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FALL 2025

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Thomas Jefferson University

HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

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HOMECOMING

SEPTEMBER 26–27, 2025

This fall, return home to campus to reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

During Homecoming, you'll have a chance to hear updates on your college, tour campus, and celebrate the 25- and 50-year graduates and award recipients during our Welcome Breakfast. Later, bring your family for Phil Phest, with food, music, and activities.

Check out the full Homecoming schedule and register today at **Jefferson.edu/Homecoming**

GO, RAMS!

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08

When we're young, we ask "Why?" — a question of curiosity. As we grow older and confront the complexities of the world, the question deepens. It becomes "Why not?" — a question of purpose.

This issue of Innovator is about people who have taken that leap from wondering to doing. Jefferson alumni, students, faculty, and friends who have chosen to devote their talents to something larger than themselves.

We meet architecture faculty reshaping urban life at scale and alumna Nureed Saeed '99, whose commitment to home and neighborhood is just as transformative. We revisit alumni who pursued knowledge beyond this world, venturing into space not for glory, but for service.

We honor Sidney and Caroline Kimmel, whose $28 million gift builds on decades of generosity — a legacy centered on a profound belief in science, care, and the city of Philadelphia.

Some people find their calling early. Others, like former NFL player D'Brickashaw Ferguson, discover it later — his new path in nursing no less heroic than his first. And some, like Robert Sergott, MD, follow a passion for decades, searching for truth in the smallest human details — the eye, the brain, the soul.

So. What's your calling? What's the deeper question you're trying to answer?

We'd love to hear your story too.

[correction]

In the previous edition of the Innovator, a photo of two diploma nurses was incorrectly captioned. The nurses in the photo were Patricia DeHart, RN, BSBA, CDE, and Karen Robnett, CRNA.

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and exclusives at
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Reaching Forward *With Purpose*

In today's ever-changing educational landscape, Thomas Jefferson University's record-setting momentum reflects the growing strength of its resilience and competitiveness. This year, the 2025 freshman class is projected to enroll 930 to 950 students, a remarkable 95% increase since 2017 and the largest in the institution's 201-year history. In addition, undergraduate transfer enrollment is on pace for a 10% increase over last year, while graduate and medical school demand continues to climb, as demonstrated by the record number of applications to Sidney Kimmel Medical College's incoming 2025 class, 12,033 for 275 seats.

Higher education in America stands at a crossroads.

Demographic shifts, economic pressures, and rising skepticism have converged to challenge long-standing assumptions about the worth of a college degree. Yet, in moments of challenge, there is also great opportunity. As Winston Churchill observed, "Kites rise against the wind, not with it."

We have a chance to redefine the value that universities provide to society. Along the way, we'll improve a lot of lives.

Over the past decade, enrollment across U.S. institutions has declined steadily — 1.5% per year since 2011 — as the number of college-aged students shrinks, tuition costs climb, and many young people question the return on investment. The pandemic only deepened the disruption, accelerating disengagement and prompting more employers to reconsider degree requirements altogether.

It's no surprise, then, that Gen Z is increasingly exploring alternatives — trades, apprenticeships, boot camps. They've earned the nickname the "Toolbelt Generation." But the response from forward-thinking institutions reminds us that higher education is not obsolete. It's evolving.

Thomas Jefferson University exemplifies this evolution. With our bold, student-first ethos, we're creating relevance, access, and lifelong learning. Our Nexus Learning model integrates theory and hands-on experience across disciplines from medicine and architecture to engineering and data science, preparing students for a world that demands agility, collaboration, and innovation.

Equally important is our commitment to affordability and outcomes. Through generous financial aid, three-year pathways, and community college pipelines, we're reducing barriers and expanding opportunity. The outcomes speak volumes: 98% of graduates are employed, in graduate school, or serving in the military, with average starting salaries of $68,000.

That's what a modern ROI should look like.

The Jefferson advantage also embraces lifelong learning. With more than 30 online degrees and professional certificate programs, a growing virtual campus, and partnerships with industry leaders like IBM, NASA, and Johnson & Johnson, the university is building a flexible and resilient educational ecosystem, one that meets learners where they are and grows with them as their careers and lives evolve.

This is what the future of higher education demands: value without compromise, access without exclusion, and excellence without judgement.

Jefferson's example shows us that the future of higher education isn't about retreating — it's about reaching. Reaching up with innovation. Reaching out with possibility. And reaching forward with purpose.

The third century of this remarkable institution has only just begun. And it couldn't have arrived at a more urgent or more promising time.

Susan C. Aldridge, PhD
President
Thomas Jefferson University

AT JEFFERSON, WE'RE
Redefining Possible

At Thomas Jefferson University, our research starts with tackling some tough questions. And our work is powered by our ability to seamlessly integrate our applied, basic, clinical and scholarly research expertise to answer them from unique perspectives.

Our dynamic culture fosters collaboration among faculty, students, clinicians and technical staff, resulting in groundbreaking discoveries and practical impact, which has led to:

- Over $200 million in public and private research awards
- Over 1,500 enterprise-wide active studies
- Over 1,000 patents for new drugs, software innovations, medical devices and diagnostic tools

As innovators for 200 years, Jefferson welcomes you to explore the transformative research that promises to ***shape the future.***

JEFFERSON.EDU/RESEARCH

Thomas Jefferson University

HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

JEFFERSON ALUMNI

Jefferson has always reached for the stars — figuratively and literally. Since the dawn of the Space Age, the school's alumni have had the right stuff, seeking adventure and knowledge to benefit mankind in the wild blue yonder.

The first to set his sights on the skies was Maj. David G. Simons, MD '46, who, on August 20, 1957, became the first human to travel 19 miles up into the stratosphere as part of Project Manhigh. The project was part of a military mission that took men in balloons to the middle layers of the stratosphere. It was designed to study how the human body reacts to high altitudes and radiation, and was essential in designing rocket cabins for future space missions. Simons spent a total of 32 hours in flight.

Following in Simons' footsteps into the heavens was James P. Bagian, MD '77, an engineer and astronaut on two space shuttle missions. In 1986, he became the lead investigator of the Challenger disaster.

After leaving NASA in 1995, Bagian was elected as a member of the Institute of Medicine. He was also elected as a member of the National Academy of Engineering for the integration of engineering and medical knowledge in applications to aerospace systems, environmental technology, and patient safety.

While their feet remained firmly planted on Earth, two other graduates of Sidney Kimmel Medical College played an important role in the country's space race.

Robert C. Laning, MD '48 served as the flight surgeon assigned to America's first manned space missions. Lanning performed recovery exams on the first three Mercury space flight astronauts following splashdown.

Col. Kenneth Beers, MD '56, was the flight surgeon for the Gemini/Titan Program, team leader for the Gemini Recovery Medical Team, and the Apollo mission surgeon. He received the Legion of Merit, the U.S. Air Force's second-highest award of achievement, for his work with the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center.

The University has sent more than alumni to the final frontier.

Since 1978, it has produced high-performance textiles used for making gloves for astronauts on their spacewalks. In 2014, fashion design and engineering students developed creative outer-layer designs for the Z-2 prototype of NASA's next-generation spacesuit.

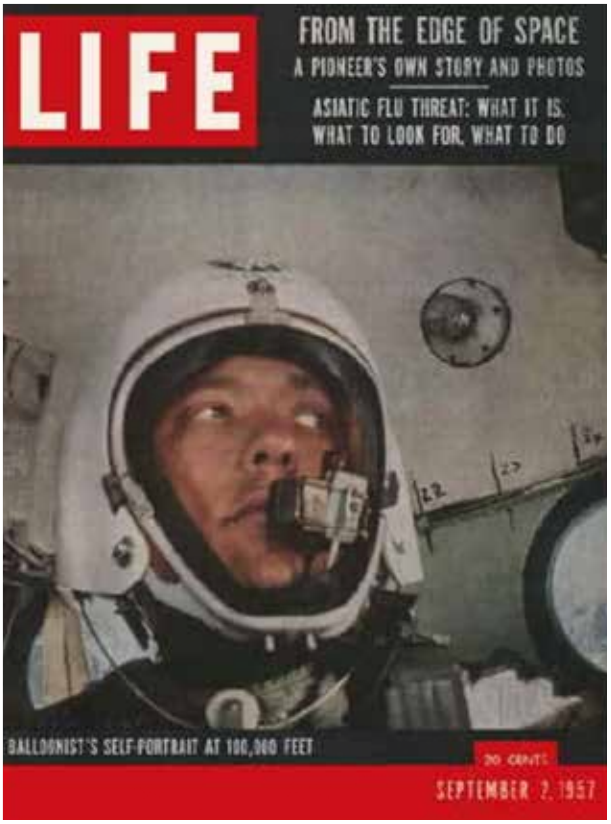
Another Jefferson alum, Gabrielle Zimmerman, MS, RDN, took her lifelong passion for food and nutrition to new heights in 2004. When Zimmerman was a student, she interned at NASA's Nutritional Biochemistry Laboratory where she designed special meal plans for astronauts. Working with the Nutritional Biochemistry team, Zimmerman designed a 4,100-calorie meal plan aligning with space food system criteria while considering additional energy needs for moonwalks. She also conducted essential calculations on astronauts' adherence to International Space Station-based resistance exercise devices for astronaut bone health. The partnership extends from the laboratory into orbit; in 2022, Jefferson sent three experiments to the International Space Station. These experiments focused on the effects of space travel on the human body, including the impact on sleep and the immune system.

These collaborations are part of Jefferson's commitment to advancing knowledge in space as a way to improve life on Earth.

IN OUTER SPACE

▲ *Col. Kenneth Beers, MD '56 (left), with astronauts Neil Armstrong (center) and David Scott.*

▲ *James Bagian, MD '77 (far right), floats in space with fellow astronauts.*



▲ *Project Manhigh earned Maj. David G. Simons, MD '46, a spot on the cover of Life Magazine.*

Check out a video of our history of alumni in space online **magazine.jefferson.edu.**

Sidney and Caroline Kimmel Invest in the Future of Care and Discovery at Jefferson

The Kimmels Have Made a $28 Million Gift That Will Fund Emergency Department Renovations and Groundbreaking Research

Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health proudly announced a transformative $28 million gift from Sidney Kimmel, the Philadelphia-born businessman, philanthropist, and film producer, and his wife, Caroline, strengthening a more than three-decade legacy of generosity that has helped propel the institution into its third century.

The new philanthropic investment will support critical capital improvements and groundbreaking research. A portion will help fund the previously announced expansion and modernization of the emergency department at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, which will be renamed the Caroline Kimmel Emergency Department. The other portion of the gift will provide critical resources for clinical and translational research at the Sidney Kimmel Medical College, catalyzing Jefferson's capacity to turn scientific discovery into life-changing impact.

"Time and again, Sidney and Caroline Kimmel have stepped up to make the world a better place, and we can't thank them enough," said Joe Cacchione, MD, CEO of Jefferson. "This remarkable gift is a testament to their personal conviction and public purpose, and it reaffirms Jefferson's place as a national leader in academic medicine, research, and uncompromising care."

The Kimmels' latest gift extends a singular philanthropic relationship that began in 1995, when Mr. Kimmel made the foundational donation to establish the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Jefferson, which last year earned the highest possible National Cancer Institute designation. In 2014, the Kimmels' historic $110 million gift led to the naming of the Sidney Kimmel Medical College, one of the largest such gifts ever given to a medical school in the United States.

"For Caroline and me, this is the right time, the right project, and the right place to give," said Sidney Kimmel. "My heart has always been in Philadelphia, and access to the highest level of care has never been more important. We are pleased to continue our partnership with Jefferson, helping to build both the facilities and the research engine that will change lives for generations."

