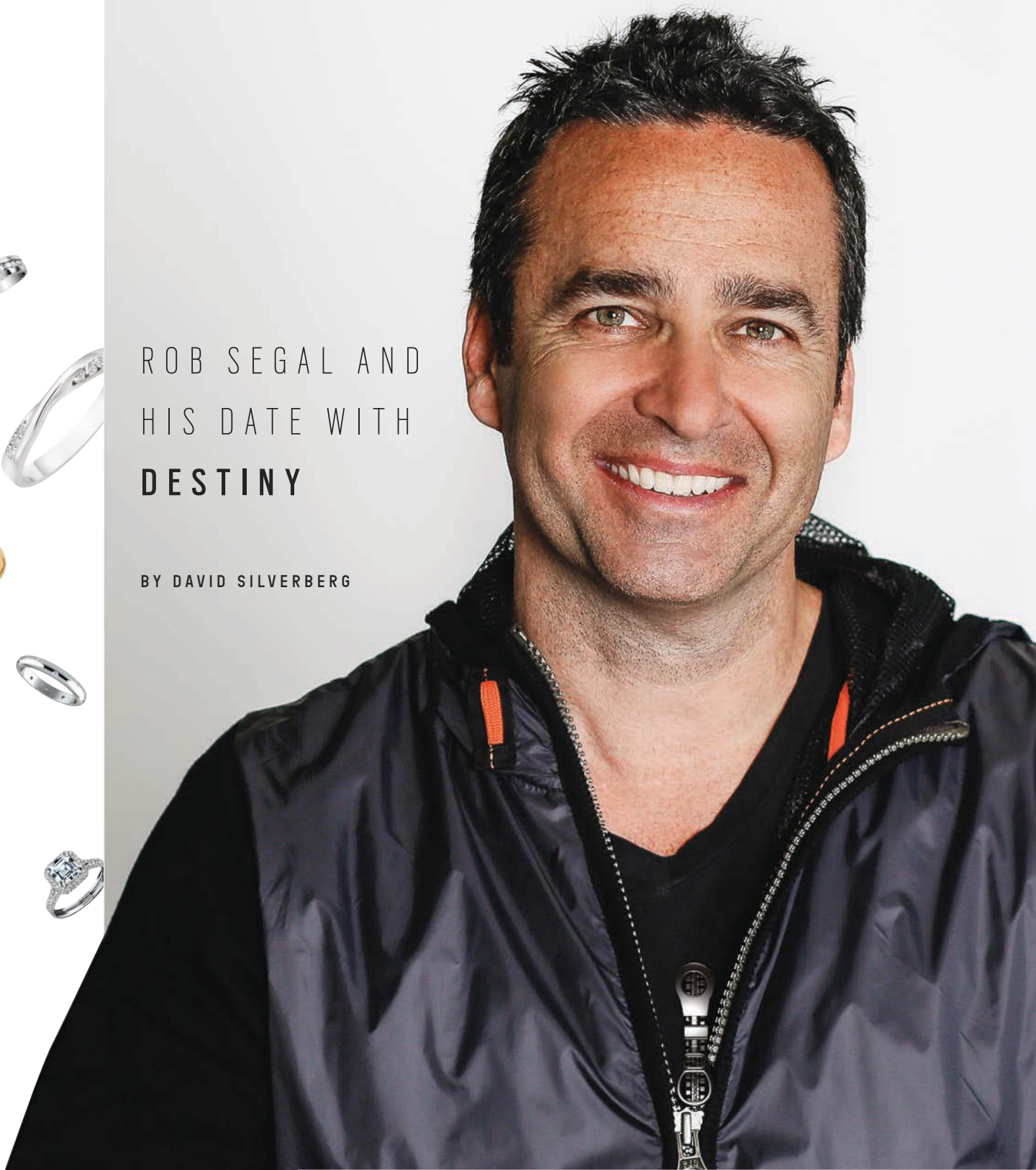
[WAG](#)






ROB SEGAL AND
HIS DATE WITH
DESTINY

BY DAVID SILVERBERG





He knows it is one of the most challenging jobs in Canadian digital media. But when Rob Segal, BA '89, sees a challenge, he sees an opportunity.

In the last two years, Ashley Madison, a Canadian online dating service marketed to people who are married or in a committed relationship, has faced a slew of negative headlines.

Most notably, a major breach of its database in July 2015 exposed the identities of 32 million users. Soon afterward, hackers uncovered data revealing how some of Ashley Madison's supposed female users were actually automated bots created by the company to offer a more balanced male-female user ratio.

The ensuing scandal rocked the digital world.

Funny enough, when Segal first heard of the data breach, he thought to himself, "Wow, I feel sorry for whomever has to run that company now."

In July 2016, Segal was named CEO of Toronto-based Ruby Corp., the parent company of Ashley Madison, Cougar Life and Established Men. When a head-hunter offered him the Ruby CEO position, Segal remembers thinking: "If I can pull it off – to bring back this company – that would be an incredible feat."

Segal replaced outgoing CEO Neal Biderman, and admits it was no easy decision to take the helm of Ruby. He did several months of due diligence, discussed the position with his wife and family, and chatted with attorneys and key staff at the company.

The actual sites' intention didn't appeal to him, as Ashley Madison is known for polyamory and kinky hook-ups. "It's exciting to be part of a fast-growing segment in online dating – the open-minded space," he said.

