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Summer 2024

## Wooster Magazine: Summer 2024

Caitlin Paynich Stanowick

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# WOOSTER



SUMMER 2024

## The Wonder and Lasting Inspirations of I.S.

Students and alumni share  
what inspired their capstone  
scholarship at Wooster and  
where it led them

Computer science major builds a robotic  
mouse for an algorithm maze. p. 6

I.S. research inspires alumnus to  
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The Class of 2024 celebrates their first-  
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—Désirée Weber, associate professor and chair of political science



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**Volume 138 No. 3**

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**On the cover:**  
Bri Mosley performs in her senior recital, “What is Black Joy: A celebration of Black musician’s contributions to Black pride.” For her I.S., she researched and produced a program featuring five sets of songs including selections by Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, and Sam Cooke, among others (more on page 8). The traditional coverage of the latest research and scholarship from the Class of 2024 in this issue showcases the ways students like Mosley found topics meaningful to them for their Independent Study projects beginning on page 3.

# Sent into the world with new knowledge

The academic year has now come to a close, and as I approach my first anniversary here at The College of Wooster, I am ever more amazed and grateful for the richness of experiences our talented faculty and staff bring to our students.

The last weeks of the academic year are the busiest time in our calendar, filled with academic pursuits and many types of celebrations—from the Mardi Gras-like atmosphere of the I.S. Monday parade to the many events recognizing our students' achievements during Commencement week.

**At Wooster, this season is particularly poignant for our seniors as they prepare and share the hard-won knowledge gained through their Independent Study projects with the College and the larger world.**

This magazine highlights the scholarship and research completed by the Class of 2024. From Brianna Mosley's moving vocal performance in her senior recital "What is Black Joy" to intriguing research from environmental geoscience major and Scot pitcher Corey Knauf about the properties of baseball rubbing mud, and the algorithms developed by Levi Gainer to help his MicroMouse navigate from points A to B—the creation of knowledge is encyclopedic in scope and ambition. Through Wooster's signature capstone experience, students build not only knowledge but life-long strengths. They galvanize habits of listening, draw upon their creativity, and work toward their ambitious visions. Beyond the inherent value of their projects, the process itself prepares them for a life of impact, community engagement, and global problem-solving.



As further proof of this, many alumni have shared with me during our Wooster on the Move events that their I.S. experience did not end with the Senior Research Symposium. This issue shares stories of the ways that alumni have expanded upon their I.S. experiences since graduating. This March, during the Great Decisions lecture series, I had the opportunity to meet John Trainor '16 when he presented his film, *Sound the Alarm*, about issues in U.S. foreign policy. The film was inspired by his I.S., which you can read about on page 14. John's commitment to advocating for information transparency, ignited by his scholarship at Wooster, is one example of the transformative power of the I.S. experience our alumni share.

And finally, we celebrate Commencement, the culmination of our students' Wooster experience, which we highlight on page 30. In celebrating the Class of 2024—the class that COVID-19 deprived of a high school graduation ceremony—we hosted perhaps the largest Commencement in Wooster history. In addition to the 3,700 people in attendance at the Scot Center, we also shared the joy and gravitas of the ceremony with nearly 900 people in real time via live stream and more than 2,000 views of the recording. I am proud of these new alumni and eager to see the impact they have in the years to come! We all hope they will stay in touch and visit often.

Anne E. McCall  
President



## The Wonder and Lasting Inspirations of I.S.

Students and alumni share what inspired their capstone scholarship at Wooster and where it led them

First-year students begin their education at The College of Wooster with the understanding that the completion of their degree will include a significant piece of original research, scholarship, or creative expression alongside a faculty mentor. A source of excitement, inspiration, and sometimes apprehension, Independent Study—and all the techniques and tools students learn to prepare for their project throughout their time at the College—represent a badge of achievement, honor, and sense of confidence they will carry with them as Wooster alumni. From the themes of *First-Year Seminar* courses to internship experiences, conversations with mentors, or internet searches, research questions

and topics come to students through many means. Designing a project, research study, or artistic invention to solve that problem, express that idea, and create new knowledge in their own field equips Wooster alumni to find answers to challenges throughout their lives and professional careers. Sometimes I.S. identifies a wonder and appetite to carry that scholarship forward even after graduation.

In this issue, in addition to hearing from some members of the Class of 2024 about what wonders and interests they studied and explored in their worlds, alumni share how they built upon the foundation of their I.S. for ongoing research, professional work, and everyday inspiration.



Visit [wooster.edu/symposium](https://wooster.edu/symposium) to see a video recap from this year's Senior Research Symposium and read about more of this year's I.S. projects.

ATHENA THARENOS

Anthropology, environmental geoscience, and Chinese studies majors

I.S. titles:

**The Olive Tree Collateral:** An exploration of land and wealth in contemporary Rhodian society  
**On Thinning Ice:** A geoscientific perspective on the politics of resource exploration in a changing Arctic

Mentors:

Heather Fitz Gibbon, professor of sociology & anthropology and chair of urban studies  
Mark Wilson, Lewis M. and Marian Senter Nixon Professor of Natural Sciences

Interviews, Ancient Land, and the Arctic

Triple major studies differing resources and utilizes multiple research styles

When Athena Tharenos ’24 first arrived at The College of Wooster, she didn’t consider herself much of an academic, nor did she see a future in research or graduate school. Then, with the support of the College and faculty advisors, she became a rare triple major in anthropology, environmental geoscience, and Chinese studies.

“I’ve been encouraged as someone who can contribute to the world through my research and work,” said Tharenos, who also ran year-round for Wooster’s cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track teams. “I don’t think I could have been quite as encouraged at another college, and a lot of doors were open for me that I didn’t think were possible.” The doors kept opening when it came time for Independent Study research in Washington, D.C. and Greece.

For her geoscience I.S., Tharenos pursued a classic geopolitics topic combining Arctic geology, climate change, and international relations. Mark Wilson, Lewis M. and Marian Senter Nixon Professor of Natural Sciences, mentored Tharenos throughout the study and connected her with Wooster alumnus Stephen Dornbos ’97 at the U.S. Department of Defense to discuss the importance of the region to national security. “Athena examined the changes to international commercial and military policies in the Arctic as it warms (reducing ice cover) and increases competition for resources and transportation routes,” explained Wilson. “This is an important analysis of the policy options we face in the next decade and beyond.”

While investigating the focused efforts to increase northern petroleum exploration and shipping

operations, Tharenos used “constant citations” of other researchers, governmental regulations, and international policies. She felt out of her comfort zone, both challenged and excited by working in unfamiliar territory. “Every day I learned new things, having to push myself into new realms of understanding and to utilize new tools of analysis,” she said.