The expanded emergency department is designed to meet the growing demand for critical and complex care in Greater Philadelphia. Featuring increased capacity, enhanced patient flow, and state-of-the-art trauma facilities, the Caroline Kimmel Emergency Department will be the front door of Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and a cornerstone of Jefferson Health's broader efforts to build an accessible, patient-centered health system.

"These upgrades to the emergency department are just the beginning of our long-term vision to redefine what accessible, patient-centered healthcare looks like in our region," said Baligh R. Yehia, MD, MPP, MSc, president of Jefferson Health. "Thanks to the Kimmels, we are making that vision a reality."

The gift to Sidney Kimmel Medical College will advance Jefferson's scientific enterprise and bolster its commitment to translating novel research into real-world treatments.

"We are deeply grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Kimmel for their unwavering dedication to improving lives," said Susan Aldridge, PhD, president of Thomas Jefferson University. "Their generosity and trust in the future of medicine at Jefferson embolden us to pursue even greater excellence as a comprehensive academic medical center and research institution."

In the past decade, Jefferson has grown into a research powerhouse, more than tripling its external grant funding. Jefferson leadership underscored the importance of this transformational gift as the institution enters its third century of improving human health and wellbeing through science and scholarship.

"Medical education, healthcare, and biomedical research are inexorably linked, and this gift strengthens that connection," said Said Ibrahim, MD, the Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean of Sidney Kimmel Medical College. "It will speed our development of new discoveries and technologies, help us find better ways to treat and cure disease, and continually expand our understanding of life."

With this gift, the Kimmels have once again placed themselves at the forefront of a movement to bridge promise and progress, science and society, and health and humanity.

My heart has always been in Philadelphia, and access to the highest level of care has never been more important. We are pleased to continue our partnership with Jefferson, helping to build both the facilities and the research engine that will change lives for generations.

D'Brickashaw Ferguson

Tackling a New Calling

▶ *D'Brickashaw Ferguson with mother Rhunette Ferguson; Photo credit: Evan Foster*

Former NFL star D'Brickashaw Ferguson traded his helmet and pads for scrubs and a stethoscope following his graduation from Jefferson's College of Nursing in May.

Prior to his retirement in 2016, Ferguson graced the gridiron for a decade as a celebrated left tackle for the New York Jets.

Seeking a new identity as he transitioned from football, Ferguson followed in the footsteps of his beloved mother and grandmother, his role models and nurses themselves. "My mom is a nurse, my grandmother is a nurse, and I have people in my family who are in healthcare," he shares. "I wanted something that allowed me to be able to serve in a very unique way, and I felt like nursing would really give me that opportunity."

Ferguson played every game in his 10 seasons, never even missing a practice. Following retirement, he embarked on his healthcare journey, working for the Jets on a strength and conditioning internship, during which he helped create plans to help athletes return to the field after injury.

Although he enjoyed the opportunity, he wanted to explore other medical avenues. It was his mother's suggestion that steered him toward nursing. She believed that the critical thinking skills and ability to make snap decisions that he had developed during his football years would serve him well as a nurse. He soon learned that those skills were indeed critical for success in his chosen field.

"I'm excited to get into this new space," said Ferguson when applying for nursing positions. "We are going to do some amazing things, and it really starts with us." He recently took a nursing position in a hospital in New Jersey, where he hopes to continue to hone his skills.

Tom Shirley Reaches 900 Career Wins

With this achievement, the Rams women's basketball head coach joins the top 10 all-time victories list.

After the team's nonconference 58-33 win over Caldwell University Feb. 19, 2025, Rams women's basketball head coach Tom Shirley reached 900 career wins as a coach.

Shirley achieved this monumental feat in his 43rd season as a head coach, with 35 of them during his tenure with Jefferson.

"While reaching 900 career wins is recognized as an individual achievement, it must be applauded as a group effort," Shirley said after the game. "Certainly, generations of very good players who were terrific student-athletes helped make this possible. The assistant coaches, university staff, and a supportive administration also deserve recognition."

Among the administration members who lauded Shirley's accomplishments were University President Susan C. Aldridge and Assistant Vice President for Athletics Corey Goff.

"Coach Shirley is an extraordinary professional as well as a remarkable coach," Aldridge said. "Having sustained such a high level [of] success for as long as he has speaks to his commitment to give back to his student-athletes and the Jefferson community as a whole. We are so proud of his accomplishments on and off the court."

Goff concurred.

"Coach Shirley's milestone of 900 career victories is a testament to his unwavering dedication and profound impact on our community. His influence extends beyond the basketball court, shaping the lives of countless student-athletes and mentoring fellow coaches," he said. "Coach Shirley has built a culture of excellence, integrity, and personal growth. We are incredibly grateful for the positive legacy he continues to create."

Between his time with the Rams and previously, the DeSales University Bulldogs, Shirley has had 38 winning seasons, including 20 or more wins in 32 of them. His most successful was last season, when the Rams went 32-2, breaking numerous school records along the way, including 23 consecutive wins, four 1,000-point scorers, all-time assist leader, a CACC title, and an NCAA East Region Finals appearance.

Shirley has won three CACC Coach of the Year awards and nine conference titles (five CACC, two ECAC, two NYCAC) while making 13 NCAA Tournament appearances. He produced 44 All-CACC players, six of whom were All-American.

Shirley enters the 2025-26 season with 905 victories, tops among active Division II coaches. Across all NCAA divisions, he ranked third among active coaches and ninth of all time through 2024-25. In his 35 seasons at the University, the Rams have had a record of 756-313 and have won at least 20 games per season in 27 seasons.

"I truly appreciate the consistency with which the teams achieved these milestones," Shirley says. "Recruiting was certainly a key ingredient, which was made easier with the outstanding reputation of Jefferson, both in the classroom and in the professional workplace."

the return of the runway

Inspired by themes as diverse as ’80s toys to the Women’s Rights Movement to life during quarantine, 18 Jefferson fashion design seniors lit up the runway, showcasing bold, boundary-pushing designs at the long-awaited signature Fashion Design Show. The vibrant event made its triumphant return for the first time since 2019, celebrating creativity, sustainability, and unparalleled inspiration powered by our designers of the future.

Full story and video of the Fashion Design Show online: **magazine.jefferson.edu**

Interdisciplinary Sticker Project Addresses Overdose Epidemic

BY MIKE BEDERKA

▲ *Top: UX/IxD students Yan Lyn Yeoh (left) and Nikitha Polavarapu began work on the sticker project in Communicating Health Data last semester.*

▲ *Bottom: Passionate about addiction medicine, Sidney Kimmel Medical College student Gwen Vogelsang says this project can teach harm-reduction principles and actions to future healthcare providers.*

Using strategically placed stickers, an undoubtedly low-tech tool, an interdisciplinary team of Jefferson faculty and students have started work to make inroads into the country's opioid crisis.

The story starts with Gregory Jaffe, MD, clinical assistant professor and co-director of JeffMD's Population Health Research Scholarly Inquiry Track.

As a medical resident in Baltimore, a city with a 20.1% poverty rate and the country's highest drug overdose rate, Jaffe became interested in teaching and, importantly, caring for underserved patients.

"That's my calling in medicine," says Jaffe, who also started the addiction clinic for Jefferson's family and community medicine residency program. "Stigma is one of the main reasons that people who use drugs and suffer from substance abuse disorders don't seek care. They feel stigmatized by their healthcare providers. That was the nexus of this entire project: to create an anti-stigma, harm-reduction curriculum delivered over social media."

He believed stickers geared toward healthcare and medical students would be an effective type of "guerrilla education." Slapped on laptops, water bottles, and notebooks, the stickers with Gen Z slang and meme-friendly graphics would feature a QR code leading to harm-reduction-related topics on Instagram.

"Short on-demand videos have just as much knowledge retention as a traditional 30-minute didactic," says Jaffe of the microlearning concept. "I learn a ton from TikTok and Instagram."

To get his work off the ground, he contacted Renee Walker, an associate professor in Jefferson's BS in visual communication design and MS in health communication design programs. She teaches the graduate course,

Communicating Health Data, which introduces the principles of designing data and info, focusing on health-related issues.

"I love projects that challenge students to rethink how we approach complex and messy problems by applying information design skills with a human touch," Walker says. "When I heard about the harm-reduction project, I saw an opportunity for students to explore using data graphics to humanize a subject that needs attention."

Along with Walker, Jaffe is working with third-year Sidney Kimmel Medical College student Gwen Vogelsang to bring the concept to fruition. She was an undergrad in Pittsburgh, another city with high opioid use, and came to Jefferson to work in addiction medicine.

"If we reach medical students at a certain time in their training, they're more likely to bring harm-reduction principles and actions into their future care," says Vogelsang, a volunteer at JeffHOPE, one of the country's largest student-run medical clinics. "I'm bringing an understanding of medical student knowledge and ways we can incorporate these concepts outside the traditional med school curriculum to reach future healthcare providers."

UX/IxD students Nikitha Polavarapu and Yan Lyn Yeoh worked on the project in Communicating Health Data last year and will continue with it past the initial phase.

While learning about the basics of harm reduction, they created stickers about Narcan and other topics with data-driven reminders about the effectiveness of opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment. They target a Gen Z audience by leveraging popular slang and trends.

Stylized as a text message, one reads: "Did you hear only 1 in 10 receive OUD treatment? Imagine being one of the 9 … not very slay, huh?"

Walker says the students' work shows how contemporary communication styles can be adapted to deliver serious healthcare messages in an approachable yet impactful way.

"We grew up with stickers," Yeoh says. "It's a great conversation starter if it's on your water bottle or in your room. The idea is to build awareness and get people to ask the question, 'What is harm reduction?'"

"As UX students, we deal with a lot of empathy and understanding the user, trying to find out their problems and needs," Polavarapu says. "Stepping into healthcare brought us a new perspective. We conducted in-depth research to help us understand the root cause of substance use disorder and how we can actually help people."

Walker says this project shows how Jefferson offers powerful opportunities for transformative impact when merging distinct but complementary disciplines.

"Like yin and yang, medicine brings essential research foundations, deep clinical expertise, and invaluable on-the-ground experience working directly with patients," she says. "Meanwhile, visual communication designers contribute their creative strategic thinking, foundational design principles, and sophisticated human-centered research methods."

When these different perspectives and skill sets come together thoughtfully, they create the potential for meaningful, lasting impact that neither field could achieve alone, Walker stresses. "This interdisciplinary collaboration allows us to approach complex healthcare challenges with scientific rigor and human-centered design sensibility."

"We have such a big, rich ecosystem at Jefferson," Jaffe says. "Learners can contribute and add their expertise and enthusiasm to our project in many ways. We're just scratching the surface."

▲ *The stickers with Gen Z slang and meme-friendly graphics feature Narcan and other related topics on the effectiveness of opioid use disorder treatment.*

The stickers will eventually include a QR code leading to harm-reduction-related videos on Instagram.

Jefferson Students Set Up for Success

BY MIKE BEDERKA

The University's latest First Destination Report showed that 98% of the Class of 2024 are employed, enrolled in graduate school, or taking a gap year. The Marianne Able Career Services Center on the East Falls Campus surveyed 376 undergraduates in the Kanbar College of Design, Engineering & Commerce; College of Architecture and the Built Environment; College of Health Professions; College of Humanities and Sciences; and College of Life Sciences.

"It's awesome," says Career Services Center Director Tracy DePedro of the annual report's results. "The professional nature of our degrees sets up students to succeed. They're hardworking and goal-orientated."

For example, Class of 2024 mechanical engineering grad Juan Bahena interned with DuPont in 2023 and had a co-op with them during his last semester at Jefferson.

"That impressed my managers," he says. "From there, they offered me a full-time position."