Segal's marketing touch has already influenced the dating platform's messaging.

Gone were the shock-and-awe tactics mainly appealing to men, and in their place were ads targeting women, and a hint of that open-mindedness. "Our sites let people explore the boundaries

of relationships and human sexuality in general," Segal said.

Most notably, Avid Life Media, the parent company of the sites, changed its name to the more feminine- and elegant-sounding Ruby. That same month, the company dropped its signature tagline – 'Life is Short. Have an Affair.' – and changed it to 'Find your moment,' while also updating its brand to replace the image of a woman wearing a wedding ring with a red gem-shaped symbol as its logo.

As untoward as some may find the site, someone signs onto Ashley Madison every five seconds, and 39 million people in 53 countries have joined the site since it was launched in 2002.

Segal is excited to be getting out of sales and having dozens of clients, and instead being his own client. The 49-year-old Toronto resident cut his teeth in marketing as the founder and president of Segal Communications, an agency he sold to marketing giant InterPublic in 2000. His many clients included Sony, Ford, and Unilever, and boasted 130 employees at its peak.

“ . . . T O B R I N G B A C K
T H I S C O M P A N Y –
T H A T W O U L D B E A N
I N C R E D I B L E F E A T . ”

Before Ruby came knocking, Segal was CEO of WorldGaming, an online video gaming platform that hosts head-to-head matches and tournaments and for console and PC gamers. "We were inventing a new space back then; we were blazing our own path rather than riding a wave or a trend," he said.

By working with so many brands over the years, Segal says his experience will only help Ruby polish its reputation. "Great marketing is all about great storytelling, and Ruby has a story to tell much like any other brand does," he said.

Of his years at Western, Segal says he credits his English courses and degree for "helping me form coherent arguments, and living on campus and away from home for the first time really opened my eyes to new experiences."

And now Segal is throwing himself into an experience many executives wouldn't find enviable at first blush: turning around a company that endured a scandal reported across the world.

"I want to bring to Ruby a fresh set of eyes and a different perspective on valuing your customers and staff, and giving everyone a voice to help build a strong work culture," Segal said. **WAG**



BY ANGIE WISEMAN

TAKING HIS SHOT

SIMU LIU, HBA'11, BRINGS ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS TO HOLLYWOOD

(PHOTO BY SAM TSANG)

Becoming an actor on a popular new Canadian TV show or a stunt double on a *Fall Out Boy* music video was not at all on Simu Liu's radar when he was working as an accountant in Toronto. Until he was laid off – and his world opened up.

"I remember feeling oddly free in that moment. I was without a job, but I thought I can do whatever I want. This is my one chance to really just try something. I owe it to myself to really give it a shot," said Liu, HBA'11.

This past year, Liu's acting career has gained momentum, with the success of his roles on CBC's *Kim's Convenience* and NBC's *Taken*. Despite his respect for Toronto's strong film industry, his ultimate goal is to move to Hollywood. On a recent trip there, he met with agents and casting directors in Los Angeles, including doctor-turned actor Ken Jeong (best known for his role in *The Hangover*) about a possible buddy cop movie that Liu hopes to write.

"I started talking to him (Jeong) on Twitter. When I got to L.A., he said come by the set and we can hang out more. So I ended up spending a lot of time with him. His advice was that you can't wait. I joked that we should do a buddy cop movie for both of us and he said, 'If you write it, I'll be in it,'" Liu said.

While there is no formal training to show actors how to network, Liu credits his networking and soft skills courses at Ivey Business School with giving him the tools he needed to push forward in his career and not be afraid to reach out.

"The hard part is to think of it (your career) as a start-up and think of yourself as an entrepreneur rather than an artist that waits for the phone to ring for opportunities," he said.

"I spent so many years struggling as an actor. Then suddenly, I'm in demand. The only thing actors want to do is work. It was amazing – tiring, brutal and amazing," he said of his recent schedule shooting two television shows at once.

In a long list of acting credentials Liu also includes stunt man, writer, director and producer – all skills that round out his already full resume.

Following his layoff from his accounting firm, Liu started out by looking at TV and film opportunities on Craigslist. In amongst some of the more unsavory ads was a posting for the movie *Pacific Rim* by director Guillermo del Toro. The movie was being shot in Toronto and they were looking for extras. The role paid just \$10 dollars an hour, but it was the stepping stone Liu needed to start his acting career. As soon as he arrived on set he knew he was home.

"I ended up falling in love with everything I saw. People have careers devoted to the movies. It wasn't just the actors – the assistant director, the gaffers working the lights – it was everything. It was such a big production."

While Ivey attracted him to Western, Liu credits one of his first experiences as a frosh with giving him his first taste of fame and one he would reflect on often as he

launched his acting career.

"The three sciences do O-Week together. So they had this big talent show where each of the sciences would audition one champion. Then on the final night of O-Week, they compete against each other on stage – and I won," he said.

Liu used his dance, gymnastics and martial arts skills to put his routine together, all skills he would later draw on to expand his acting offerings.

"I had a very interesting first few months because everyone knew who I was," he laughed.

While Liu majored in accounting, he was always involved in extracurricular activities that fed his interests and would later act as experience as he built his resume for acting.

"I loved that I could find a group of people that were passionate about the same things as me and when I did graduate and found myself laid off a few months later,

it was really great to have those other skills," he said.