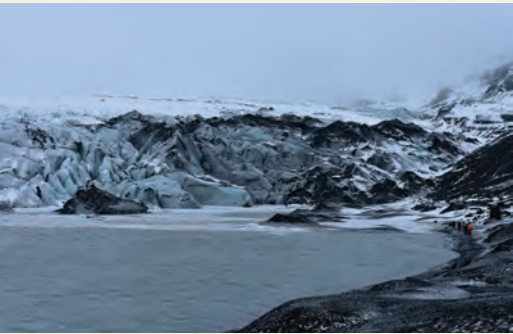
Wilson called her a superb writer and a very deliberate reader, adding, “She kept detailed notes on her many literature sources so that she could weave together sophisticated environmental and geopolitical interpretations for her thesis.”

This writing skill was also imperative for her second I.S.—an ethnographic study anchored in storytelling. And though her research took her all the way to the Greek island of Rhodes, it was much closer to her heart. During a 2021 trip she gifted her 87-year-old grandfather for his birthday, Tharenos’ uncle told endless stories about plots of land that belonged to their family. She realized that even abandoned lots and overgrown olive groves possess a rich history with stories, family ties, and other value that she wanted to explore.

“With a cigarette pinched between his lips, my uncle kept saying, ‘Athena, this is your history and you need to know it!’ So I wanted to share these and other people’s stories,” said Tharenos. She spent the next two summers conducting fieldwork in Greece and also learned to speak Greek. She visited a university library on the island for historical facts and economic insights. She traced parts of her family lineage to connect plot ownership. But the majority of her immersive Rhodian research happened on front porches as she chatted with

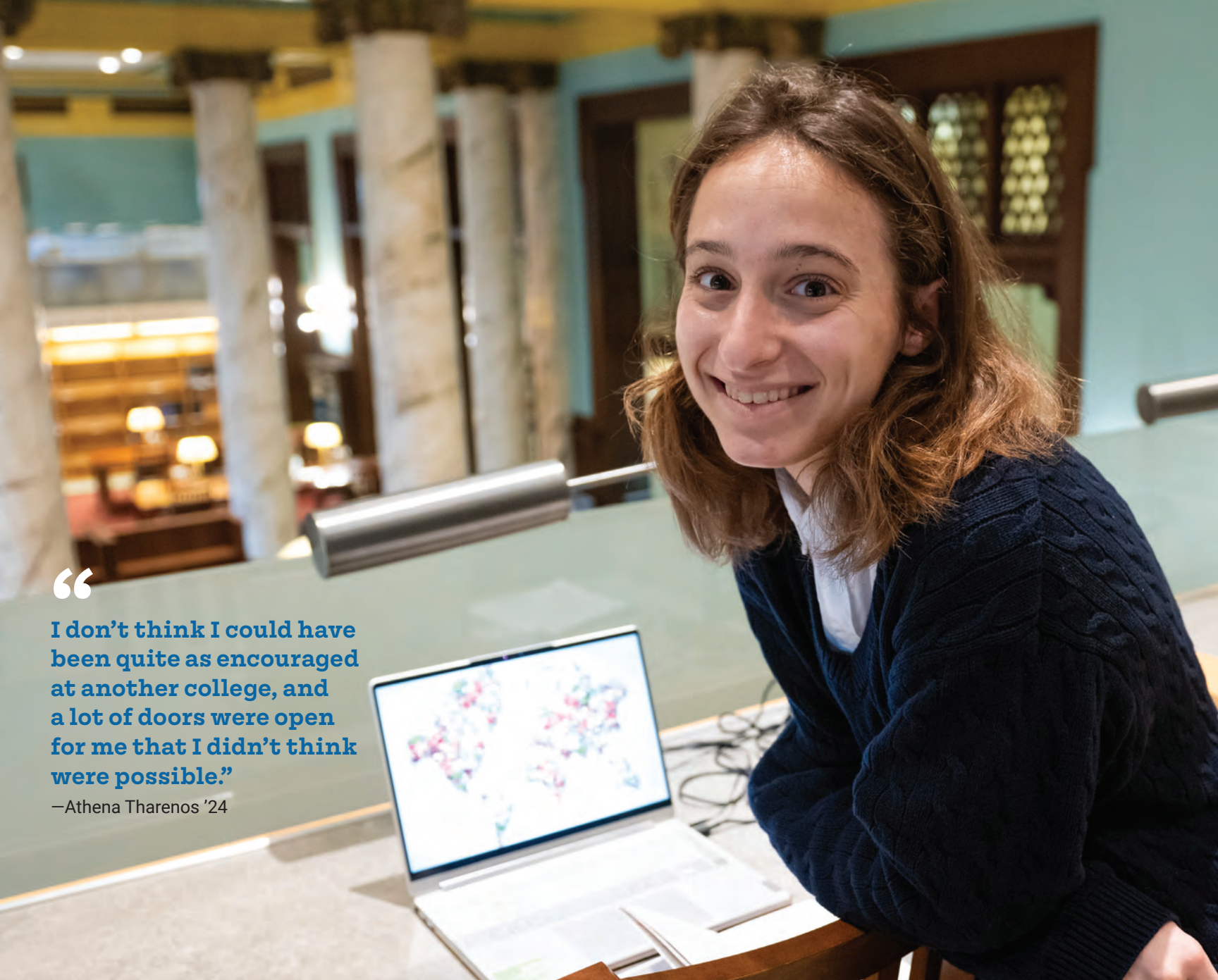
people about family history, childhood, and the memories about their family land. From conversations with a great aunt in broken Greek to chats with a market vendor selling cherries—every interaction informed Tharenos of life on Rhodes.

She discovered how multigenerational inheritance practices are creating value, and she recognized a contrast between Rhodian society’s emphasis



↑ Completing ethnographic interviews with families in Rhodes, Tharenos found homes like the half-abandoned building here where the family lives in the left unit but cannot afford to maintain the right one and cannot dream of selling it.

**TOP** Tharenos became interested in the effects of melting glaciers after seeing this Icelandic glacier and corresponding glacial lake while visiting the Arctic Circle through an environmental volunteering program with her high school.



“**I don’t think I could have been quite as encouraged at another college, and a lot of doors were open for me that I didn’t think were possible.”**

—Athena Tharenos ’24

on relational/community wealth being more emotional/somatic versus a traditional fiscal wealth. “There’s legitimate value that’s being placed above fiscal value, and it’s intriguing to see in a place as economically engaged as Rhodes,” said Tharenos, noting tourism is a big focus on the island. “They talk a lot about money in interviews, but when it comes to land, that’s always outside that sphere of money.”

The locals valued Tharenos’ attempts to speak and learn Greek, too. “I was able to do this research because I was considered a part of this community,” she said. “There’s a theme with I.S. that students

do projects about their home community, but I was able to discover a community I never knew I had.”