Bahena now works as a reliability and equipment engineer for the company. He ensures the machinery and equipment run smoothly and the timely completion of work orders and maintenance for dozens of buildings at DuPont's Wilmington site.

Jefferson's deep industry and alumni connections also aid students, DePedro says. Graduates often return to campus to speak at panel discussions,

▲ *Accounting alumna Nicole Hrbkova interned with Ernst & Young and USA Tax Service. She graduated with her MBA in May and she recently accepted a full-time position with Ernst & Young.*

and the University hosts several major career fairs throughout the year, with roughly 1,250 students attending events in 2023 and 2024 on the East Falls Campus. Over that time, the Marianne Able Career Services Center reviewed nearly 950 resumes.

"Students know us," DePedro says. "We're part of the curriculum for the first-year and writing seminars, and faculty constantly work with us on different programs. We're not hidden or lost in the

◀ & ▲ *Mechanical engineering students gain real-world experience through their senior capstones. Class of 2024 alumnus Juan Bahena (far left, photo at left), currently a reliability and equipment engineer at DuPont, worked with the Philadelphia Water Department to develop a sustainable, affordable microplastic filtration system.*

shuffle like you might see at some other schools. We're an integral part of their world."

Jennifer Hanley, associate director of industry relations, plays a key part in guiding students, DePedro notes. She uses her industry connections and HR background to connect them with the right opportunities in various fields.

"Since I've worked on the hiring side, I understand what recruiters look for and what makes a candidate stand out," Hanley says. "That insight helps students sharpen their skills, build strong networks, and confidently navigate the job market."

Jefferson's smooth pathway to grad school benefits undergrads as well. Early in her University days, Class of 2024 valedictorian and accounting alumna Nicole Hrbkova thought she would earn her MBA at Jefferson. Taking the pre-MBA minor cemented the idea.

"I believe an MBA opens doors for progressing in your career, and it's a good base before obtaining other, more specialized professional credentials, such as the CPA," says Hrbkova, who graduated in May with her MBA with a CPA concentration.

She thanks her academic adviser for helping her maximize her time as a student-athlete. Last year, the tennis team captain became the 12th Ram in school history to reach 100 career wins.

While at Jefferson, she interned with USA Tax Service and Ernst & Young, and she recently accepted a full-time job with the latter as part of its audit staff in Manhattan.

Top employers hiring two or more Jefferson graduates include Jefferson Health, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, URBN, K. Hovnanian Homes, Macy's, and Jacent Strategic Merchandising.

"The professional nature of our degrees sets up students to succeed. They're hardworking and goal-orientated."

Adapting Motorized Toy Cars for Children With Disabilities

BY KERRY O'CONNOR

Jefferson's physical therapy, occupational therapy, and industrial design programs collaborated with Easterseals of Southeastern Pennsylvania to adapt off-the-shelf, ride-on motorized toy cars for children with disabilities.

On June 1, the children drove the adapted cars for the first time at an Easterseals community event in Subaru Park in Chester, Pennsylvania, that included faculty and students.

Occupational therapy students worked on the adaptive cars as their yearlong doctoral capstone project, a culminating experience that allows them to apply their knowledge and skills to a real-world problem, and physical therapy students volunteered to lend a hand. For the industrial design students, the project was one of four they worked on during the spring semester.

In February, the Jefferson group sent two unmodified motorized cars to Easterseals therapists, who observed how the cars could and could not be used by children ages three to six with varying disabilities. They shared their observations with the Jefferson team at numerous meetings and brainstorming sessions. Faculty and students then conceptualized, built, and applied custom adaptations to identical motorized cars in the Jefferson studios.

"The therapists at Easterseals identified several issues with the standard cars that we needed to find solutions for," says Stephanie Muth, PhD, an alumna of Jefferson's Master of Science in physical therapy and current physical therapy professor who worked with students on the project. "Some children couldn't

use the steering wheel. For others with strength issues, the seat didn't offer ways to remain upright and safe. With the problems fleshed out, the therapy and industrial design students got to work."

Through trial and error and experimentation, the team created and implemented adaptations, including higher and stronger padded seatbacks, proper restraint and harnessing systems, several different joystick and hand control systems that can be swapped out depending on the user, tray systems to hold adaptive devices, and controls that can be activated by a child's head movement.

A Jefferson Center for Faculty Development and Nexus Learning Pedagogy Grant supported the motorized cars and supplies necessary to build the adaptations. The grant funds faculty projects and research exploring best practices for transdisciplinary learning.

"This is truly a collaborative effort between rehabilitation and industrial design," says industrial design professor Eric Schneider, who also worked on the project. "The rehab students knew what adaptations would make the cars accessible depending on a disability, but they wouldn't have had the background to build the adaptations and electronics. The industrial design students could build a functioning adaptation but wouldn't have had the background to identify the need correctly."

A large need for accessible toys exists, says Sarah Garman, an Easterseals physical therapist who worked with the children and Jefferson team. The collaboration between Jefferson and Easterseals could lead the way.

"Adapted accessible toys are crucial for children with disabilities," Garman says. "Beyond just the act of playing, which shouldn't be overlooked, adapted toys help develop cognitive and motor skills. These motorized cars can give children mobility and independence, allowing them to do what other kids are doing so they feel like they belong."

Check out the adaptive cars in action online!
magazine.jefferson.edu

In Search of the Elusive, Endangered Whale Shark

BY JEFFREY ASHLEY, PHD

Jefferson researcher Jeffrey Ashley, PhD, traveled to Djibouti to join a weeklong expedition studying the elusive whale shark, the world's largest fish. The team, led by Jennifer Schmidt, PhD, of the Shark Research Institute, aimed to identify and catalog whale sharks in the Bay of Tadjoura to help track their migration and population.

Aboard an 85-foot Turkish gulet, the group explored this remote East African bay, a seasonal feeding ground for juvenile whale sharks. Using underwater photography, they documented the sharks' unique spot patterns, which are analyzed with specialized software to identify individuals and add to a global database.

Each day began with scuba dives, followed by searches from small skiffs. Despite challenging waters, the team's third day brought an unforgettable encounter with a juvenile male whale shark. Ashley snorkeled alongside the massive but gentle fish, capturing photos and videos to aid identification.

While daytime sightings were limited, the nights were more active. The researchers hung lights off the boat's stern so plankton would gather, attracting feeding whale sharks. The researchers observed these giants feeding vertically near the surface, a rare and stunning behavior.

In addition to whale shark research, Ashley and colleagues conducted plastic pollution surveys on several beaches in the Gulf of Tadjoura. Their findings highlighted the widespread presence of marine debris, underscoring the global impact of plastic waste.

With over 30 years of experience in coastal and marine pollution research, Ashley valued the chance to broaden his expertise through this hands-on marine expedition. He looks forward to bringing these insights back to Jefferson classrooms, inspiring students in oceanography and marine conservation.

▲ *Jeffrey Ashley, PhD, assesses the plastic pollution on the beaches of the Gulf of Tadjoura.*

READY FOR THE FUTURE

Jefferson is *your* partner in education.

We're committed to providing education across the enterprise to students at all levels of their journey – including you.

Jefferson offers students:

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HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

Redefine Possible


WOLF

what i was always supposed to do

Nureed Saeed '99

BY IRISA GOLD

AUTHOR J.R.R. TOLKIEN WROTE, "Not all those who wander are lost."

Although her route may have been a bit circuitous, fashion merchandising graduate Nureed Saeed '99's strong belief in herself and where she belonged led her to an award-winning, celebrated career in interior design.

"I think the reality is that most of us don't live linear lives," she says. "We have these very up-and-down paths, or sometimes circular paths that lead us back to exactly where we started. Interior design is what I was always supposed to do."

While Saeed's route to interior design was not a direct one, she credits her parents with being an influential part of her career journey.

"My mom was always redecorating," she shares. "She was a meticulous, particular person. I don't think you can be an interior designer unless you grow up around somebody like that. And I loved helping my dad with DIY projects. He influenced my love of midcentury modern design and architecture. He took me to the Gateway Arch when I was six years old, and to his mod, midcentury retro office building. I remember it all with such fondness."

Saeed loved math and art from an early age. "I always had the idea of spatial recognition in my mind and a design eye," she says. "I graduated from high school and told my dad, 'I want to put a portfolio together and try to get a degree in interior design.' He laughed and said, 'That's not a job, that's a hobby. You have to do something else.'"

While at first Saeed complied, studying science and business at two other universities, she did not find her true calling there. "I thought, 'I know what I know, and I'm going to prove him wrong,' and I did," she says.

It was her mother who gave her the impetus to alter her path and permission to follow her dream. "My mom is my unsung hero," she says. "She was the one who said to me, 'Do what you want to do.'" Saeed finally transferred to the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science, which became Philadelphia University the year that she graduated. Having already completed a number of business courses, she majored in fashion merchandising at the Kanbar College of Design, Engineering, and Commerce.

Following graduation, Saeed joined the fashion world in New York City, where she was able to utilize all the facets and skill sets of her degree while furthering her business and design skills. "I was a buyer, product developer, and merchandiser," she says. "In my last full-time role, I was the vice president of global licensing for golfer Greg Norman. It was an amazing opportunity."

After 15 years, when travel became difficult with three small children at home, Saeed and her family moved back to New Jersey. "I pivoted to what I always wanted to do and was meant to do, interior design," she shares. "All of these skills and experiences led me here, and my degree is a big part of that."

Saeed's first project was designing the interior for her own midcentury modern home. With encouragement and referrals from her architect and contractor, she

launched her own interior design business, Nu Interiors and never looked back. Five years later, when her husband got a job in San Francisco, the family moved west. Today, Saeed's business is not only booming but also bicoastal and will celebrate its 11th anniversary this year.

"Most of my business is renovations," she says. "How do we merge what's old and new and bring people's worlds forward versus totally starting from scratch? Someone's home is a very personal experience, and if you don't go into it with that thought and that love, you will inherently miss something along the way."

Saeed continues to use her experience in and passion for interior design to make a difference

All of these skills and experiences led me

not only for her clients but also the industry. Honored as the 2023 Kitchen & Bath Business Person of the Year, she currently serves as president of the Northern California Chapter of the National Kitchen and Bath Association, a role she has held for four years. Additionally, she obtained a Certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion from Cornell University's IRL School, and she advocates and leads the charge for diversity and inclusion in the design industry.

"Throughout my career, I've realized that I'm maybe the only one at the table who's like me, and I've used that as a pathway to make space for other people," she explains. "Some people walk into spaces with inherent privilege and some with inherent bias. I think we have to acknowledge that so that we can create a space where everybody is seen, heard, and brought to the table."