Although he didn't always recognize acting as his future career, when Liu thinks back to the first spark of interest in acting, he harkens back to his childhood when his parents dropped him off at the movie theatre for the day. "I don't think I even entertained the thought of bringing that up to them. I was raised by

"I SPENT SO
MANY YEARS
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AS AN ACTOR.
THEN SUDDENLY,
I'M IN DEMAND."

movies, musicals and TV shows. And I loved all of it. Of course, it's totally natural that I would want to go into that eventually," Liu said.

Despite his passion for the craft, growing up, Liu didn't feel comfortable broaching the subject of acting with his parents, Chinese-born immigrants determined to provide the best life for their family in Canada.

"I never really gave myself permission to fully pursue it. For me, my parents, above all else, wanted stability because their life, coming from a different country, had been anything but stable," he said.

Liu's drive, determination and his ritual of checking Craigslist every morning enabled him to build his resume and gain experience. Some days he was paid as an extra on a movie or a TV show and some days he worked for free in a music video.

"Looking back through it all, at no point did I say, 'I'm going to give up or call it quits.' I was still convinced this was something I loved enough to keep going. It's not just about getting a degree and conforming to someone else's idea of success," he said. "You need to be honest with yourself about what your interests are because if you do have something that you are truly passionate about but don't pursue then you run the risk of waking up one day and realizing that you don't actually like your life. Take the time and know yourself." [WAG](#)

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BY ADELA TALBOT, BA'08, MA'11

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

ADRIAN MOODY, BHSC'05,
AND ADAM HAINES, BESC/BSc'04,
CREATE A MUSICAL WORLD
WITHOUT BARRIERS





(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

It all started with Joey.

When Adrian Moody, BHSc'05, met the young boy more than three years ago, Joey had cerebral palsy, was non-verbal and spoke only by typing into a digitized device called a Vanguard. Moody, a Toronto-based musician and producer, had heard of Joey – who at 5 “wrote great poetry” – from a teacher at the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. The teacher wanted to involve the young poet in a music class, but didn’t know how.

“His lyrics were this really cool poetry. I looked at this kid and I saw an artist, not a kid with a disability. I took his lyrics and we sat in the studio and did a little song-writing session. He was super excited,” Moody said. “It was really fun. It was one of the most amazing song-writing experiences because it was so natural and flowing – and this is a 5-year-old kid. He was really into it.”

Moody knew he was onto something. His studio had technology and software that could turn Joey’s lyrics into a song, one Joey would sing and record – something the boy and his parents never considered to be a possibility. Moody spent a couple of weeks manipulating the recording, stretching the digitized speech and building a melody around the words.

“His parents didn’t know he could get involved with music. When I sent the recording back to them, when I met them and saw the tears of joy, the kid bouncing off the walls, to me, it was like, ‘Wow. This is something special that’s been done,’” he said.

“That started the questioning for me. This software exists; the talent is here; there’s musical resources that exist. Is anybody out there doing something like this to help children like Joey, and children who might have a disability, in making music?”

Moody called Adam Haines, a friend he met while studying at Western and what followed was a “cocktail-napkin meeting” that changed everything.

“Adrian told me this story over breakfast one day and I was blown away, not

just by hearing the music, which was amazing, but also hearing the reaction from his parents,” said Haines, BESC/BSc’04.

An engineer and entrepreneur, Haines had spent the bulk of his career in start-ups, mainly in the software industry. When Moody shared Joey’s story, he knew it was the perfect partnership the two had been looking for since their days at Western.

“As our careers diverged over the years, we always kept in touch and remained close friends. But it wasn’t until Adrian worked with Joey that the opportunity revealed,” Haines noted.

As an engineer, Haines got excited about the practical application of technology to change lives. If the technology Moody had in his studio could manipulate digitized sound and help one aspiring, however differently-abled, child make music, what else could be done?

And that’s when Music Without Barriers was born.

Incorporated in 2014, Music Without Barriers facilitates collaboration between aspiring artists with disabilities and a community of musicians, artists, technologists and disability-support personnel.

Through their involvement in music, a universal language, aspiring musicians, regardless of their limitations or abilities, can find a voice. They can express themselves and participate in something they previously might have considered to be unattainable, Moody noted. Music Without Barriers’ mission is quite literal in that it wants to eliminate all obstructions to musical expression – be they cognitive, physical or financial.

“It was because of Joey’s song that we got our next project. Someone in (his) school realized how awesome it was. We got a TV interview with Global News and, after that interview, had a lot of parents with children of a variety of abilities reaching out to us, asking how they could get involved,” Moody said.

Often lost in the process is the profound impact these projects can have on parents – many of whom never realized this was possible for their child.

Moody continued, “When we go work with artists, whether they are children or not, we show this is what they’re capable of by filming it, putting it on YouTube, putting it on our website. When we share that, parents come forward and they think it’s amazing. What we do really opens the eyes of the community to what’s possible. It’s pretty awesome; it’s magical.”

It’s a fun challenge to figure out who they can help with the resources they have, Haines added. If a child has cerebral palsy and cannot move his or her arms, they should still get the



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

IS ANYBODY OUT THERE, DOING SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO HELP CHILDREN LIKE JOEY, AND CHILDREN WHO MIGHT HAVE A DISABILITY, IN MAKING MUSIC?”

opportunity to have that magical feeling of strumming a guitar the first time. There’s so much out there you can do with eye tracking, with touch sensors and other technologies. It’s about connecting those dots, he said.