Heather Fitz Gibbon, professor of sociology & anthropology and chair of urban studies, mentored Tharenos and taught her *Ethnographic Methods* class a few years ago. She said, “Athena is self-directed, persistent, and highly motivated, and she has a keen eye for ethnography. She is able to go into unfamiliar places and find meaning in what for others would seem to be mundane situations.”

For her next adventure, Tharenos plans to attend the University of Oxford and work toward a

master’s of philosophy in development studies. “I don’t know where I’m going yet after Oxford, but I will make sure I can make a difference,” she said. ■

**“Athena is self-directed, persistent, and highly motivated, and she has a keen eye for ethnography.”**

—Heather Fitz Gibbon, professor of sociology & anthropology and chair of urban studies



“It’s important not to be too discouraged when things don’t go exactly the way you expect.”  
—Levi Gainer ’24



LEVI GAINER	I.S. title:	Mentor:
Computer science major	MicroMouse Maze Solving	Heather Guarnera, assistant professor of computer science

## Engineering Through Twists and Turns

Computer science major builds a robotic mouse for an algorithm maze

Computer science major Levi Gainer ’24 has big aspirations to work in robotics or with large language models (computer algorithms that recognize and generate language). For his senior Independent Study at The College of Wooster, Gainer took a micro approach at combining the two interests. He designed, built, and programmed a 9-inch MicroMouse robot to solve a maze.

Prior to Wooster, Gainer competed in national robotics challenges where he 3D-printed and raced drones. The rigor of college classes kept him from pursuing additional competitions—until senior year. “I knew I wanted to do something with robotics for my I.S. because I hadn’t gotten to compete in that arena since high school,” said Gainer.

He set his sights on the February 2024 Applied Power Electronics Conference (APEC) MicroMouse Contest hosted by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). It’s the largest MicroMouse competition in the U.S. and one of the top 3 international MicroMouse competitions in the world.

The competition features speed runs of the robotic mice to see which one can navigate through a 16-square-foot maze in the shortest time. Robots must move around to explore the maze automatically (without any guidance). They discover where the walls are using distance sensors and keep track of their movements and where various paths lead. By the end of five runs, each mouse uses the data it collected to solve the maze as efficiently as possible, and the robot with the fastest time wins. Simply put: engineering and algorithms are the name of the game.

“There are several interesting problems embedded into this competition that are at the heart of

computer science—automatic driving and finding the fastest path from point A to point B,” said Heather Guarnera, assistant professor of computer science, who served as Gainer’s I.S. mentor. While Gainer spent a lot of class time looking at code, this project gave him applicable experience integrating hardware components in a complicated way—getting them to communicate when they aren’t necessarily meant to, and finding ways to improve on competitors’ building techniques.

Gainer received Copeland Funding, a College fund dedicated to assisting seniors conducting their I.S. research, to buy approximately 70 parts to build the robot including sensors, a circuit board, motors, wheels, and more. “I had to build my robot conceptually before I even had the parts to begin,” said Gainer. “I researched every component in the first two weeks of school, so I could apply for funding, and the written portion of my study explains how I chose the hardware that ended up on the MicroMouse,” said Gainer.

He also received funding for materials needed to construct a maze and for travel to and from APEC. With Guarnera’s help, Gainer was granted access to a studio art room to store his self-designed, massive wooden maze, which fit by one inch on one side.

“There are several interesting problems embedded into this competition that are at the heart of computer science—automatic driving and finding the fastest path from point A to point B.”



—Heather Guarnera, assistant professor of computer science

“I didn’t know what resources were available to me and had never heard of Copeland Funding,” said Gainer. “Dr. Guarnera had lots of ideas on who to talk to and believed in my project whether or not I was confident about how it was going. She was incredibly helpful.”

Guarnera’s *Algorithm Analysis* class also gave Gainer a strong foundation for programming the robot. He researched and/or implemented multiple algorithms including breadth-first search, depth-first search, A\*, and flood fill. She applauded his software implementation as well as his hardware design, especially his plan to use a drone motor to create a vacuum effect that sucks the mouse down to the floor for greater traction and quicker turns.

Unfortunately, just weeks before the competition, Gainer ran into a complex circuitry issue that couldn’t be fixed within budget or time constraints. He wasn’t able to compete at APEC, but switched over to a simulation model to complete his study. “I turned the code I would have put on the MicroMouse into a computer program and basically ran a digital mouse through a digital maze,” said Gainer.

Despite the outcome, Guarnera was still incredibly impressed with what her mentee accomplished in the last year. “Levi has shown a tremendous amount of passion and dedication to his project,” she said. “His circuit design, software, and blueprint for the robot can still be used to fully construct a competitive MicroMouse for next year’s competition.”

Gainer learned from using maze algorithms that people like to find the shortest path, but they’re not always the fastest because they require extra turns. It’s a fitting parallel for his experience that’s taken longer than expected but will give him the unique build he envisioned. Finishing the mouse and competing will be his personal mission. He also wants future students to know it’s totally normal for projects to change in scope at any point. “No one really told me until after I had to change my scope, but I realized pretty much everyone ends up changing something,” said Gainer. “It’s important not to be too discouraged when things don’t go exactly the way you expect.”

<b>BRIANNA MOSLEY</b>	<b>I.S. title:</b>	<b>Mentors:</b>
Music major	What is Black Joy? A celebration of Black musicians' contributions to Black pride	Lauren Vanden Broeck, adjunct professor of music, voice Timothy Freeze, visiting assistant professor of music, trombone

## Reclamation and Rediscovery

### Vocalist draws from historical lows to hit musical highs in a soulful, self-designed recital

For vocal music majors, completing a senior recital as part of an Independent Study at The College of Wooster is the culmination of years of training and months of rehearsal for what is a truly special day. Bri Mosley’s performance was certainly in tune with these achievements, but it also jumped up an octave when it became a featured event on the College’s Black History Month celebration schedule and garnered the attendance of an Oscar-nominated songwriter. But perhaps the most meaningful achievements came from personal discoveries Mosley made about her own identity.

“I’ve struggled throughout my entire life to present myself openly and honestly, without caring what other people think,” Mosley admitted. “I live in a world that is pretty adverse and not always accepting of who I am—whether that be my race, my sexuality, or my identity as a woman. It was so important to me to perform music that allowed me to express this.”

She conceived a recital featuring five sets of songs that detailed varying aspects of Black joy. With a rich-textured and wide-ranging voice, Mosley delivered selections by historic Black musicians like Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, and Sam Cooke, among others. The result seamlessly spanned jazz, theater, R&B, and other genres to illustrate how Black joy is not without struggle and about reclaiming bodies, seeking change, retold stories, and one’s own story.