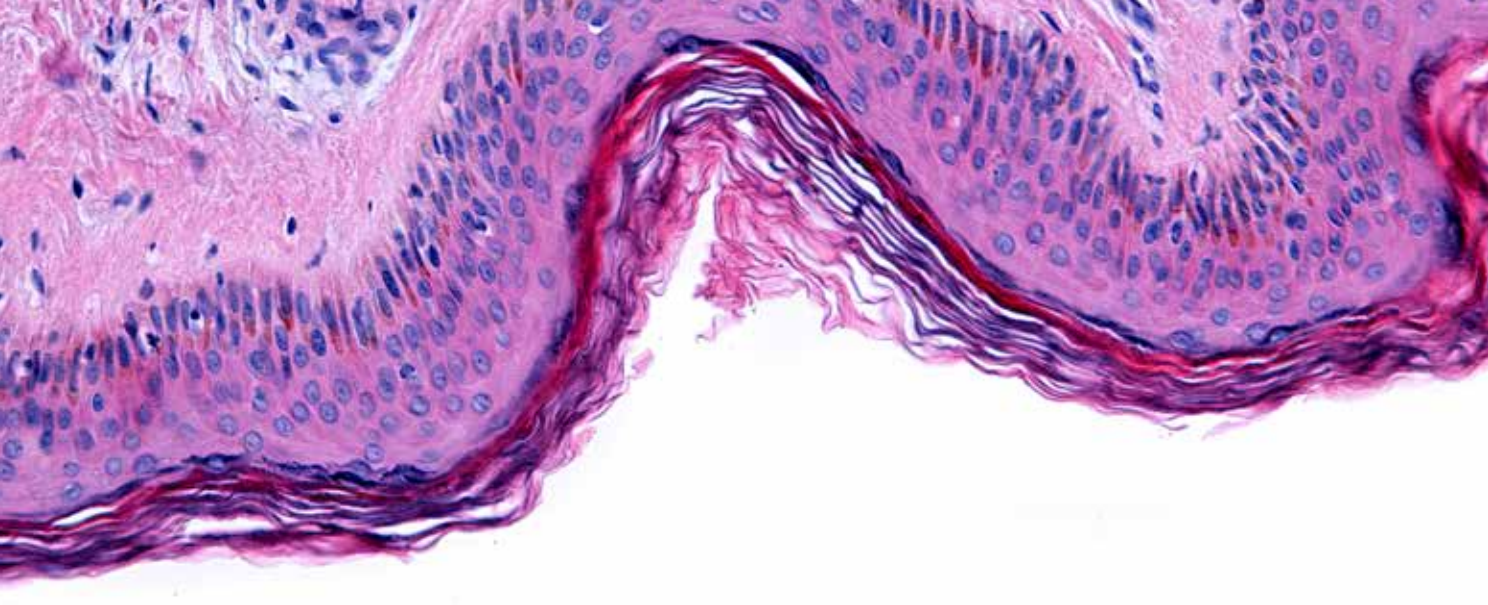
Family remains top of mind for Saeed. She and her husband are parents to an 11-year-old daughter and 12-year-old twins, a boy and a girl. While her mother remains living in the house she grew up in, sadly, her father passed away before she created her interior design business and soared to success.

"I think he was proud," she says. "When we went through his things, we found the newspaper clipping from Women's Wear Daily where I was announced as the vice president of global licensing for Greg Norman. I didn't know he had clipped and kept it, but it was on his bedside. I remember first showing him the article and joking, 'Not bad for a hobby, right?' He laughed and said, 'Yes, you got me. It's not a hobby.'"

Even 3,000 miles away, Saeed flies Jefferson's flag proudly. "Every year, my family and I look forward to the Jefferson alumni Phillies game against the San Francisco Giants," she shares. "I'm involved as much as I can be from across the country. I'm Team Jefferson, and I love it!"

Watch more of the story online: **magazine.jefferson.edu.**

here, and my degree is a big part of that.



CELL MATES

BY CINDY LEFLER

Vibrant purple swirls into muted pink, evoking the emotion, the texture, and the movement of a Vincent Van Gogh. Yet there are black and gray flecks, daubs of darkness that call to mind the impulsiveness, energy, and randomness of a Jackson Pollock.

And beneath it all lurks something sinister, a truth that belies its beauty: Death.

The artwork gracing the walls of the Rieders Family Alumni Art Gallery at Thomas Jefferson University's Pinizzotto-Ammon Alumni Center isn't brushed onto a canvas; it is smeared on a piece of borosilicate glass, photographed, magnified 400 times, and printed on aluminum panels. It doesn't depict starry nights or abstract drips; it illustrates the stark realities of fatal conditions such as cancer and heart disease.

"Death Under Glass" is a unique exhibit that explores life-threatening diseases and fatal trauma through microscopic images created from tissues collected during postmortem examinations. It is a collaboration between alumna and forensic pathologist Marianne Hamel, MD '04, PhD, and her creative collaborator Nikki Johnson MFA, BFA, a forensic photographer.

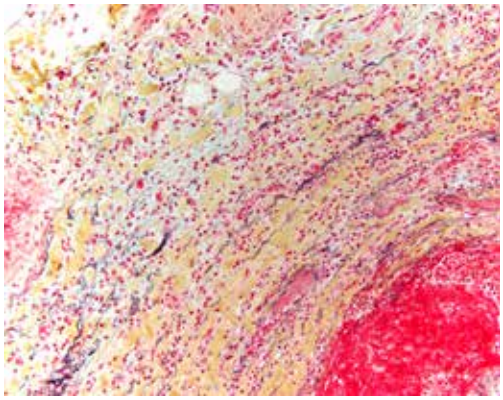
The first "Death Under Glass" exhibition opened at the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia on May 16, 2014, and ran through mid-December of that year, and the response from the public was overwhelming.

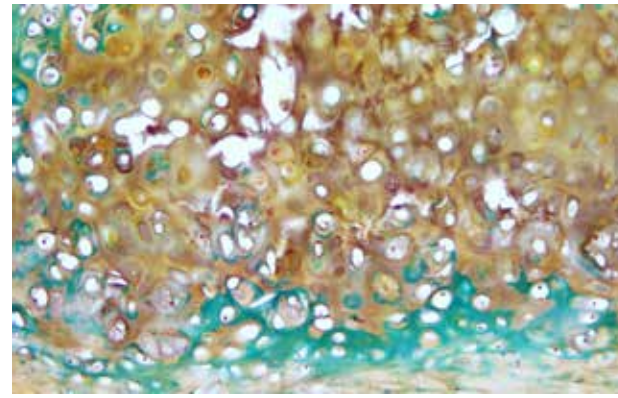
The exhibit has gone on to travel the world, appearing near — at Seton Hall and Rutgers Camden's Stedman Art Gallery in New Jersey — and far — at various galleries in California and London's Bart's Pathology Museum. It has also been featured in numerous publications, including New York Magazine, and on the online division of NPR's Science Friday podcast. Its social media presence has an impressive following with 126,000 followers on Instagram, more than 20,000 on Threads, and several thousand on Twitter.

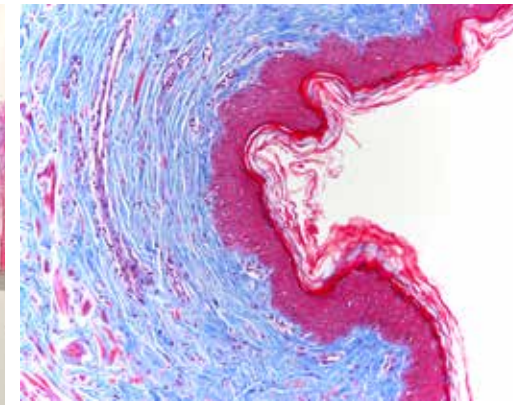
Recently, Hamel and Johnson teamed up with students at Jefferson's School of Design and Engineering to create an updated version of the exhibit that opened in May and runs through December 2025.

The project was inspired by a short sentence in The Innovator.

"They put out a call in the magazine asking for alumni artists to participate in gallery showings," Hamel says. The Rieders Gallery, made possible by a generous gift from M. Frederic Rieders, PhD '85, and Marin Rieders, features rotating exhibitions of artistic works by alumni. "The two biggest undergraduate majors (at Jefferson) are health sciences and design, so I said, 'Let's see if we can bring the two schools together







Watch more of the story online: **magazine.jefferson.edu.**

▲ *Left to right: Allison Cravo '25, Associate Professor Renée Walker, Susan C. Aldridge, PhD, Associate Professor Beth Shirrell, Emma Prushan '25*

using "Death Under Glass" as a model.'"

After discussions with Beth Shirrell, associate professor and program director of the Visual Communication Design program at Jefferson, and Renee Walker, an associate professor in the program department, Hamel met with the four seniors chosen for the project.

The students not only designed the wall displays but also created the accompanying catalogue that documents the details of the artwork and provides a comprehensive record and context for the featured pieces.

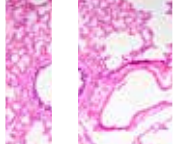
Shirrell says Jefferson's range of disciplines in design and medicine create numerous rich opportunities for collaboration.

"We are captivated by the beauty of the images, but as designers, our role is to reveal the scientific reality of death that lies beneath," Walker says.

It's that very dichotomy that drew Hamel and Johnson to create "Death Under Glass."

After graduating from Jefferson's Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Hamel completed an anatomic and clinical pathology residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and a forensic pathology fellowship at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of the city of New York.

It was during her New York training period that she noticed the lovely patterns and colors on the slides she was viewing.



Death has negative connotations. But seeing it as beautiful art offers a different perspective. It helps in accepting death as a reality.

To create a slide, a forensic pathologist cuts off a small section of human tissue, then places it into a plastic cassette and covers it in formaldehyde to prevent decay. The sample is then mounted in paraffin wax, and a thin slice is cut from the original piece. The slice is affixed to a glass slide, then stained using a chemical dye and topped with a coverslip. Because human cells are not colorful on their own, the dye provides "landmarks" to help the pathologist recognize what they are seeing.

"I said to Nikki, 'You know, it's a shame that you can't see what I see through the microscope, because it's really beautiful,'" Hamel recounts. "And she said, 'Well, if you photographed it and printed it on large-scale aluminum panels, everybody could see it.' So, we did."

Jefferson offered the latest "Death Under Glass" project as part of an elective course called Philadelphia University Design Workshop, an immersive program that connects students with an outside client to provide real world experience.

"Students had the unique opportunity to collaborate as a design team for a client," says Shirrell. "They created a multitouchpoint system that told the story of 'Death Under Glass' through a catalogue and exhibition graphics. Every decision, from typeface to materials, was made to draw viewers in and highlight the artwork."

To honor the scientific angle of the exhibit, students designed select pages of the catalogue to mimic the view through a microscope lens. Portions of the photographs were cropped into circular shapes and printed on translucent vellum, drawing attention to specific details and offering a forensic pathologist's perspective.

"As a designer, I see the art first," says Allison Cravo, who is majoring in visual communication design. "Death has negative connotations. But seeing it as beautiful art offers a different perspective. It helps in accepting death as a reality."

Andrew Sack, a visual communications design major who helped to create the font being used in the signage for the show, says at first glance, all he saw was abstract beauty. "Then my professor explained what it really was about, and that drew me in."

To draft the font, Sack and classmate Emma Prushan began with the basic theme of death but wanted to add the scientific aspect, so they blended a stark Gothic typeface with more modern lettering "to create an aesthetic feel that reflected both the beauty and somberness of the project."

Hanna Zelcer, a visual communication design major, calls the art "beautiful and terrifying at the same time."

"When you look at one slide, you know it was metastatic cancer that killed the person," she says. "At first, just seeing it on a slide strips away their humanity — who they were as a person — and you just see them as their death. And yet they were more than that."

After seeing cells of people who have died from liver disease due to alcoholism and heart disease caused by diet and lifestyle choices, Zelcer says she will take one more thing away from the project: "Our actions in our life have an impact after death. You can see it on the slide."

The show opened to rave reviews on May 15 with a reception attended by Michael F. Rieders, Susan Aldridge, PhD, president of Thomas Jefferson University, and Zvi Grunwald, MD, chair of the Department of Anesthesiology at Jefferson.

Hamel believes that people are drawn to "Death Under Glass" for a variety of reasons.

"Maybe you like the tension between the terribleness of the situation and the beauty of the image. Maybe you just like the images themselves," says Hamel.

Whatever the reason, she encourages people to visit the exhibit for the experience of a lifetime.

"Come see it, because there's nothing else like it in the world," she says.