“The work we’ve done so far is largely on the backs of our bones, with few resources in terms of funding, some generous donations from the community in Toronto, from friends and family, families of artists. We need the support of the community around us to sustain us and grow our programming,” Haines said.

It’s about facilitating and ensuring more stories like Joey’s are possible, added Moody. And that means some expanding is in the future for Music Without Barriers.

“A traditional studio isn’t accessible for everybody. We have a vehicle in which we have all this equipment. Really, you can take a studio anywhere, bring it into people’s homes. We want to be able to provide group programming – to community service centres and to provide music discovery for children that didn’t know some of these technologies exist,” he noted.

“We want to see Music Without Barriers hubs in different cities across Canada, the world, where artists can come and make the kind of music that is near and dear to their hearts. We believe it’s not too hard to make a better world through this, just by giving people the opportunity to be creative and express themselves musically,” Moody continued.

“Music is the universal language; it crosses borders; it crosses language barriers; it can cross physical and cognitive barriers as well. You just need someone to show you the way and that’s why we do it.” **WAG**



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Kindness is purple – and contagious.



By David Simmonds, BA'07

We had a feeling. We were watching social media channels and observing the conversations our alumni were engaging in and we were able to pinpoint a common theme: kindness.

When we conducted our regional round tables in 2016, Western alumni told us they wanted to give back. They wanted to help current students cope with stress, deal with mental-health issues, and meet the demands of today's university climate. When we reflected on our feelings, our observations, and your feedback together, we conceptualized Kind Mail.

Seeing your response, we knew we were on to something.

In December 2016, Western's Digital Engagement Specialist pitched an idea to our Board of Directors. The premise was simple – provide alumni with an opportunity to send a post-card to a current student with words of wisdom,

encouraging comments and tips to ace their exams. Our goal was to deliver 200 cards to students.

As the campaign rolled out over our social media, you responded. As word spread, the kindness campaign wove its way through our purple network. In the end, more than 2,000 alumni submitted messages.

This is proof that kindness is purple – and it's contagious.

In April, we tested another new campaign with a similar aim – connect alumni and students and assist during exam period. This time, we asked alumni to donate \$10 through

our *It's On Me* initiative. With each donation alumni could buy a healthy breakfast for a student and make a contribution to our Western Wellness Education Centre.

Once again, you stepped up and gave back. Participating alumni loved the opportunity to support students. The campus community was overwhelmed with messages of

support. Western students were pleased to learn that they had been gifted a great start to their day.

Both of these programs were launched through our Western Alumni social media channels. And they were inspired by you, your commitment to students, and your kindness.

If you'd like a chance to give back and connect with a current student please join the conversation.

Keep providing your feedback. Watch for our alumni survey this fall. All registered alumni will receive a digital link – but to do so we need your contact information. Please use the form below to send us your address. Your feedback may just inspire our next big idea.

Participating alumni loved the opportunity to support students.

Have you moved? We'd love to hear about it!



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For more information visit: alumni.westernu.ca/10kcoffees



(PHOTO BY FRANK NEUFELD)

The legend of McGhie

BY PAUL MAYNE

The story behind the Mustangs' music man

It takes three seconds and five simple words for Rick McGhie to take control of a room.

The simple strum of a guitar and the soft, melodic, 'A long, long time ago,' that rings from the beer-stained amps grabs students' attention quicker than a bartender shouting last call.

McGhie's appearances each Wednesday at The Spoke – and Thursdays at The Grad Club – have been called 'legendary,' a 'tradition,' and a 'rite of passage' for Western students. As for the 67 year old, "it's what I do," he said.

McGhie's first taste of Western came while he was still in high school, stopping in at The Hub on Friday and Saturday nights to listen to some acoustic tunes. When time came for him to become a Mustang, McGhie arrived with a guitar in tow. He came to Western in 1970, ready to tackle a Science degree.

He was no stranger to the guitar. Buckwheat, McGhie's high school band, played every weekend, and even played at Expo 67 a couple of times. After coming to Western, it didn't take long – a week, in fact – before he was approached by fellow Mustangs to put a band together.

"I had a bit of a reputation for playing and was approached by a couple other students," said McGhie.

This encounter led to the formation of Every One of Us, his first official Western band. The group played Friday and Saturday nights at the Spoke (when it was located in Somerville House). They grabbed the odd gig in London for a few extra dollars and, after a lineup change, and a name change (or two), the band, known at the time as Homespun, took on traveling gigs full time. McGhie was not a fan.

"It was one of the most unpleasant experiences of my life. I often describe it as being married to four guys you don't really like," he laughed. "People ask me why I never pursued the whole stardom idea. Those are the same people who've never spent their life on the road."

By 1975, McGhie decided to call it quits with Homespun and head back to school. A fellow band member, however, encouraged him to stay with the music and give it a shot as a solo artist.

McGhie began showcasing his talents at the Elbow Room, a pub located in the basement of the University Community Centre, on a regular basis – at least until they shut the doors in 1991.

"In those days, you played full weeks. They offered me one week a month, and the whole summer," said McGhie. "The Elbow was a great place to play. It was lined-up from 11:30 in the morning, pretty much every day."

McGhie also played shows around London, and went back on the road for shows in Toronto and the Niagara Falls area. He even performed at other colleges and universities. At Loyalist College, he met Kathy; last year, the pair celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

At the time, McGhie was doing contract audio component work during the day and playing at night. But being 'on the road' soon became 'stay in London', after what he refers to as the 'Brock Incident.'