Having grown up in history classes focused most on slavery, Mosley realized she missed an education from so many Black voices that are important to understanding Black beauty and perseverance. “This project helped me learn about the significance of music in my own family, but it also taught me

how Black people have used music as a way to document the progression of the Civil Rights Movement, discuss misrepresentation in the media, and how they’ve reclaimed their own identities to project their own authenticity.”

While she wasn’t required to submit a paper, Mosley wanted to pay proper tribute to these performers and took a more self-designed approach, completing written research that explains each piece’s relevance and historical context. “You cannot sing what you do not know. I had to know much about all of these different artists and their repertoire, and specifically these songs, so that when I came out on the stage, I would feel like I was doing them justice,” Mosley said.

Between songs, Mosley drew from this research for a multimedia lecture of sorts that replaced typical recital program notes. She also provided a reflection of why each set of music and that aspect of Black joy is important to her. This allowed her to tap into aspects of production, performance, and music business that she enjoys. It also gave her the space to share personal experiences with her upbringing, racism, and more.

“When I arrived at college and was surrounded by a larger, more assertive community, I was reminded of the power of my memories and my right to feel anger,” said Mosley. “Performing this recital was not only an act of gratitude toward the students who helped lift me up, but to reveal to younger Black students how essential it is to rely on your community.”

She also relied on the collaborative musical community at Wooster to prepare her I.S. and perform with her. Lauren Vanden Broeck ’15, alumna and adjunct professor of music, mentored

Mosley from a performance aspect, while Timothy Freeze, visiting assistant professor of music, offered music ethnography knowledge to mentor her research efforts. Two accompanists performed in the recital with Mosley, too. Toni Shreve, staff collaborative pianist, played during Mosley’s Wooster audition at age 17 and has been with her for all four years at Wooster. “She’s very much one of the most important people who defined my experience here,” Mosley said fondly. Adjunct Instructor of Music and Jazz Combo Coach Greg Slawson also played an integral role providing accompaniment and recruiting student instrumentalists for the recital.

“The work of uncovering ancestral trauma, recovering one’s cultural inheritance, and discovering one’s place in the world is a monumental undertaking for one student to do essentially on her own. And I am so grateful that Bri wasn’t entirely on her own,” said Vanden Broeck. “This project was the definition of community.”

And that community extends far beyond campus. Mosley unknowingly chose to perform “Be Alive,” a song written by one of Vanden Broeck’s former Wooster classmates, Darius Scott Dixon ’13. “DIXSON” (as he’s known professionally) and Beyoncé Knowles-Carter received an Oscar nomination in the Best Original Song category for the music and lyrics to “Be Alive” from the motion picture *King Richard*.



↑ Oscar-nominated song writer and alumnus Darius Scott Dixon ’13 returned to campus to coach Mosley in performing “Be Alive,” the 2022 best original song nominee.



“**Performing this recital was not only an act of gratitude toward the students who helped lift me up, but to reveal to younger Black students how essential it is to rely on your community.”**

—Bri Mosley ’24

Vanden Broeck asked if DIXSON would like to offer any technical training for Mosley and her ensemble, and he enthusiastically arranged a virtual session to give a few notes the week before the performance. What’s more: He came to work one-on-one with Mosley at the dress rehearsal and attended her recital. “Having Darius with us to put the final touches on Bri’s repertoire was indispensable,” said Vanden Broeck, acknowledging his knowledge of gospel and R&B music idioms.

Mosley described working with DIXSON as one of the most meaningful interactions she could have had in that process. “It was a very surreal experience! He was so down to earth. He gave me really great things to think about, and they really did impact the performance,” she said.

After Wooster, Mosley plans to keep studying music performance, and she emphasizes the need for society to keep learning about musical traditions and history of Blackness in America

and the world. “It will disappear if we let it,” urged Mosley. “Many Black musicians have been erased thus far, and if we continue to let that happen we’re contributing to the erasure of a culture that has brought so much to the world we have today.”

Watch Bri Mosley’s Senior Recital on stage in Gault Recital Hall.

COREY KNAUF

Environmental geoscience major

I.S. title:

Testing Stickiness and Effectiveness of Baseball Rubbing Mud

Mentor:

Meagen Pollock, professor and chair of earth sciences

# The Perfect Pitch

## Environmental geoscience major combines two passions for senior research

Virginia native Corey Knauf '24 has played the game of baseball for nearly his entire life. Just like a pitcher comes set for each pitch he throws, this 6-foot-4-inch right-hander knew choosing to attend The College of Wooster would set him up well for a career. He sought out a school that highlights academics and offers a competitive baseball team. "Wooster fit that category perfectly," said Knauf.

When the time came to choose a senior Independent Study topic, he wondered if he could

repeat the magic he found in the college-selection process to feature both academics and athletics. "The classes I took in earth sciences really taught me that I could apply a research project to both baseball and geoscience," explained Knauf.

One of those classes was *Earth Materials*, taught by Meagen Pollock, professor and chair of earth sciences. "Dr. Pollock's class introduced me to rocks and soil properties and really sparked my interest," said Knauf. He pitched the idea of studying the stickiness and effectiveness of baseball rubbing mud. The department "immediately loved it," as did Pollock, who jumped on board as Knauf's I.S. mentor.

The Lena Blackburne Rubbing Mud is the standard mud used by all Major League Baseball teams and many National Collegiate Athletic Association teams (including the Fighting Scots). Since the 1930s, this "magic mud" has been used as a safety measure to improve the grip and dull the shine of



new baseballs before each game. Knauf wanted to know what made it special.

His research compares the Blackburne product to a common alternative, softball mud, and a mud made from random soil. Knauf collected the latter from a construction site during his summer 2023 internship with a geotechnical consulting firm in Virginia. The firm tests soil to ensure sites are sturdy enough before construction begins. While they had some of the data he needed, Knauf chose to bring the sample back to campus to run the tests himself.

At Wooster's Art Murray Field, Knauf and two teammates used the high-speed camera from their bullpen to capture velocity, spin rate, and movement of the balls after they were rubbed with the various mud samples. He also created a peel test to determine the stickiness of each mud. Additionally, Knauf observed minerals through X-ray diffraction in the XRD lab and evaluated the difference in physical properties of the various muds. Using a new PARIO particle-size analysis instrument that Wooster purchased in summer 2023, Knauf measured the percentage of clay, sand, and silt in each mud.

"I knew I could apply this work to baseball, but it was also exciting to learn how to use different instruments in the lab," said Knauf. Scovel Hall Lab Technician, Nick Wiesenberg, was a huge help to Knauf in learning how to use the PARIO tool. "We made a few mistakes but were able to learn from them, and we got it done," he added.