The Rieders Family Alumni Art Gallery

Death Under Glass
Is Open to the Public

Monday - Friday | 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Pinizzotto-Ammon Alumni Center
Jefferson Alumni Hall
1020 Locust Street, Suite 210
Philadelphia, PA

A curated selection of featured works from "Death Under Glass" will be displayed at the East Falls Campus during Homecoming Weekend, Sept. 26 and 27. Following the Welcome Breakfast, there will be an artist talk and discussion featuring Hamel, Johnson, and the Visual Communication Design students involved with the preparation and design of the exhibition materials.

Check out the full Homecoming schedule and register today at **Jefferson.edu/Homecoming.**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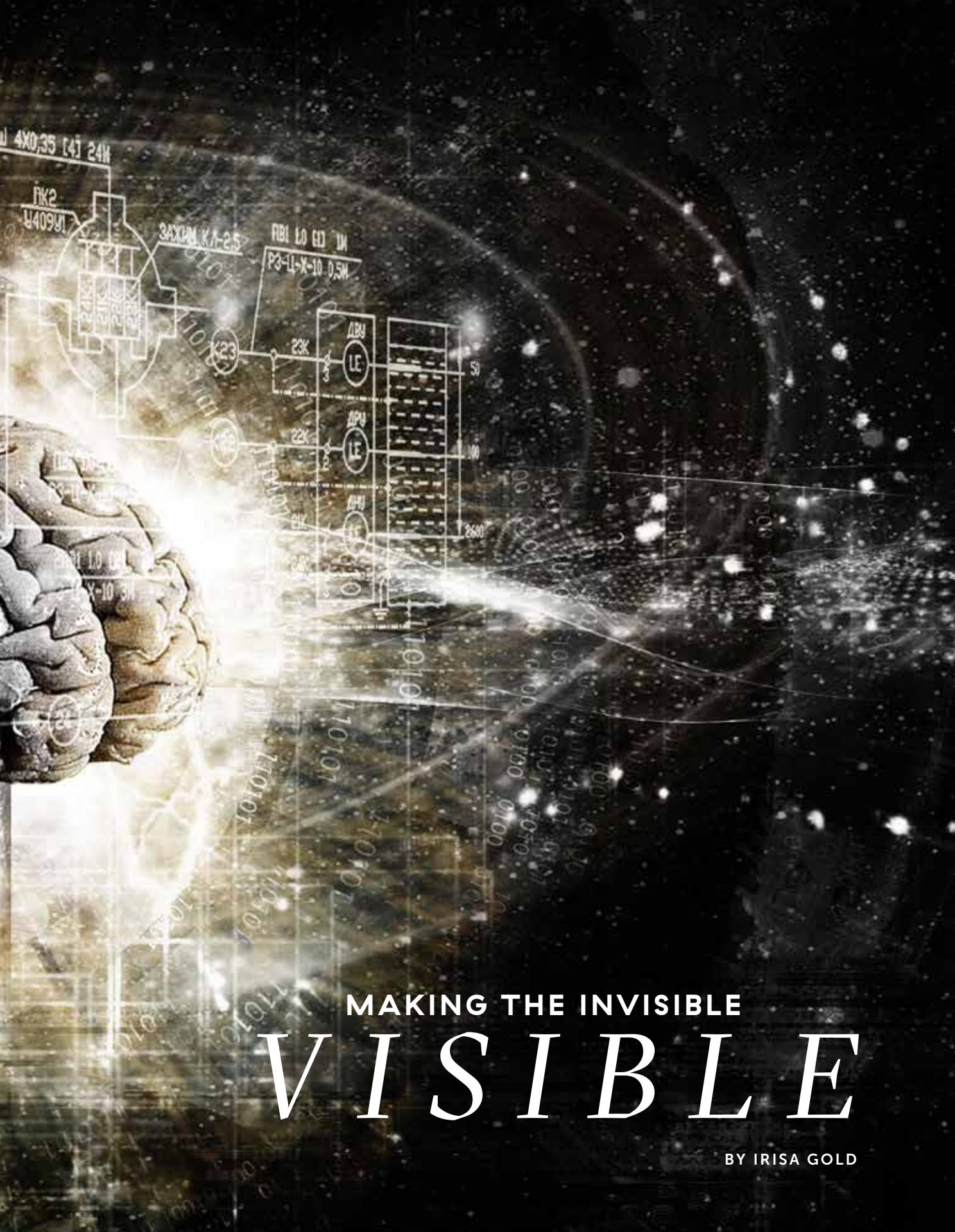

MAKING THE INVISIBLE

VISIBLE

BY IRISA GOLD

ROBERT C. SERGOTT, MD

Poets and artists as far back as Leonardo Da Vinci and William Shakespeare have described the eyes as windows to the soul. For ophthalmologist Robert C. Sergott, MD, this sentiment should be altered to reflect a stunning medical fact — in actuality, **the eyes are truly a window to the brain**.

The Margaret and Richard Hayne Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology in the Department of Neurosurgery at Sidney Kimmel Medical College and the founder and executive director of Jefferson's William H. Annesley Jr. MD '48 EyeBrain Center, Sergott serves as director of neuro-ophthalmology at Wills Eye Hospital.

Sergott's motivation to make a difference in the medical field started early and close to home. His mother was a nurse who taught obstetrics and gynecology nursing at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center and Lankenau Hospital. As a child, he suffered from painful ear infections, and he recalls regular drives from the Philadelphia suburbs to New Jersey to see Michael Rachunis, MD '36, a Jefferson graduate who never failed to soothe his pain.

"It was the combination of those two early life experiences that created my interest in medicine," he says. "When I started to look around at career choices, this seemed to be the most worthwhile in terms of being able to help people when they are having troubles."

Sergott received both his undergraduate and medical degrees from Johns Hopkins University and is grateful for his exposure to and mentorship from his medical school clinicians, researchers, and teachers. "My interests included pediatric, adolescent, and adult patients and involved both medical care as well as surgery," he shares. "Ophthalmology fit that role and allowed for time to pursue both basic and clinical research. Through some very good mentors, especially ophthalmologist Dr. David Knox, I became enchanted with the neurology of the visual system."

After completing his internship at Columbia University affiliate Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital and his residency in ophthalmology at Wills Eye Hospital, Sergott served fellowships in neuro-ophthalmology at the University of Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and in multiple sclerosis at the University of Pennsylvania.

"That gave me some very solid grounding in basic research and neurodegenerative diseases," he says. "This was in the days of MS where we didn't have any medications. I was inspired to not only participate and be deeply involved in clinical care but also to continue with clinical research, because you couldn't be satisfied with the status quo of how we take care of patients."

Sergott began a lifelong journey to unite neurosciences and ophthalmology, exploring the revolutionary potential of using neuro-ophthalmology to better understand and treat a myriad of neurological disorders. In 2019, he founded the first facility in the world focused on the visual signatures of neurological diseases. The Annesley EyeBrain Center at Jefferson was named in honor of his mentor, ophthalmology pioneer, professor, and former Wills Eye attending surgeon and alumnus William H. Annesley Jr. MD '48.

"It became more and more obvious that many patients with visual problems related to MS, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, stroke, and rare neurodegenerations were seeking our help," he explains. "That translated into an unmet medical need, and that was the motivation for the Annesley EyeBrain Center."

Partnering with Gyorgy Hajnoczky, MD, PhD, the Raphael Rubin, MD Professor of Pathology, Anatomy, and Cell Biology and director of Thomas Jefferson University's Mitochondrial Research Center, Sergott studies neuro-ophthalmic mitochondria and molecular signatures of neurodegenerative diseases.

"All diseases in the brain start with mitochondrial dysfunction or this dysfunction amplifies the disease," he explains. The Center's team investigates mitochondrial function in the laboratory, maps the development of disease, enrolls patients in clinical trials, and shares insights and discoveries with patients in the clinic in the hopes of predicting and preventing neurological diseases and conditions once thought to be untreatable.

This approach enables earlier diagnoses of neurodegenerative diseases as well as providing insight into how and why the diseases start and how to interrupt them, and helping researchers identify new treatment modalities. Sergott and his team are also reaching across the breadth of Jefferson via exciting partnerships with psychiatry, cardiology, cardiac surgery, neurosurgery, and genetics. "We want to be ahead of the disease and not let the disease get ahead of the patients," he says. "I believe we have started a platform that will go all throughout the University."

"Neuro-ophthalmology has often been intriguing and very enchanting, because we could tell through the examination of the eye what might be happening in the brain or the spinal cord," he says. "This window to the brain has now become even larger with recent technologies. There was disease there, and we couldn't see it, but today, retinal imaging is remarkable. There are new ways to noninvasively and painlessly image the retina and optic nerve like we couldn't do before. And it has allowed us to make the invisible visible."

While it's impossible to biopsy the brain or the spinal cord without doing damage, thanks to the evolution of basic research over the last three to five years, scientists can take samples from skin, urine, or blood; process and culture them in the laboratory; and from there, grow retinas and parts of the brain that function like biopsied tissue, maintaining all the properties of when they were harvested.

They are also evaluating the mitochondrial function within the retina using 3D, 3-nanometer resolution electron microscopy and fluorescent lifetime imaging microscopy and then correlating these findings with tissue specimens.

"The work we're doing now with fluorescent lifetime imaging ophthalmoscopy, also called FLIO, enables us to study the metabolism of the retina in real time painlessly and noninvasively," Sergott says. "We utilize two electron microscopes that enable us to correlate these findings with what happens in human tissue, and we can get down to structural, ultramicroscopic details."

When describing the success of the Annesley Center, Sergott credits the convergence of his collaborations with Jefferson colleagues across many disciplines, partnerships with medical technology, research, industry, and regulatory agencies, and support from Jefferson leadership and philanthropists Margaret and Richard Hayne.

"I've been in medicine a long time," he shares. "It's rare that you have this coalition of people coming together with their own expertise, their own critical thinking, all the way from leadership through philanthropy through science. It doesn't happen often. There is continuing inspiration — that sometimes turns into aspiration — from seeing patients who we have not been able to help."

When asked to reflect on his legacy and what powers him forward, Sergott says, "First, I took good care of patients. Second, we added some new knowledge to neurology, ophthalmology, and neuro-ophthalmology that enables us to diagnose and treat disease sooner and improve the quality of life for those who are either genetically disposed to these diseases or, unfortunately, acquired them. Part of that legacy too is that this goes on and the journey doesn't stop with me."

SMARTER CITIES

Images of Philadelphia as a smart and healthy city provided by the College of Architecture & The Built Environment.

HEALTHIER FUTURES

BY CINDY LEFLER

WORKING SMARTER

The times, they are a changin' — and not necessarily for the better. Climate change, social inequities, rapid urbanization, and health disparities all have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of city dwellers.

Thomas Jefferson University's Institute for Smart and Healthy Cities is addressing those challenges in order to create a better future for those who live, work, and travel through urban areas. The Institute is a collaborative and transdisciplinary effort among the College of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the College of Population Health, and the Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce.

"Our overarching goal is to transform cities into environments that actively support human health, equity, and ecological sustainability," says Edgar Stach, PhD, director of the Institute. "We approach these objectives with interdisciplinary research, community-based engagement, education, and technological innovation."

The Institute brings together experts in architecture, design, public health, urban planning, engineering, and data science to address complex urban challenges.

"By fostering cross-sector collaboration, developing evidence-based solutions, and translating research into policy and design practice, we aim to catalyze meaningful change at both local and global scales," Stach says.

Barbara Klinkhammer, dean of the College of Architecture and the Built Environment, says integrating knowledge across disciplines will address the urban challenges that face us today and loom large tomorrow.

"Urban areas are the fastest-growing living environments for people around the world. The key challenge is designing cities that foster healthy living while adapting and reducing the harmful effects of urbanization, pollution, and climate change," she says.