"I was driving back from Brock (University) one night, and was in a driving trance, because I was working in the

daytime, playing nights and commuting back and forth," he said. "I remember being on the QEW, and then, I woke up in Brantford. I had no idea where I was. I woke up because I missed my turn. That was terrifying and that's when I stopped doing that. I then just started playing locally."

And that was a good thing. He and Kathy were just starting their family and this allowed him to focus on helping to raise the children, while playing at night. McGhie still played a few gigs outside London, but he made sure all the shows were within commuting distance, in order to be home every day for his children.

The Ceeps was a quick commute for McGhie, who held the Sunday and Monday slots for a few years. He also began doing more special events for faculties, anniversaries and even played the wedding of two Western grads who first met at one of his Spoke shows.

Alumni events are still big for McGhie, a chance for him to rekindle a lot of memories with many Western graduates. The university even took him on a tour out west in 2009 to see his Mustang fans, and will again this summer.

While he never tires of listening to, and appreciating, the 'I remember seeing you ...' stories, it still boggles his mind how, as if he were a character on Cheers, 'everybody knows his name.'

"I'm often amazed at how well known I am, and I'm not being egotistical," he said. "I remember once, I was playing the Hard Rock (Café) in Toronto, and was out on Yonge Street, waiting to meet someone, when six different people walked by, 'Rick, what are you doing here?' They all went to Western and I was flabbergasted they knew me. I can't complain about that. I've been around so long, there are thousands of people who know me and are happy to invite me to play."

McGhie refers to his regular Spoke and Grad Club shows, which require no written contract – "I guess they find me reliable" – as a two-sided coin.

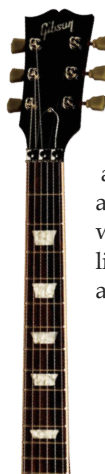
"There is the artistic side and there's the sing-along side, and I love both of them," he said. "I get up every morning and play a few hours. I'm always looking for ways to improve as a musician; I'm always trying to be better. And I need a place to play those types of songs, so the Grad Club is where I can do that."

"But there's a certain amount of musical baggage I need to bring along for the Spoke. They want a set routine, and I don't mind that. I need that. It's probably more fun because the crowd is really with me all the time."

Although he's getting older – mentioning a hip replacement a few years back as proof – McGhie said there are no plans to put the guitar on a shelf and head to the beach any time soon.

"I think I'm the only one (from the bands) still making a living playing music," he said proudly. "If you can get away with doing this, not having to be on the road and have a reasonable lifestyle, then that's a great thing. I'm good with where I'm at. I don't find any frustrations with the job, it's not like I have bad management, I have no management. As long as I can sing and play, I'll sing and play." **WAG**

PEOPLE ASK ME WHY I NEVER PURSUED THE WHOLE STARDOM IDEA. THOSE ARE THE SAME PEOPLE WHO'VE NEVER SPENT THEIR LIFE ON THE ROAD.





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AWARDS & HONOURS

Fifteen outstanding Western alumnae were recognized by the **Women's Executive Network 2016 Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award**. The talents and accomplishments of these women offer inspiration to future generations of leaders and we're honoured to call them our own.



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ROBERTA JAMIESON, LLB'76, LLD'93
President & CEO, Indspire
WXN Hall of Fame Category



CATHERINE KARAKATSANIS, BESC'83, MESC'91
COO, Morrison Hershfield Group Inc.
WXN Hall of Fame Category



AMANDA KHAN, BHSC'09, MSC'12
Medical Student, The University of Toronto
(MD/PHD program)
Telus Future Leaders Category



PENNY LIPSETT, BA'73
Vice-Chair, Liquor Control Board of Ontario
RBC Champions Category



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BMO Arts & Communications Category



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Deadline for inclusion
in the Fall 2017 issue
is July 1.



66 The Class of Geography 1966 celebrated 50 years at Homecoming by attending the football game, President's Dinner and a brunch at the home of Lynn and Keith Watson. Stories of field trips to the Bruce Peninsula and Pelee Island, as well as the travails of cartography lab, flowed freely. Tales of children and grandchildren were also shared. Pictured are, from left, **Dick McCutcheon**; **Gary Sullivan**; **Leif Wilson**; **Hugh Goodwillie**; **Velma Parker**; **Lew French**; **Sherrill (Gill) Bell**, who flew in from Australia; **Lynn (Maybee) Watson**; **Sally (Lyon) Goodwillie**; **Jack Wood**, who crossed the continent from Vancouver; and **Glen Pincombe**.

1950s

54 Patricia Laing, BA'54, who officiated high school and university basketball for more than four decades, was inducted into the Ontario Basketball Association Hall of Fame.

56 Dr. Brian Thicke, MD'56, received the City of Brampton Lifetime Achievement award, and was presented with his pin for 50 years on active hospital staff. He is still in full-time family practice in Brampton. Brian's children Joanne, Todd and the late Alan Thicke are also Western alumni, and grandson Creighton is a Mustang swimmer.

1960s

63 William (Bill) Thomas, BA'63 (Geography), MSc'67, MDiv'80, was awarded the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers presented on behalf of the Governor-General by Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberg, Jan. 25.