Knauf's software analysis determined that the Blackburne mud left more mud on the ball consistently (making it stickier). He found that the special mud contained 50% water and 7% organic

← Knauf and two teammates tested multiple baseballs after they were rubbed with the various mud samples using a high-speed camera from their bullpen to capture velocity, spin rate, and movement.

**FAR LEFT** Using a new PARIO particle-size analysis instrument, Knauf measured the percentage of clay, sand, and silt in each mud.

“The classes I took in earth sciences really taught me that I could apply a research project to both baseball and geoscience.”

—Corey Knauf '24



material compared to less than 2% in the other samples. "That was the tip-off that the Blackburne mud was really something different," said Knauf. "Clearly there's something to it being special." In fact, it's so special that the mud's location is a secret. Each winter, the owner harvests the mud from an undisclosed spot in New Jersey's Delaware River.

Like the mud's location, this research is also unique. Though many articles talk about the Blackburne company history, no one has thoroughly covered the stickiness aspect like Knauf. Because the MLB has recently cracked down on using foreign substances

to have the stickier feel, Knauf also considered possible substitutions for Blackburne mud. "I found a place in the San Francisco Bay with similar characteristics to the New Jersey river source," said Knauf. "They both have a semidiurnal tide, meaning the tide goes through the river twice daily. That's how you get the finely filtered mud."

Knauf was very satisfied in completing the project, adding that he'll never forget the feeling of turning it in. "All three graduating senior baseball players turned in their I.S. projects together with our coaches and the entire team there for support," said

Knauf. "That was a cool moment for us as a class. We've been through a lot starting college during the COVID pandemic, so it was really fun and rewarding to see their hard work pay off, too."

Knauf plans to pursue a career or related graduate degree in geotechnical consulting. Though he's left the Scots roster, he said he'll be sticking with baseball. "Whether it's giving lessons or playing in some rec leagues, I definitely want to stay close to the game." 🏈

“My I.S. opens the door for neuroscience to step into the arena and help with food desert solutions. Once we identify which brain areas are affected by high-fat foods and susceptible to change, then we can use this information to guide solutions development.”

—Tyara Thompson ’24



“Projects like this are challenging (and rewarding) because they involve negotiating with the interests of other laboratories and research lines. They allow our students to experience new lab environments, new lab skills, and help them practice communication between multiple advisors, which is the norm in the neuroscience research field.”

—Grit Herzmann, associate professor of psychology and chair of neuroscience



**TYARA THOMPSON**

Neuroscience major

**I.S. title:**

Neuroscience and Public Health: Exploring the neuroscience of motivation and consumption as a tool for developing food desert interventions

**Mentor:**

Grit Herzmann, associate professor of psychology and chair of neuroscience

## Access Meets Motivation

Neuroscience student digs into the impacts of food desert inhabitation on brain development and behavior

As a high school student with a couple psychology courses under her belt, Tyara Thompson ’24 had “fallen in love with the brain.” The Posse Scholar from Lithia Springs, Georgia, matched with The College of Wooster and found her calling on campus. As a first-year neuroscience major in the cognitive behavioral neuroscience track, she became fascinated with the concept of neuroplasticity, the brain’s ability to structurally and functionally change based on a person’s environment and/or experiences.

Then she unexpectedly lost her great aunt to a stroke.

While grieving the loss of a family member, she quickly realized she gained a meaningful research topic. She wanted answers for what caused her aunt’s stroke—and she was going to find them. Thompson recalled her aunt’s health problems related to smoking and COPD, but after looking back on childhood travels to see her aunt in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, something else stuck out: the food environment.

“I seldom remember having a cooked, balanced meal with fruits and vegetables,” recalled Thompson. “I can picture all the fast-food restaurants there because that’s what we ate, but I couldn’t recall a grocery store. I wondered how that ‘food desert’ environment could have affected my aunt’s propensity to stroke,” she added, considering a term she would define in her research.

Thompson worked to align internships and other opportunities that might help her find answers to this mystery on her heart. Thanks to a connection through a course assignment with Anna Damato ’16,

a then neuroscience Ph.D. student at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, she discovered BP-ENDURE—a Blueprint Program for Enhancing Neuroscience Diversity through Undergraduate Research Education. For two summers, Thompson spent 10 weeks completing cutting-edge research under Alexxai Kravitz, associate professor of neuroscience at Washington University. With permission, Thompson was able to use her findings for her senior Independent Study at Wooster.

Her goal was to draw a connection between the public health side of food desert interventions and the neuroscience side of consumption and motivation. She explained what food deserts are, who they predominantly affect, what foods exist, and what kinds of interventions have been put in place. “Food deserts are correlated with poverty. People can’t afford fresh foods, or they don’t have transportation to the stores that carry these foods,” said Thompson. “Yet, even with various interventions that remove the affordability and accessibility barriers, people still aren’t engaging. They notice the change in their landscape but are stuck in their habits. I wondered if living in this junk-food-laden environment changes the brain, and specifically how it changes reward, decision-making, and habit-forming functionality.”

The second half of her I.S. addresses finding a way to use neuroscience to develop effective solutions that change residents’ behaviors. Using optogenetics methods in the Kravitz Lab, Thompson performed brain surgery on mice to test their ventral pallidum (VP)—a brain area associated with reward and motivated behavior—during junk food consumption. In short, she asked: does inhibiting a key brain area reduce junk food consumption? She injected a

virus into the VP that allowed her to inhibit specific cells by shining a light. “When you shine the light that activates those VP cells, it induces immediate feeding,” explained Thompson. “I wanted to find out if we could lower feeding activity by shining a different kind of light that turns those cells off.” Some of the mice ate less, but it wasn’t significant.” Thompson highlighted that her study fits into the first step of using neuroscience as a tool in food-desert-solution development: identifying which brain areas matter most when considering food desert inhabitation.

Thompson’s I.S. mentor, Grit Herzmann, associate professor of psychology and chair of neuroscience, said, “Projects like this are challenging (and rewarding) because they involve negotiating with the interests of other laboratories and research lines. They allow our students to experience new lab environments, new lab skills, and help them practice communication between multiple advisors, which is the norm in the neuroscience research field.”

While at Wooster, Thompson also enhanced her communication and listening skills as starting setter on the volleyball team and as a resident assistant. “Being an RA taught me how to communicate with a wide range of personalities, to advocate for myself, to lead by example, and how to meet people where they are at.”

The work she’s done at Wooster and in the lab at Washington lays a foundation for how Thompson wants to approach her doctoral research and career. “My I.S. opens the door for neuroscience to step into the arena and help with food desert solutions. Once we identify which brain areas are affected by high-fat foods and susceptible to change, then we can use this information to guide solution development.”