The concept of smart cities is an emerging model in the development of urban environments that strives to create more efficient, healthier, and livable cities. The early roots of the idea can be traced back to post-war urban planning in the 1950s, with later attempts occurring in the 1970s. In 1986, the World Health Organization launched its Healthy Cities initiative, which focused on improving public health through urban planning and policy. The term "smart city" gained traction in the 1990s.

Jefferson's Institute for Smart and Healthy Cities launched in January 2021 and was recently awarded a UNESCO Chair for Smart, Healthy, and Learning Cities. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that works to promote peace and security through international cooperation in education, science, culture, and communication. Stach is the chairholder.

JEFFERSON'S INSTITUTE FOR SMART AND HEALTHY CITIES AIMS FOR A *better tomorrow.*

"This is both a recognition of our Institute's global commitment and a strategic platform for advancing our mission," Stach says. "Through this appointment, we can deepen our research collaborations, exchange knowledge with global partners, and align our work with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It significantly enhances our ability to influence policy, support education, and pilot scalable solutions for healthier and more resilient cities."

While there are similar smart and healthy city initiatives across the country and the world, Klinkhammer says Jefferson's is unique due to the 2017 merger of Thomas Jefferson University and Philadelphia University.

"To my knowledge, there is no other institute or center that connects the health and the design disciplines," she says. "Today's problems cannot be solved by one discipline; they require people to think from very different perspectives and angles."

Several smart cities in the U.S. are leading the way in innovative initiatives that include bike sharing, smart traffic lights that reduce automobile idling time, and sustainable fuel sources including biodegradables, just to name a few.

Other projects focus on adding more green space and vegetation to help improve air quality and provide shade to reduce the impact of the "heat island effect."

Heat islands occur when urban areas experience higher temperatures than their surrounding rural areas, primarily caused by the replacement of natural landscapes with buildings, roads, and other parts of the infrastructure that absorb and reemit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies.

To combat the heat island effect, communities can increase vegetation and green spaces by planting more trees for cover, creating parks and gardens, and promoting urban farming; they also can institute the use of green roofs that incorporate vegetation or install "cool roofs" using materials that reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat than a traditional roof.

"When you compare areas of a city that have shade, you'll see the temperature drop significantly — up to 18 or 20 degrees Fahrenheit," Klinkhammer says.

One Philadelphia program that promotes a green community is Park in a Truck. While it does not fall under the Institute's aegis, it works in connection with it. Under the leadership of Kimberlee Douglas, professor of landscape architecture at CABE, the program works with residents of urban neighborhoods to transform vacant lots into green spaces.

So far, six Park in the Truck gardens have been established using grant money from the Pew Charitable Trusts and other foundations.

Grant money and private funding are the keys to success in creating smart and healthy cities, says Klinkhammer. Yet, they're not easy to come by these days.

"With the climate we are currently in, foundations and private citizens have played a big role in supporting our projects," she says.

The Institute currently supports and coordinates more than 10 active research projects, including climate-responsive architecture, urban heat mitigation, AI-assisted planning tools, healthy building materials, active mobility systems, and health equity in underserved neighborhoods. Many of these projects are conducted in partnership with government agencies, community organizations, international universities, and private-sector collaborators.

One current project is headed by Yao Lu, PhD, assistant professor at the CABE.

Lu is partnering with Christopher Pastore, PhD, professor of transdisciplinary studies at Kanbar, Lu's and their project centers on using textiles as a mold for casting concrete panels, which has multiple benefits.

"The traditional mold for concrete casting requires a lot of scaffolding material like timber or metal, which is very expensive … and once the project has been constructed, those mold materials are wasted," he says. Using textiles, on the other hand, can be more cost effective, and they are easily recyclable for a variety of uses.

Lu's lab is also exploring a special recipe for concrete that can absorb carbon dioxide, one of the biggest byproducts in the manufacturing process.

Lu says urban construction, and urban behaviors in general, consume a lot of resources, and managing those behaviors more efficiently can lessen the damage done to the environment.

"We are not leaving any margin for error for our children, our grandchildren," Lu says. "In order to prevent any more terrible natural disasters from happening, we have to think more smartly now."

Stach agrees.

"As urban populations continue to grow, the design and function of our cities play a central role in determining public health outcomes, climate resilience, and social equity. Smart and healthy cities initiatives address the urgent need for solutions that improve quality of life while reducing environmental impacts," he says.

Klinkhammer looks forward to formulating many of those solutions at the Institute.

"What I'm hoping for in five or 10 years is that the Institute has real outcomes where we can prove through implementation that the science and the design concepts we are developing bring change for the city and a better life for its citizens," he says.

Watch more of the story online: **magazine.jefferson.edu**.

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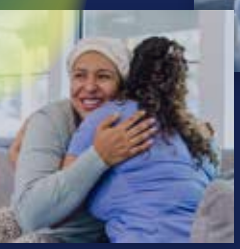

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Jefferson Health

HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

Redesigning Drug Delivery

Julia Anthony, MS '17
Founder and Chief Strategy Officer, SOLUtion Medical
Graduate, NASDAQ Entrepreneurship Program
Member, Johnson & Johnson's JLABS Incubator

In the dynamic world of pharmaceuticals, where innovation can bolster quality of life, Julia Anthony stands out as a beacon of inspiration. After graduating from Jefferson's MS in Industrial Design program in 2017, Anthony founded SOLUtion Medical, a company dedicated to developing drugs that require mixing at the point of care.

Born with congenital adrenal hyperplasia, a rare and life-threatening condition, Anthony experienced firsthand the challenges of receiving timely and effective treatment, difficulties that many patients still face today. Rather than letting their health struggles deter them, this alum harnessed adversity to create solutions to benefit others.

SOLUtion Medical focuses on the effective delivery of drugs that must be mixed right before injection, beginning with a program designed for adrenal crisis. When the body fails to produce cortisol, emergency treatment is required immediately. Otherwise, the consequences can be fatal.

The current treatment process requires 14 intricate steps, including time-sensitive drug mixing. In the chaos of an emergency, when every second counts, this complexity introduces dangerous delays.

Determined to change the narrative, Anthony founded SOLUtion Medical with a singular mission: to redefine drug delivery and remove unnecessary barriers patients face in moments that matter most. The company's intuitive, user-friendly drug delivery systems streamline point-of-care mixing, preserving medication stability and potency while eliminating the inefficiencies, risks, and costs that put lives at stake.

Describe your journey to founding your company.

The path wasn't really written for me … everything was far from easy. I realized I could use this difficult thing impacting my life to help people right in front of me.

At Jefferson, I saw an interesting opportunity to be part of a design program that would ultimately have access to real-world healthcare problems. Being told "no" a lot is super important. You have to get comfortable with feedback and critique.

You won Jefferson's Top Ram entrepreneurship competition in 2017 and last year were named a Gaingels 100 Entrepreneur, an honor that recognizes LGBTQIA+ venture-backed entrepreneurs. What do these honors mean to you?

To be acknowledged among such talented individuals is both humbling and inspiring. It's a reminder that our voices matter, and our journeys, though unique, contribute to a larger narrative of resilience and innovation within our community. It's also a model of hope for others who may be navigating their paths in the business world.

What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs?

Industrial design is more of a mindset to me. When you make your own things, you're designing, writing the playbook, and teaching others how to follow the playbook, all at the same time. It takes a level of self-awareness and being open and flexible.

▲ *Last year, Julia Anthony was named a Gaingels 100 Entrepreneur, an honor that recognizes LGBTQIA+ venture-backed entrepreneurs. Here, Anthony holds the book honoring the distinction. They won Jefferson's Top Ram entrepreneurship competition in 2017.*

▲ *Born with the life-threatening condition congenital adrenal hyperplasia, Julia Anthony created SOLUtion Medical to redefine drug delivery and remove unnecessary barriers patients face.*

Legacy in Action

Endowed positions are among the highest honors faculty receive, an acknowledgement of the esteem in which the institution and academic peers hold them. Thomas Jefferson University currently has 124 endowed positions. An investiture ceremony officially bestows the named position, honoring the recipient as well as the benefactor whose generosity makes the appointment possible.

The University recently held five investitures celebrating new endowed positions.

▲ *Left to right: Stephen T. Smith, Joseph G. Cacchione, MD, Susan C. Aldridge, PhD, Gregary Marhefka, MD '98, Howard H. Weitz, MD, Said A. Ibrahim, MD*

To learn more about Jefferson professorships and other endowed positions, please visit **Jefferson.edu/Professorships**.

Investiture of Gregary D. Marhefka, MD '98 as the Howard H. Weitz, MD, MACP, FRCP (London), FACC Professor of Cardiology

In October 2024, alumnus Gregary D. Marhefka, MD '98, director of Jefferson's medical cardiovascular ICU, was named the Howard H. Weitz, MD, MACP, FRCP (London), FACC Professor of Cardiology. Marhefka's clinical work focuses on critically ill heart patients and mirrors this work with students, residents, and fellows in our Sidney Kimmel Medical College. During his 50 years at Jefferson, Weitz has had many roles, including director of the Division of Cardiology and the Jefferson Heart Institute, vice chair and Master Clinician of the Department of Medicine, and senior associate dean of the medical college, and he is regarded regionally, nationally, and internationally as an outstanding and innovative clinician and educator.

Investiture of Ethan J. Halpern, MD as the Sandeep P. Deshmukh, MD Professor of Radiology

In March, Ethan J. Halpern, MD, professor of Radiology, Urology, and Medicine, and vice chair of research in the Department of Radiology, was named the Sandeep P. Deshmukh, MD, Professor of Radiology. During the course of his career, Halpern's impact on education through teaching and mentoring has been substantial, and his prolific research accomplishments have led to advancements in the fields of prostate and cardiac imaging and contrast-enhanced ultrasound. Sandeep P. Deshmukh was a beloved leader, clinician, teacher, and mentor in Jefferson's Department of Radiology for 15 years, and he was deeply committed to training the next generation of radiologists and was a mentor and educator to Jefferson medical students, residents, and fellows throughout his time at Jefferson.

▲ *Left to right: Joseph G. Cacchione, MD, Prakash Deshmukh, Pushpa Deshmukh, Stephen T. Smith, Ethan J. Halpern, MD, Susan C. Aldridge, PhD, Said A. Ibrahim, MD*

▲ *Left to right: Said A. Ibrahim, MD, Robert C. Sergott, MD, Susan C. Aldridge, PhD, Patricia D. Wellenbach, Joseph G. Cacchione, MD, Robert H. Rosenwasser, MD*

Investiture of Robert C. Sergott, MD as the Margaret and Richard Hayne Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology, Department of Neurological Surgery

In April, Robert C. Sergott, MD, founder and executive director of the William H. Annesley, Jr. MD '48 EyeBrain Center of the Vickie & Jack Farber Institute for Neuroscience, was named the Margaret and Richard Hayne Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology.

Sergott's research interests include optic neuropathies and retinopathies caused by immunological, ischemic, genetic, and degenerative diseases. He is currently involved in multiple clinical trials and grants on the diagnosis and treatment of a variety of neurodegenerative diseases. William H. Annesley, Jr. MD '48 was a pioneer in ophthalmology, pushing the boundaries of the field all his life to provide the latest and best therapies for his patients. His legacy is carried on through his family, including Margaret and Richard Hayne. Margaret is the co-president and chief creative officer at URBN, and Richard is the CEO and chairman of the board of directors of Urban Outfitters.

Installment of F. Michael Angelo, MA as the Robert M. Stein, MD ‘68, FACC, FAHA Archivist

In May, F. Michael Angelo, university archivist and head of Historic Collections and teaching associate, was named the Robert M. Stein, MD ’68, FACC, FAHA, Archivist. In this position, he prepares historical exhibits; creates the content on the University Archives website; gives tours and lectures; runs educational programs; and manages the efforts to acquire, preserve, and make available for research official University records, personal papers, artifacts, and other materials of enduring historical value to Jefferson. Robert M. Stein, MD ’68, in addition to being a board-certified cardiologist for more than 40 years, is an advocate for the preservation of art and history. Stein remains active in the community, currently serving as a docent at the San Diego Museum of Art and docent and former director at the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum.