64 Peter Martin, BA'64, President of the Toronto Argonauts Alumni Association, has been named CFL Alumni of the Year.

67 Jim Inwood, BA'67, **David Shaw**, BA'83, and **Norm Trotter**, BA'70, celebrated Western Founder's Day in Hilton Head, S.C. All are retired and enjoying the warmer temperatures of The South.

1970s

73 Nick Di Pietro, MSc'73 (Applied Mathematics), recently contributed to a Concordia University oral history project resulting in two books that will supplement the Quebec senior high school programme. A website – ItalianCanadianWW2.ca – was also built to describe the challenges faced by Italian Canadians during the Second World War.

75 Gary Mottershead, BEsc'75, MBA'77, recently published *Guanxi – The China You Never Read About*.

77 Elizabeth Rankin, BScN'77, has been selected to participate at the Medicine X-ED spring conference at Stanford University based on a proposal regarding the patient-centred medical education curriculum outlined in her book, *The Patients' Time Has Come: Listening to Patients Will Redefine Patient Safety and*



74 This winter, **Nick Gudewill**, MBA'74, made a 13,000 km journey from Cape Town to Cairo, travelling through 11 countries, on his BMW 1200 Adventure motorcycle. He travelled with a company called Globeriders LLC with 10 other riders. "At age 68, I can safely say it was the most involved, exciting and intense two months of my life and I'm very happy that I'm still able to take on such challenges," Gudewill said. In 2011, he completed a similar journey on the Silk Road starting in Istanbul, Turkey, and finishing in Xian, China. He's planning a third trip for early next year with Globeriders travelling from Bogota, Columbia, to Tierra del Fuego. Visit hnickgudewill.blogspot.ca to follow the adventure.

Revitalize Service Delivery.

79 Tony Wilson, BA'79 (Political Science), was recently appointed the honorary title of Queen's Counsel (QC), by the Attorney General of British Columbia. He has been a Bencher of the Law Society British Columbia since 2012 and a regular small business columnist for *The Globe and Mail* since 2010. He continues to practice franchise law at Boughton Law in Vancouver.

1980s

83 Cleviston Haynes, MA'83 (Economics), was appointed Acting Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados.

83 Keith Spence, BSc'83 (Geology), MBA'85, President and Partner with Global Mining Capital, received the 2017 Harry Jerome Professional Excellence Award from the Black Business and Professional Association.

83 After several critically acclaimed recordings as a member of The Ambassador Duo with saxophonist Clifford Leaman, **Derek Parsons**, BMus'83, has released his first solo CD, *Liszt: The Poet Inspired*, on the Equilibrium label. The CD consists of piano works inspired



1979
The Dukes of Hazzard
premieres
on US TV
network
CBS



1956
Dick Clark's 1st
appearance
as host of
American
Bandstand



78 Jim Thorner, BESC'78 and **Donna Sokol**, BA'76, were married June 24, 2016 at Brescia University College. They reside in Baynes Lake, B.C.

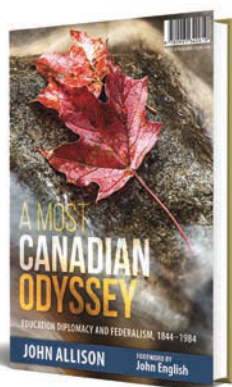
by Liszt's Italian travels and residencies. Parsons has also created a two-piano reduction of the *Healey Willan Piano Concerto in C minor, HWC 76*, with the assistance of co-author Caroline Owen. The reduction is thought to be the first for this concerto. It has been endorsed by the Healey Willan Society, and will be published later this year by Biretta Books, Chicago.

85 Karen (Staines) Briard, BA'85, BEd'86, has hung up her whistle to enjoy the retired life after 30 years with the Durham District School Board teaching physical education, leadership and special education, as well as coaching cross-country and track. As of Feb. 1, you might find her on her bike, gardening, or running on a trail somewhere.

86 John Boynton, HBA'86, has been appointed President and CEO of Torstar Corp and publisher of the *Toronto Star*.

86 Margaret E. Henderson, BSc'86, MLIS'86, Director for Research Data Management, Associate Professor, at Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries, in Richmond, Va., has published her first book, *Data Management: A Practical Guide for Librarians*.

86 Catherine Davidson, BA'86, has been appointed the new Librarian at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Oshawa, effective June 1.



87 John Allison, BA'87, recently published *A Most Canadian Odyssey: Education, Diplomacy and Federalism, 1844-1984*, the last book published by The Althouse Press at Western before its closure in July 2016. It has been subsequently reprinted through Ingramsark in Nashville, Tenn., and is available worldwide on Amazon and other online bookstores. The book details education, federalism and Canadian diplomacy in the 20th Century.

1990s

90 Mark Smithyes, BA'90 (Political Science), was recently appointed Chair of Life Sciences Ontario's Board of Directors.

90 Elaine (Berdusco) Greenwood, BSc'90 (Hons. Zoology), graduated from Nipissing University with a Master of Education degree in 2016 after 26 years, three children and many life experiences later. She is currently writing a cookbook and continues to serve as family taxi driver, chef, mentor, mother to her daughters, and wife to husband Gerry.

91 Loui Silvestri, BA'91 (French Language and Literature), BEd'92, Principal of Sunningdale Public School in Oakville, has been named among Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2017 by *The Learning Partnership*. Now celebrating its 13th year, the program recognizes the unique and vital contribution of principals in publicly funded schools.