Herzmann applauded Thompson’s inquisitive nature and perseverance, noting that I.S. is only one stepping stone in this journey. “I think that Ty’s greatest achievement is to be able to see a research trajectory in front of her and not assume that I.S. will provide all the answers already.”

## Sounding the Alarm on Disinformation

I.S. research inspires John Trainor '16 to advocate for information transparency

In a world filled with information, it becomes more important and harder to determine what is true. For John Trainor '16, a history alumnus from The College of Wooster, this lesson came from an unexpected place: a short Wikipedia article on a little-known historical event: the Norwegian rocket incident, a nuclear false alarm that took place in Russia in 1995. What began as a moment of curiosity turned into his senior Independent Study, and later, a years-long deep dive into the importance of accuracy in an increasingly information-driven world and the creation of a full documentary on the event called *Sound the Alarm*.

What intrigued Trainor about the Norwegian rocket incident was the lack of detail and background available. In 1995, a Norwegian and American scientific team launched a rocket to study the northern lights, but a miscommunication led the Russian military to fear an incoming nuclear attack. Trainor learned through his research that some claimed the event went all the way to Russian president Boris Yeltsin, who had only minutes to decide whether there was a real threat and if Russia should launch an attack against the United States. "I stumbled across it on Wikipedia the summer before my senior year, and the entry was quite vague. It was really just two sentences about how a science experiment led to some misunderstanding in Russia," he explained.

Mentored by Keith Rathbone, former visiting assistant professor of history at Wooster, Trainor took it upon himself to

explore the history of this little-known event by traveling to interview many figures who were directly involved. With Henry J. Copeland Funding, a College fund dedicated to assisting seniors conducting their I.S. research, Trainor traveled to Washington, D.C., to conduct video interviews with Steven Pifer, the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, and Peter Pry, a former nuclear weapons analyst with the Central Intelligence Agency, to begin his project. Trainor found that Pifer and Pry shared his interest in uncovering information about what happened and how it applies to similar situations. "Pry was especially adamant about these issues and false alerts, how a misunderstanding can escalate," said Trainor. "He was part of a House Armed Services Committee and actively working with Congress on these issues."

In many of his classes with Greg Shaya, Henry J. and Laura H. Copeland Professor of European History who also teaches global media & digital studies, Trainor learned how to analyze film through a historical lens and how films reflect the historical context in which they were created. He then applied those lessons to his own research. He decided that the best way to share this research would be to create a documentary film on the event because, as he learned in Shaya's classes, "Film can bring stories to life, reach an audience, and communicate in a different way than just writing a paper," he said.

After turning in a 30-minute film along with a more traditional paper for his I.S., Trainor's time at Wooster came to

a close with graduation, but his journey of studying the Norwegian rocket incident was not finished. Wanting new perspectives on the event and to get closer to the truth, he moved to Berlin, Germany, and spent the next six years researching and filming to expand his documentary. With funding from the Norwegian Film Institute, North Norwegian Film Center, and Fritt Ord (freedom of speech) Foundation, Trainor and his team continued the project in hopes of fully understanding and communicating what happened. Interviewing Norwegian scientists involved with the team that launched the rocket and retired Russian military officers on duty at the time of the incident, Trainor uncovered new viewpoints and information that helped not only with the creation of the film, but also the overall historical understanding of this little-known incident.

"In some ways, investigative work can be never-ending. There's always something more to learn, and this project was constantly evolving. I went into it feeling like I had a good understanding of what happened, only to meet with people in Russia and hear a completely different perspective."

Once Trainor finished the film, it was shown at several Norwegian film festivals where it received positive responses. "Norway is a country that has a lot of



**ABOVE** While working on the documentary, Trainor traveled to interview a variety of experts in international security and nuclear weapons, including Theodore Postol, professor emeritus at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



“  
In some ways, investigative work can be never-ending. There's always something more to learn, and this project was constantly evolving. I went into it feeling like I had a good understanding of what happened, only to meet with people in Russia and hear a completely different perspective.”

—John Trainor '16

activism, and there's a strong desire to get involved in politics," Trainor said. While he knows that the film will not solve problems of nuclear dangers and misinformation single-handedly, he hopes that it will play a part in larger discussions about these topics. "As long as there's some attention directed toward an issue, you can start to see some changes in policy around the world," he explained.

Trainor's passion for telling the story of the incident is not just academic curiosity but also based on the dangers that disinformation and misinformation can cause. "Once I got into this project, and started hearing from people who were so alarmed about everything that was happening, that drew me in to want to learn more and understand what the modern nuclear danger looks like, and try to get that message out, especially to people of my generation and younger, who grew up after the Cold War, and don't have the memory of that," Trainor explained.

By trying to understand an event where disinformation almost led to disaster, Trainor uncovered his enthusiasm for work dealing with principles of information literacy, trust, and transparency more broadly. After completing *Sound the Alarm*, Trainor moved away from filmmaking but continues working in areas where information transparency is vital. Running his own marketing consulting firm in New York City, he partners with technology companies on issues including digital trust and wants to continue working to promote the value of clear and open communication. "Anything dealing with content, information, or digital trust is really where my passions are," Trainor said. "By creating this film, I was able to explore these ideas one step further, not only talking about the problem, but also some solutions." ■

← Trainor returned to Wooster to share his documentary for the Great Decisions lecture series, highlighting experts in foreign policy and international affairs, and also met with students in a storytelling workshop.

# Prepared to Solve Challenging Problems

Self-designed major Jennifer Shephard '18 finds her niche in public health

A seventh-grade project to identify a disease and how it was spreading in the population sparked an interest in epidemiology and public health for Jennifer Shephard '18 before she knew what epidemiology was.

“Even as a seventh grader, I was intrigued with the complexity of the assignment, but at the time I didn’t know it was called ‘epidemiology,’” recalled The College of Wooster alumna and senior population health epidemiologist for the Richmond and Henrico Health Districts in Virginia. By the time she arrived at Wooster in 2014, Shephard knew the *First-Year Seminar: Pandemics in a Global Society* course was the right choice to fuel her interest in public health and the spread of diseases.

Shephard realized by the time she was a sophomore that she wanted to take advantage of Wooster’s program to develop a student-designed major. With the guidance of Stephanie Strand, associate professor of biology who was her advisor from orientation through graduation, and Drew Pasteur, professor of mathematics who also advised her from when she declared her major through graduation, Shephard chose public health: epidemiology. She combined courses that she thoroughly enjoyed—biology, math, social sciences, and sociology—to design her major with her advisors.

Throughout her college experience, Shephard took advantage of opportunities to learn skills important to working in public health. After her sophomore year, she studied demographic



“**They needed someone who knew how to create a database for all the COVID cases. How I was able to work and help in the pandemic was due to my education at Wooster.**”

—Jennifer Shephard '18



↑ After tuning in her I.S. senior year, Shephard celebrated per Wooster tradition with a Tootsie Roll and collecting the No. 10 button for turning in her project.