▲ *Left to right: Stephen T. Smith, Susan C. Aldridge, PhD, Robert M. Stein, MD ‘68, F. Michael Angelo, Matt Dane Baker*

Investiture of Lara Carson Weinstein, MD ‘95 as the Stephen and Sandra Sheller Distinguished Professor of Supportive Healthcare

In August, alumna Lara Carson Weinstein, MD ’95, co-director of the Center for Supportive Healthcare, was named the Stephen and Sandra Sheller Distinguished Professor of Supportive Healthcare. Weinstein’s work focuses on driving fundamental change in how our health systems, health professionals, and learners support the health and wellness of people from marginalized populations. Stephen and Sandra Sheller are longtime supporters of the Philadelphia community, and their leadership and philanthropy within business, healthcare, education, nonprofit organizations, and advocacy has provided a platform for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

▲ *Left to right: Stephen Sheller, Sandra Sheller, Lara Carson Weinstein, MD ‘95*

Blended Giving: Make an Impact Now And for the Future at Jefferson

Blended gifts are transforming philanthropy at Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health, allowing donors to create lasting change today and for years to come. A blended gift, typically combining a major gift with a bequest, enables donors to make a powerful impact both during their lifetime and beyond. By combining a current gift or pledge with a future commitment, you can help Jefferson reimagine health, education, and discovery with maximum impact.

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Blended gifts offer numerous benefits:

✔ Support groundbreaking medical research, exceptional patient care, and innovative education

✔ Achieve both immediate and long-term philanthropic goals

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Not intended as legal or investment advice.

BY IRISA GOLD

@thetherapygal

Follow Message

76.9K Followers **3.9M** Likes

Leeor Gal '19

🎓 Jefferson's Marriage and Family Therapy Master's Program

🔥 Relatable Therapist

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was immeasurable but oftentimes invisible, affecting not only the physical but also the mental health of individuals across the globe.

For Leeor Gal, a 2019 graduate of Thomas Jefferson University's Marriage and Family Therapy Master's program, finding a new path and creating a new normal to best serve her patients and those needing support during those tumultuous times was paramount.

The growing popularity of TikTok in 2020 was a perfect medium for Gal, whose passion for video creation began as a child. Utilizing its expressive, engaging platform, she began to create silly, yet relatable and educational videos designed to destigmatize therapy and mental health issues, and her viewership soared.

Her videos provided comfort and entertainment as well as information and acceptance, helping to assuage loneliness and create desperately needed connections in a world of worry and isolation.

"Initially, I made one video with a silly song and dance about being a therapist and knowing I looked young," she shares. "I got a flood of following. People related to that video so much. I thought, 'I have a voice here. I can do something with it.'"

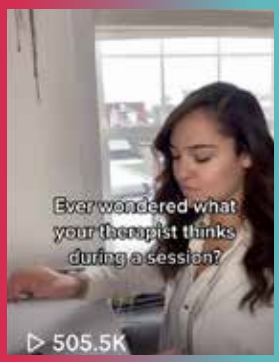
This new communication tool allowed people the opportunity to get to know her. "It was about authenticity," she shares. "I created attention around mental health topics that people could relate to. Therapy used to be hush-hush, or people might have thought it was embarrassing to talk to a therapist, but I wanted to make it accessible, entertaining, and to show people that while it's challenging to be in therapy and to work on yourself, it is actually really cool and fun."

Today, Gal still has some of the same clients who got to know and joined her through her earliest social media presence.

Gal's journey to Jefferson and marriage and family therapy began after she received her undergraduate degree in public relations from Rutgers University. Within six months following graduation, she knew it was time to follow a new path. "I went back, completed my prerequisites, and applied to Jefferson's master's program," she says. "It was the best decision I've made in my life. I now have the best job and best fit for me."

Her Jefferson education provided the solid foundation to prepare her for the future and the inspiration to grow her experience and knowledge and create the practice of her dreams. Her introduction to clinical work began almost immediately, when two months into the program, she began to work with her first clients.

"I was never a good test taker, but I'm really good at learning by doing," Gal shares. "As we learned a new skill or type of therapy, I would be able to apply it within a session in real time. Learning from my professors allowed me to understand what type of therapist I wanted to be."



This interview is #trending at **magazine.jefferson.edu.**

She appreciates that her Jefferson program not only focused on marriage and families but also focused on individuals and groups, utilizing a systemic framework for treating each patient.

"While you have an individual sitting in front of you, they are part of their larger system," she explains. "This means they have their family, friends, relationships, religion — all make up who they are. I loved the idea of looking at my patient as more than just the individual who is sitting in front of me. The program helped me to identify that it is so much more complex than just, 'What are you coming in for today?'"

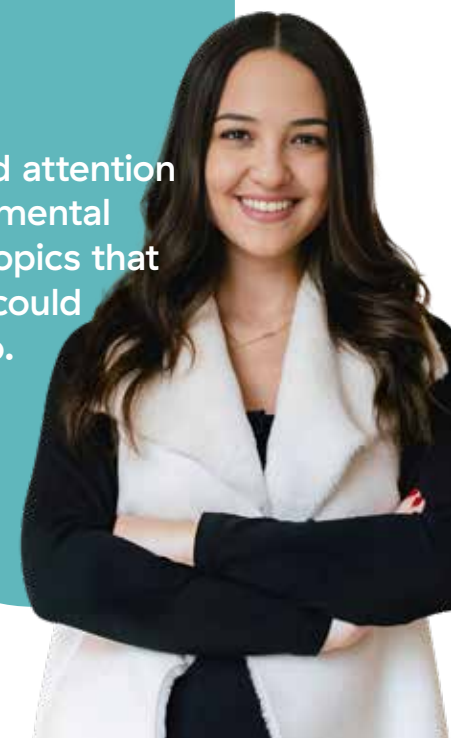
Today, Gal has fulfilled her dream of opening a group practice. While she specializes in helping patients with family issues, ADHD, anxiety, depression, and navigating relationships, she also employs and mentors four other therapists with varying therapeutic specialties. She has found that the birth of her son a year ago has served to further magnify her empathy, compassion, and passion for service to others, including her patients as well as the therapists in her practice.

"Mentorship is one of my favorite things," she shares. "I say, 'I'm always here. Don't ever hesitate to ask me questions.' It's important to me to have compassion and understanding for my employees as well."

Gal treasures her clients' successes and milestones, striving to ensure that they never feel alone and always feel accepted, heard, and understood.

"I learn from my patients and never take that for granted," she says. "It can be the smallest things that really connect with people. One of my favorite times is, when following a session, my client will return and say, 'What you said last week changed my life.' Or, I have discharged a client, meaning we had great sessions together, they have been able to persevere and overcome obstacles, and they feel good. Later, I get an update from them, like, 'I had the baby' or 'I passed my exam' or 'I graduated college.' Those are the greatest gifts for me."

> I created attention around mental health topics that people could relate to.



1969

Frank Mulhern, Marketing and Management, was drafted in 1970 at the age of 24 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where he was educated in Enlisted Personnel and spent four years on destroyers. He was married in 1971. He and his wife, whom he is still in love with today, had two children. After his tour, he and his family returned to New Jersey, where he worked in customer service with Airwork Corp, a company in Millville that repaired and overhauled jet aircraft engines. After eight years, he was contacted by GE Aircraft engines and offered a customer service position in Arkansas City, Kansas. He began work there in January of 1984. GE paid for everything, including his graduate degree in management providing he maintained a 3.0 average or better. He received his MSM from Friends University in Wichita, Kansas. His two children have their graduate degrees as well and live in Lee's Summit, Missouri, and Tulsa, Oklahoma. He retired early at age 60, and he and his wife started Five Loaves, a meal ministry in their church for anyone needing a sit-down meal. They served meals one night a week for 13 1/2 years, but unfortunately, COVID-19 precipitated the program's cancellation.

1971

Don Selkow, Textile Management & Marketing, is finally retiring at the end of this year, as he will be 82 in December, and the timing is quite extraordinary. Having had an active career spanning well over 60 years, he had no idea that at his age, it was something to have survived for so long. Philadelphia College of Textiles & Science graduate and his mentor Harvey Saligman, president of Queen Knitting Mills and a trustee, persuaded director of admissions Mott Linn to allow him to attend the night division, with the possibility of attending day school if he achieved a B average in three courses. He graduated from the evening division while working in the fiber byproduct industry, married, and had a baby boy. As time went by, he had opportunities including being a partner/owner of three yarn spinning mills.

1989

Terri McClements, Accounting, was appointed chair of the board of directors for the American Cancer Society. She will serve a two-year term through March 30, 2027.

McClements brings decades of experience, dedication, and leadership to her new role. She is a proven executive with over three decades of experience advising Fortune 100 and 500 multinational companies and their boards on strategy, digital and cloud transformation, talent, financial reporting, and board culture. She was most recently a senior partner at PwC, one of the largest global professional services firms, until her retirement in 2023. Throughout her 36-year career at PwC, she held numerous senior leadership roles, including serving on the firm's U.S. board and mid-Atlantic managing partner. As vice chair and human capital leader at PwC, she transformed the firm's talent strategy, integrated over 10 acquisitions, and drove value through cultural and operational alignment. McClements also led the core healthcare practice and oversaw strategy and succession planning. She also serves on the boards of Park Hotels & Resorts and Inova Health System.

Her leadership and influence have been widely recognized. She was inducted into the Business Hall of Fame in 2023, named one of the 100 Most Powerful Women in Washington, honored as one of Virginia Business's 50 Most Influential Virginians, and received both the Washington Business Journal C-Suite Award and inclusion on its list of 100 Most Powerful Executives.

Catherine (Smyth) Price, OT Post Bac, writes novels under the pen name Bridget McGowan. She has 17 self-published novels in paperback and on Kindle on Amazon.com. She writes fiction for children, teens, and adults. Her most recent novel is titled "The Invisible Twin." She also travels, especially in Europe. Through Ancestry.com, she discovered some third and fourth cousins in England and Ireland, many of whom she has met.

1997

Donna (Perrone) Lamborne, Marketing, has been in higher education at Temple University for the last 24 years and has most recently been promoted to vice dean for strategic initiatives and administration at Klein College of Media & Communication. She lives in Southern New Jersey with her husband, Trae, and two children, Grace (21) and Jack (19).

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1998

Bob File, Computer Science, currently serves as the senior director of solution engineering at Ledger Run, based in Belvedere Tiburon, California, though he works remotely from his home in New Jersey. In this role, he leads efforts to align technical solutions with business needs, driving innovation in life sciences through scalable SaaS platforms focused on streamlining clinical trial operations.

Life has been a rewarding blend of professional growth and personal fulfillment. With over 20 years in technology leadership, he has had the privilege of working with industry leaders like IQVIA and Veeva Systems, driving impactful solutions for global pharmaceutical companies. Beyond work, he stays connected to his roots through his involvement with La Salle University's Information Technology Advisory Board and Rowan University's Computer Science Advisory Board. Living in New Jersey with his family, he is grateful for the balance of a dynamic career and meaningful community ties.

He says, "Thank you, Jefferson University, for laying the foundation for my path. I would love to hear from fellow alumni — feel free to connect!"

Steve Ghazarian, Diagnostic Imaging, worked briefly in clinical healthcare after graduation, then switched to IT. He worked for many years in IT in the financial sector for a major bank and recently changed to his current position in healthcare IT as an application analyst for Penn Medicine.