91 Mike Dover, HBA'91, MBA'97, has published his second book, *Dante's Infinite Monkeys: Technology Meets the 7 Deadly Sins*, a study in how technology can amplify evil.

92 Darrin Griffiths, BEd'92, and **Scott Lowrey**, BEd'89, recently released *The Principal Reader: Narratives of Experience*.

94 Ethoca, co-founded by **Darryl Green**, BESC'94, LLB'99, MBA'00, recently won the 2017 Card & Payments Award for Best Technology Initiative in conjunction with Accertify.

95 Deborah Saucier, PhD'95 (Psychology), has been named President of MacEwan University in Edmonton. Saucier starts her new position July 1.

98 Chris McCreery, BA'98, has two new books out marking the 50th anniversary of the Order of Canada – *Fifty Years Honouring Canadians: The Order of Canada 1967-2017* (Dundurn Press) and *The Order of Canada: Genesis of an Honour System* (UofT Press).

2000s

01 Erika Chamberlain, LLB'01, has been appointed to a five-



85 Adrienne Pieczonka, BMus'85, DMus'12, now appears on a Canadian stamp, part of a collection that celebrates two Canadian-penned operas and three individuals credited with bringing modern Canadian opera talent to the world stage.

year term as Dean of Western Law, effective May 1.

03 Dr. Danielle Martin, MD'03, recently published *Better Now: Six Big Ideas to Improve Health Care for all Canadians*.

05 Benjamin Mou, BSc'05, recently got married, moved to a new job and home in British Columbia, and has a baby due in the fall.

05 In November 2016, **Jenny Park**, BEd'05, started working as a Practicum Coordinator for Constructing Futures, a bridging and training program with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers.



2003 The last 'old style' Volkswagen Beetle rolls off the assembly line in Mexico



94 Kas Rigas, BA'94 (English Literature), a leading consumer marketing communications expert, recently joined APCO Worldwide as a Senior Director in the Food, Consumer Products & Retail practice.



08 **Jacqueline Hoppmeyer**, BMOS'08, and **Matthew Goldsmith** were married Aug. 21, 2016 in Montreal. Nine friends from Hoppmeyer's time at Western were in attendance, including two as bridesmaids. Pictured are **Matthew Laski**, BA'08; **Zach Greenberg**, HBA'08; **Nicole Shomair-Shiman**, HBA'08; Hoppmeyer, BMOS'08; **Lauren Jacob-Shedletsky**, BA'08, bridesmaid; **Renee Zatzman**, HBA'08, bridesmaid; and **Dalia Kagan-Watson**, BA'07.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Robert W. Farley, MD'54, died October 3, 2015 in Brantford, Ont.

Former Western writer-in-residence **Bonnie Burnard**, BA'67, died March 4, in London, Ont.

Clyde Derrick Halford, LLB'71, died Aug. 23, 2016, in Hamilton, after practicing law for more than 40 years.

John Langdon, BESC'67, died Dec. 31, 2016, surrounded by family and loved ones. He was born in Nelson, Lancashire, England, on Dec. 24, 1944.

Anne Neidhardt, BScN'67, died Jan. 9, at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. She is survived by her husband, Wilf Neidhardt, MA'67.

Frances Henry Postowoj, BA'81, died Oct. 13, 2016, due to complications from multiple sclerosis. She is survived by her husband Dave Postowoj, HBA'85.

Ann Marie Rawling (Robertson), BA'54 (Home Economics, Brescia), died April 26, 2016, in Guelph, Ont.

The Rev. Yvonne Summerfield, BScN'77, MDiv'04, died Jan. 13.



2007
Apple announces the iPhone

07 County of Simcoe Economic Development Officer **Rebecca Breedon**, BA'07, received the Young Professional Influencer of the Year Award for her contributions to the county's many successful projects and initiatives.

08 **Dr. Boluwaji Ogunyemi**, BSc(Hons)'08, chief dermatology resident physician at the University of British Columbia, and Director of Communications of Resident

Doctors of British Columbia, received the 2017 Harry Jerome Health Science Award from the Black Business and Professional Association.

2010s

11 **Kevin Vuong**, BMOS'11, has been named one of Her Majesty The Queen's Young Leaders and Canada's representative to meet HM Queen Elizabeth II this

coming June 2017, when she will personally hand-deliver the Award and Medal.

16 **Tara Chen**, BHSc'16, is now living in Kingston, Jamaica, on an internship with the International Youth Internship Program. She is working with the Interagency Coalition of AIDS and Development/Caribbean Vulnerable Communities in the areas of HIV/AIDS in vulnerable populations.



08 **Jason Wood**, BA'08 (History), is pleased to announce the birth of his first born child, a son named Lincoln Christopher Wood Jan. 25, at McMaster Hospital in Hamilton.



08 Since graduating from Western, **Erin (Stephenson) Jackson**, BSc/BMSc'08, attended Saba University School of Medicine, located in The Bottom, Caribbean Netherlands, and then moved across the United States, with stops in Louisiana, Kansas, Florida and Georgia. Today, she works as a pediatrician at Memorial University Medical Center in Savannah, Ga., and was recently accepted into the pediatric oncology hematology program at Batson Children's Hospital in Jackson, Miss. Jackson is married to Justin Jackson, an American from Texas. They have a daughter named, Charlotte.