**LEFT** In her office at the Virginia Department of Health, where she works as senior population health epidemiologist, Shephard maintains pride for her alma mater with a Wooster pennant.

All photos provided by Jennifer Shephard.

health surveillance data, set up small, low-cost pharmacies, and led workshops about nutrition and the prevention of infectious diseases as a global justice volunteer for three months in Nicaragua. She continued international work in South Africa and Zambia for a few months after she graduated. As a member of the APEX assessment team for nearly three years, Shephard learned how to design and develop surveys. Guided by staff in the Center for Advising, Planning, and Experiential Learning, the assessment team was tasked with conducting evaluation surveys about the use of APEX and students’ summer activities and analyzing data for one-year and five-year post-graduation surveys. “I regularly use the skills of building, designing, and analyzing surveys today,” Shephard said.

Her Independent Study, “The Shot Heard Around the World: Determining the Influence and the Spread of the Anti-Vaccination Ideology on Measles Outbreaks Using Epidemiological Models,” provided a catalyst to research disease spread. Intrigued by measles outbreaks in Disneyland and Ohio that made headlines in 2014, Shephard examined how anti-vaccination ideology and people’s different belief systems may have contributed to the outbreaks.

She used mathematical models “to examine if vaccine hesitancy, leading to individuals not being vaccinated, interplayed with the spread of measles,” she said. Shephard also looked at how ideology, in addition to the disease, may spread within a population. Little did she know that the research she did for her I.S. was precursory training for the coronavirus pandemic.

After graduating from Wooster in 2018, Shephard first worked as a health educator for the Washington County Health Department in Maryland, focused on sexually transmitted infections and HIV prevention. “I had all this interesting data on STIs and HIV, so I would run data analyses to not only look at program evaluation but also how I could better determine at-risk individuals,” she said. In addition to her work as a health educator, the analysis fascinated her and proved valuable when the pandemic began in March 2020.

Shephard was furloughed for less than one week from her position with the health department and brought back the next week. “They needed

someone who knew how to create a database for all the COVID cases,” she said. “How I was able to work and help in the pandemic was due to my education at Wooster.”

Everyone was overwhelmed in the beginning of the pandemic, and there was little guidance about what questions to ask for contact tracing. When the department needed someone to step up their process, Shephard was ready. The critical thinking skills and modeling techniques she learned at Wooster through classes, experiential opportunities and her I.S. helped her think through the questions to ask and then start to see the patterns of COVID-19 cases. By the end of the pandemic, she was overseeing the entire contact tracing team and managing all the community, school, and business outbreaks.

“I was always quite shocked when my supervisors kept asking me to do more,” despite not having a master’s degree at the time, Shephard said. “They continued to affirm that I was on the right path and to keep going,” she said. Prior to accepting her current position at the Richmond and Henrico Health Districts, Shephard earned a master’s degree in demography and health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her interest in how diseases spread on the population level led to the focus in demography rather than the more traditional master’s in epidemiology.

She plans to pursue a doctoral degree in social epidemiology next, delving more into the societal characteristics that affect risk factors, patterns of disease, and health distribution. Shephard is more interested in studying the determinants of health, such as poverty, health behaviors, racism, and other structural factors that can impact someone’s health. “A lot of the work I’ve done has been a connecting factor, not looking at just the disease or health outcome, but more of the social and societal factors that are influencing the spread of diseases,” she said. “I enjoy the complexity of epidemiology and believe that looking at data in relation to human experience can reveal many patterns necessary to create sustainable solutions in order to solve the most challenging problems.”

# From Struggles to Strengths

Peter Jeffy '14 builds on his I.S. as he supports student success

Peter Jeffy '14 has been helping undergraduate students succeed since he was one himself. As a student mentor with The College of Wooster's Academic Registration and Creative Horizons (ARCH) program, Jeffy welcomed first-year students and helped them register for classes. As a member of the Black Students Association and the African Student Union, he helped build community among and advocate for Black and African students. As housing coordinator for the Men of Harambee, he helped revive the dormant fraternal organization designed to support Black and underrepresented male students on campus.

Jeffy's involvement with the Men of Harambee inspired his Independent Study, which focused on helping Black male students identify and build their strengths to enhance their success. As the project director of the McNair Scholars Program at Kent State University, Jeffy is building on his I.S. research and continuing to support student success. The program prepares first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students for doctoral study.

"My I.S. has been the driving force of my career," said Jeffy, who also serves on Wooster's Alumni Board. "Every step of the way, it has prepared me for the work I'm doing now in a very intentional way."

Jeffy's I.S. journey began during a summer internship with the University of Arkansas Division of Student Affairs following his junior year. Jeffy worked in the Office of Strengths-Based Initiatives, where he discovered the Clifton StrengthsFinder (now known as CliftonStrengths), an assessment that helps



Photo: Kent State University

“

**My I.S. means a lot to me. I felt like it was something that I was well suited to do, and it was a project that would prepare me well for the next step.”**

—Peter Jeffy '14



↑ Jeffy advises first-generation, undergraduate students at Kent State University, part of a passion for supporting underrepresented students that started at Wooster.  
*Photo: Kent State University*

**TOP** Serving on Wooster's Alumni Board, Jeffy took some time while on campus to visit with students at the Senior Research Symposium about their experiences.

individuals identify their innate talents. He was intrigued by the focus on the positive rather than the negative.

"I had looked at a lot of research around Black males and education, and much of it took a deficit model approach," Jeffy said. "These studies focused on how Black males are not graduating at the same rate, or they're not as prepared for college. There was so much information about how they're not doing well or why they're not doing well and not enough about what allowed these students to be successful."

Returning to Wooster after the internship, Jeffy noticed that some of the Men of Harambee members were struggling with their grades, their confidence, or both. He wondered if introducing them to CliftonStrengths could help them internalize and integrate their strengths into their daily lives and, in turn, strengthen the group as a whole. Jeffy took an anti-deficit approach as he worked closely with his advisor, Ahmet Atay, professor of communication studies, to develop an I.S. that explored how Black male students can apply their natural talents toward individual and organizational success, titled "Strengthening the Bonds Between Brothers: Implementing Clifton StrengthsFinder to the Men of Harambee."

Jeffy led his fellow members through a series of workshops using the CliftonStrengths assessment. He also met with each member one-on-one to discuss how they could leverage their strengths to meet their goals. He found that the workshops fostered effective organization communication and that members were engaged throughout the process, although the short duration of the study prevented him from analyzing any long-term effects.