1999

Sally Ivaskewitz, BA, MS, Textile Science, Knit Design, started at Textile and was a member of the first graduating class of PhilaU. She is really proud of achieving a GPA of 3.89 without faculty supervision. "My thesis is filed in the knit science lab, Feel free to check it out!"

2000

Mindy Mong, Textile Design, greatly appreciates her undergraduate program at Philadelphia University, which provided her with a solid foundation of understanding the technical aspect of weaving. She has been a textile designer in North Carolina for the residential upholstery industry since graduation in 2000. She was laid off a few times because it's a competitive industry, so job availability and locations are limited. She loves the industry, though, because it's both technical and creative. She was laid off in 2017 and became a freelancer instead, and she is currently still self-employed. Freelancing helped her become a more technical designer, since the mills she works with each have their own specialty, and she was able to learn from them.

On a personal level, she met her husband in North Carolina, and they have been living in the country with their child and dogs, where she enjoys the peace and quiet that's the total opposite of Philadelphia. Freelancing is challenging in regard to work stability, but she needed the flexibility in her schedule since she is also the chauffeur for their child. Thankfully, her husband has been supportive of her career.

2002

Sara (Rogozinski) Wagner, Business, attended Temple University School of Law after graduating from Philadelphia University and graduated in 2005. She then moved to Wilmington, Delaware, and joined the firm Richards, Layton & Finger, PA (RLF), Delaware's largest law firm. In 2013, she became a partner at RLF and has practiced commercial real estate and business law there for her entire career.

Today, she is the chair of the Real Estate Services Group and a member of the firm's Executive Committee. In addition to her work at RLF, she is a fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers (ACREL) and the American College of Mortgage Attorneys (ACMA). She chairs the Legal Opinions Committee for ACREL and co-chairs the Capital Markets Committee for ACMA. Outside of her professional obligations, she is married with five children.

2007

Alicia (Spor) Bonner, Physician Assistant Studies, has become an experienced and dedicated physician assistant since graduating from Thomas Jefferson University's PA program in 2007 and has received specialized training in aesthetics from the American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine. Since 2008, she has been committed to providing a comprehensive range of advanced aesthetic treatments and wellness services, continually updating her skills with the latest techniques and advances in the field. She is passionate about helping patients achieve their aesthetic goals and feel their best. She is the owner

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As part of our commitment to lifelong learning, the Office of Alumni Relations offers opportunities for group travel for Jefferson, Textile, and Philadelphia University alumni, friends, and families. Our varied itinerary of travel destinations combines educational forums, unique adventures, and excursions to places of historical and cultural interest, with opportunities to discover nature's majestic landscapes and incredible wildlife. These trips offer the highest-quality travel experience through our partnerships with experienced travel providers.

- **Antiquity to Anatolia**
  October 29-November 9, 2025
- **Antarctica Discovery**
  January 9-20, 2026
- **Galapagos Islands (Northern Itinerary)**
  February 28-March 7, 2026
- **Wonders of Peru**
  February 28-March 11, 2026
- **A Shogun's Welcome to Japan**
  March 22-April 3, 2026
- **Vivid Western Caribbean & Panama Canal**
  April 14-24, 2026
- **Flavors of Northern Italy**
  May 22-30, 2026
- **English Channel Discovery**
  May 24-31, 2026
- **Majestic Vistas & Wildlife of Alaska**
  July 28-August 6, 2026
- **Scotland**
  August 2-10, 2026

For detailed trip information and to join our Travel Interest List, visit Jefferson.edu/AlumniTravel or contact Alumni Relations at 215-955-7750 or alumni@jefferson.edu.

and lead injector of Bella Mobile Aesthetics, a small local business in Yardley, Pennsylvania, where she continues to practice medicine and contribute to the local community in various ways.

2012

Sarah Wieman, Fashion Merchandising, was named to NAA's Inaugural 20 on the Rise Program. The new and innovative program recognizes 20 rising rental housing industry professionals who have made significant professional achievements and demonstrate potential in their future careers. Wieman and their fellow recipients were celebrated at the rental housing industry's premier event, Apartmentalize, in Las Vegas, June 11-13, 2025.

2013

Tarik Gluhic, International Business & Finance, started his own fintech company called United Financial Network in Flatiron, New York City. The company has 55-60 full-time employees (about 80% in the office, the rest remote or working from home). It specializes in unsecured debt space and has grown quickly in just 2 1/2 years.

2015

Rebekah (Hoffner) Reynosa, Disaster Medicine and Management, is now the manager of emergency management and business continuity for Penn State Health.

2020

Niranjan Patil, Construction Management and Sustainable Design, shares that a lot has happened since graduation, and the journey's been exciting! Currently based in Dallas, Texas, he works as a project manager at an architecture firm, leading multifamily housing projects. Every day brings new challenges, creative solutions, and the chance to shape spaces that people call home. It's incredibly rewarding.

With master's degrees in sustainable design, construction management, and project management, he has been diving deep into projects that blend innovation with environmental responsibility. He is now channeling that passion into studying for the ARE 5.0 exams, with the long-term goal of launching his own sustainable design consultancy. "Dream big, right?" he says.

Outside the office, you'll usually find him behind a camera lens capturing new places, traveling to recharge his creativity, or geeking out over net-zero architecture trends.

He is thankful for the education and community that helped lay the groundwork for all of this and wishes fellow alumni continued growth and amazing adventures ahead. "Let's keep building a better world, one project at a time!" he says.

Angela Pote, Trauma Community Counseling, started a successful mental health practice and has written a book, "The Crossroads of Neurodivergency, Trauma, Chaos, and Magic" which is waiting for a publishing date. She is currently an international psychology PhD candidate and is conducting research on "the lived experience of intractable pain patients in regards to underreporting of their pain to medical providers."

2021

Arielle Marcum, Communications, recently took a job as assistant director of marketing, social media, at Kutztown University.

Jack David Whalen, Architecture, has become a licensed architect, mentor, instructor at his local community college, state representative in the American Institute of Architects, and regional director for the ACE Mentor Program of America since graduation.

He now lives in Delaware with his significant other and their three beautiful cats. In anything he does, he cares deeply about supporting the next generation of leaders in his industry and eliminating any barriers they may have in order to enter the profession.

SIGN ON, TURN A PAGE, CHILL OUT!

Join the Thomas Jefferson University Alumni Book Club, an online group for reading, learning, relaxing, and connecting with your fellow Textile, PhilaU, and Jefferson graduates.

Visit pbc.guru/Jefferson to join today!

Bob Barnhardt

Educator, leader, and mentor Robert A. Barnhardt '59 passed away on December 23, 2024, at the age of 87. He received his bachelor's in textile engineering in 1959 from the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science (Jefferson), his master's from the Institute of Textile Technology, and a master's and PhD in higher education from the University of Virginia.

After working at various companies, he served on the faculty from 1961-1964 and as chair of the Department of Textile Engineering at Textile from 1964-1966, where today, a classroom in Downs Hall bears his name. Following academic leadership roles at ITT and NC State, he retired in 2005.

While he lectured and consulted for textile corporations around the world, Barnhardt was most proud of his work in the classroom. Every year for 44 years, he taught at least one college course.

Elizabeth Jane Forbes

Longtime nursing professor Elizabeth Jane Forbes, EdD, passed away on February 16 at the age of 90.

A pioneer in nursing education, Forbes was professor emeritus at the Jefferson College of Nursing from 1987, retiring in 1996. She was the first female faculty member hired to lead the nursing master's program and launched Jefferson's first Nursing Scholar Program.

Dedicated to improving the quality of care for vulnerable populations, particularly disadvantaged women and the elderly, Forbes wrote extensively on gerontological nursing, including co-authoring the first textbook to address long-term care. She also served on a special congressional task force for the White House Council on Aging, investigating the quality of care in long-term care facilities.

Forbes was proud to be second in a line of four generations of nurses in her family.

Dr. Jerry A. Shields

Jerry A. Shields, MD, a longtime professor of ophthalmology at Thomas Jefferson University and emeritus director of the Ocular Oncology Service at Wills Eye Hospital, passed away on June 22 at the age of 88.

A pioneer in the field, Shields was renowned as a physician, surgeon, researcher, and educator. After earning his medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1964, he embarked on a distinguished career marked by service to his country as a surgeon in the Marine Corps in Vietnam and groundbreaking contributions to ophthalmology and ocular oncology.

Following his military service, he completed his residency in ophthalmology at Wills Eye Hospital in 1970, as well as fellowships in ophthalmic pathology at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in 1971 and in vitreoretinal surgery at Wills in 1972. He established Wills' Ocular Oncology Service in 1974, one of the first eye cancer centers in the world.

James (Jim) Solano

Retired accounting professor, pioneering sports agent, certified public accountant, and philanthropist James (Jim) Solano passed away on January 26 at the age of 81.

Solano received his bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting at Temple University. Following graduate school, he began a five-decade teaching career, initially at Temple University before moving to the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science (Jefferson). He retired from teaching in 2017.

In 1966, he opened a CPA practice, growing it to include physician groups and professional athletes before he launched a sports agency business specializing in NFL contracts for players and coaches and later including PGA golf professionals. Highly respected by players, coaches, and management, Solano represented over 800 players and coaches as an NFL player agent, including 500 from the Philadelphia Eagles.

1956
Joan H. Bristow
Dale A. Grove Jr., MD

1957
Mary C. Cowen

1959
Robert A. Barnhardt, PhD
Jane A. Hudson
Raymond J. Lodise, MD
James L. McCabe, MD

1960
Joan D. Kelley
Harold J. Kobb, MD
Dolores M. Pascoe

1961
Maurice J. Lewis, MD

1962
Herbert E. Cohn, MD
Jerome J. Vernick, MD

1963
John N. Rightmyer, MD
Claude M. Williams, MD

1964
Peter J. Eidenberg, MD

1965
Gene W. Doo, MD
Martin H. Lizerbram, MD

1967
Eli Fromm, PhD
Louis L. Keeler Jr., MD
Charles A. Meyer Jr., MD

1969
Donna R. Lonie

1971
Michael J. Mastrangelo, MD

1972
Karen M. Ezrine, MD

1974
Ronald D. Abraham, DO

1976
Jonathan B. Belmont, MD

1977
Sandra R. Harmon-Weiss, MD

1980
Dennis K. Dougherty

1982
Constance Clifton

1983
Roseann Kuhar-Clarke
Mark Sokoloff

1989
Joanne I. Bechtold

1992
John G. Daly

1995
Howard R. Lambert

1996
Karen Sibert

1998
Mark S. Kramer

2000
Thomas J. Speelhoffer

2002
John W. Pfeifer

2003
Helena Maddox

JEFFERSON INNOVATOR Magazine

TRIVIA

Give our open-book quiz a shot!
HINT: All of the answers are in this issue!

1. **Before attending and graduating from Jefferson's College of Nursing, D'Brickashaw Ferguson played football for the New York Jets. What position did he play?**

A. Quarterback
B. Left tackle
C. Center
D. Wide receiver

2. **Which Jeffersonian served as the flight surgeon assigned to America's first manned space missions?**

A. James P. Bagian, MD '77
B. Col. Kenneth Beers, MD '56
C. Robert C. Laning, MD '48
D. Maj. David G. Simons, MD '46

3. **Jefferson alumna and therapist Leeor Gal initially utilized which social media platform to reach out to her clients and those needing support during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

A. Facebook
B. Twitter
C. LinkedIn
D. TikTok

Submit your answers at **Jefferson.edu/InnovatorTrivia** or scan the QR code with your smartphone camera by October 15, 2025. A perfect score will enter you in a drawing to win a Jefferson T-shirt.

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