01 Award-winning wildlife photographer, filmmaker, conservationist and educator **Rob Stewart**, BSc'01, died in a diving accident on Jan. 31, 2017. Stewart's family said his body was "found peacefully in the ocean" Feb. 3 after he disappeared Jan. 31 while diving in the Florida Keys.

Stewart is best known for his 2006 documentary *Sharkwater*, an examination of global shark hunting and its impact on the ocean ecosystem. That film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and has since won more than 40 awards at film festivals around the world.

Stewart's second film, *Revolution*, was the highest-grossing Canadian documentary in 2013 and won 19 awards from global film festivals.

Prior to his death, Stewart was in Florida filming a followup to his 2006 documentary *Sharkwater*, called *Sharkwater Extinction*. His diving partner lost consciousness as he got into the dive boat and Stewart's family believed he too may have lost consciousness.

Born and raised in Toronto, Stewart evolved from a self-professed "animal nerd" to one of the world's leading environmental activists, from a person whose sole focus was saving his beloved sharks to a mission to save us all. He was always in love with creatures, the odder or more misunderstood the better.

His passion for all living things led him around the world, as a university student studying Zoology in Kenya, as a wildlife photographer in Madagascar and Southeast Asia, and ultimately as a documentary filmmaker in the Pacific shooting his innovative and award-winning documentary.

The Final Say

With Shannon Proudfoot, BA'03

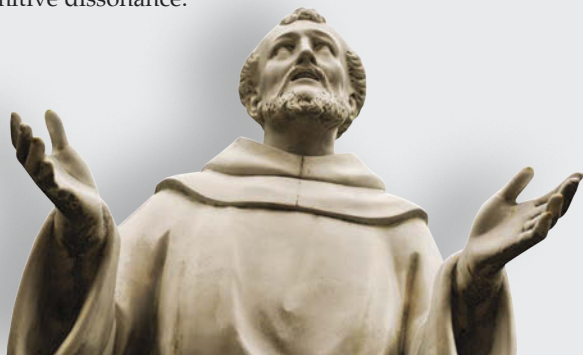


University helped put the pieces together

Just inside the front entrance of my elementary school, near the principal's office, was a statue along one wall. It was about two-thirds life scale – a creepy and incongruous size – but because it sat on a pedestal, its head was maybe six feet off the ground.

The person it depicted wore a long brown robe cinched with a rope at the waist, Birkenstock-type sandals, a trim brown beard and a soulful, warm-eyed facial expression. He also had a couple of birds and forest creatures perched on his shoulders and at his feet. All of that, in my youthful knowledge of Catholic iconography, meant the man was the animal-loving, Franciscan order-founding, vaguely hippie St. Francis.

The statue also had small, bloodied wounds on its feet and the palms of its hands, which I knew from my fine Catholic education were the visual hallmarks of Jesus' crucifixion. This was confusing and confounding. But in that fantastic, strangely brilliant way you do effortlessly when you're a kid – and never manage to recapture for the rest of your life – I just mashed the two thoughts together with a mental shrug in order to resolve the cognitive dissonance.



Somehow, the statue was both Jesus and St. Francis. Case closed.

Fast-forward eight years. I'm midway through my undergrad in Art History and Criticism at Western, and particularly loving Romanesque and Gothic architecture and the jewel-like, slightly spooky realism of Northern Renaissance paintings. One day, I'm sitting in the largest lecture hall in the Visual Arts Building. The lights are always dimmed so we can see the glowing images that accompany all of our lectures, leaving just enough visibility to take notes – and just enough to lull sleep-deprived undergrads into the occasional unplanned nap, which shows up later in your notes as a half-completed word suddenly interrupted by a straight line sliding off the edge of the page.

The slide projector ticks softly from one image to the next each time the professor clicks the remote in her hand. Soon, we're looking at and talking about Giovanni Bellini's *St. Francis in Ecstasy*, a Venetian Renaissance painting from the late 1470s. The work is remarkable for how Bellini uses nature and a stubborn sort of naturalism to depict the experience of religious grace. There are no seraphs, no laser beams of God's favour shooting across the canvas; rather, Bellini renders his main character in a deep and detailed landscape that dwarfs him with its earthy transcendence.

And then our professor explains to my class that as St. Francis stands before his humble cave, with his head thrown back and his back slightly arched by the power of the experience, he is receiving stigmata as a tribute to his devoutness.

Right at that moment, hundreds of kilometres and nearly a decade removed from that weird statue in the front hallway of my school, now in that darkened lecture hall, surrounded by my classmates, I involuntarily whisper-yelled into the droning quiet, "Oh, now I get it!"

This, ideally – maybe minus some embarrassing public muttering – is how a university education works. At first, you're just collecting intriguing trivia and bits of isolated knowledge, like your brain is a fishing tackle box that's being stocked one square at a time. But eventually, the bits and pieces of what you're learning start to leap over the little dividers, dissolving the partition walls between them and making sense of little mysteries you didn't realize were stuck in the back of your brain.

By the time you hit the job market, and your undergrad days fade to gauzy memories, chances are a lot of the factoids you picked up over the course of your degree have evaporated. But what remains are the ways of thinking and digging and puzzling out that you learned, the engaged, geeky excitement of seeing pieces of the world stitch themselves together before your eyes, and the ability to summon all the bright details back with a little cramming.

Shannon Proudfoot is an Ottawa-based staff writer for Sportsnet magazine.



“The littlest thing tripped me up
in more ways than one.”

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