"My I.S. means a lot to me. I felt like it was something that I was well suited to do, and it was a project that would prepare me well for the next step," Jeffy said. "I worked hard on it. I don't personally like Tootsie Rolls, but I grabbed mine with pride when I turned it in."

That next step turned out to be graduate school. Jeffy originally applied to the master's program in higher education administration and student affairs at Kent State University, but because of his I.S., his plans changed.

"I remember getting a call from someone at the institution who said, 'I saw your undergraduate research, and I know you're applying for this other program, but I think the cultural foundations program would suit you very well,'" Jeffy said. "This individual knew one of my mentors and saw my research and thought I would do really well in this philosophy-based education program. My I.S. directly led to that opportunity."

Jeffy earned his master's degree in cultural foundations of education at Kent State and is working toward his doctorate. He began working with the university's McNair Scholars Program as a graduate student and has served as project director since 2021. The curriculum-based program centers students' lived experiences as they engage in transformative research opportunities and navigate the graduate school application process.

"In many ways, my work is an offshoot of my I.S.," Jeffy said. "I allowed people to bring their voice into who they were as a student or student leader. Now I allow my scholars to bring their voice into their research and their graduate school applications. We encourage our students to let their identity come first and foremost and not be a barrier to anything."

Jeffy is grateful for his time at Wooster, where he lettered in football all four years and was part of the Wooster Dance Company. "I hold the school in high regard. It led to my dream job, and now I get to dream of new dreams for what I want for myself and my career," he said. "The fact that I sit on the Alumni Board is truly an honor, and I'm excited to continue to serve Wooster proudly." 🏳️‍🌈

# Direct Line Drive

## Kyle Cunningham-Rhoads '12 applies I.S.-inspired curiosity as sports analyst

Kyle Cunningham-Rhoads '12 grew up fascinated with all things baseball, including collecting baseball cards and absorbing the player statistics on the back. Little did he know that his love of baseball would set the course for his decision to major in mathematics and play on the Fighting Scots baseball team at The College of Wooster and for his career path as an AI data analyst at Stats Perform.

His college choice was easy. His grandparents, Fred '59 and Jo '58 Cunningham, met as students at Wooster, and because his mother taught anthropology at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, Cunningham-Rhoads was familiar with the educational value of a small, liberal arts college. His Wooster experience proved transformational, from his time on the baseball team, including pitching the team's second no-hitter in history, to his Independent Study that

became a direct line drive to his work in sports analytics.

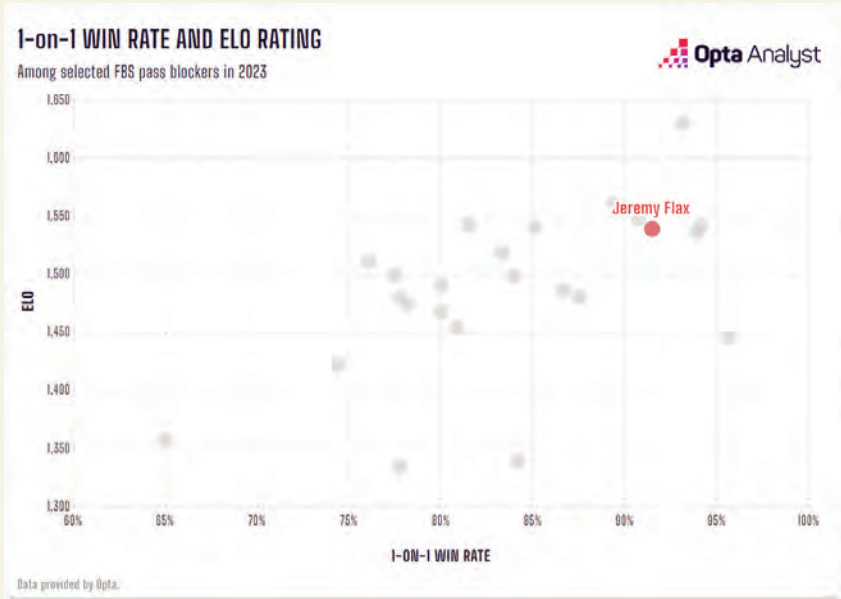
When it came time to plan his I.S., Cunningham-Rhoads decided he wanted to tackle a curiosity that occurred to him from watching football games. As a baseball fan, he wasn't exposed to football much until he got to college in Ohio. "Everybody was constantly obsessed with Ohio State football, so I started to watch games and wanted to know more about it," he said. As an outsider, he began to wonder about little aspects of the game that maybe others who were deeply indoctrinated into the sport didn't question. When field goal kickers were called "great" by sportscasters because they were successful on 95% of their kicks, the statistic didn't consider differences in variables, such as the distance of the kicks. "I heard broadcasters say, 'This guy is a really good player,' but there was no data or proof

other than 'Just trust us,'" Cunningham-Rhoads said.

His curiosity became his I.S. research question. Breaking down what distinguished one field goal kicker from another piqued his logical, math-centered brain. The goal was to create a metric or statistic to provide solid data to back up statements about who was the best field goal kicker. With the help of his I.S. mentor, Drew Pasteur, professor of mathematics, Cunningham-Rhoads determined the information needed to answer the question. He gathered data about all the National Football League field goal kicks over a three- to four-year span. He included weather data by matching stadiums with Weather Channel details, if the fields were grass or turf, and whether games were high pressure, at a home stadium, or in a small-sized stadium.

After collecting thousands of data points, he used mathematical modeling with artificial neural networks, designed to mimic how neural networks work in the brain. "Dr. Pasteur helped me critically evaluate the model's results, draw appropriate conclusions, and recognize extraneous variables that might not be measurable through the data," Cunningham-Rhoads said. "Having a dataset that truly encompasses everything that you need" is one of the most important lessons he said he continues to use in his work at Stats Perform.

New computer technology and software make collecting data today less time-consuming than it was for his I.S. and in the early days as a data collector at the company. However, today as an AI data analyst, Cunningham-Rhoads uses the same I.S. research process repeatedly. "I.S. gave me the keys to task myself with finding a question and then answering it, to be curious about whatever you're watching, whatever you're seeing, or any kind of data, and then create a plan for being able to actually answer that question," he said. The process includes collecting the data, taking the data, massaging it into a usable format, and



“  
**I.S. gave me the keys to task myself with finding a question and then answering it, to be curious about whatever you're watching, whatever you're seeing, or any kind of data, and then create a plan for being able to actually answer that question.”**  
—Kyle Cunningham-Rhoads '12

creating new metrics. He has helped create 75 football metrics, several baseball metrics, and an entire golf system. "My job is to have ideas about new things we can do with new data or questions that we can think about in different ways than what currently exists," he said, acknowledging his ability to explain those metrics came from his minor in education at Wooster. "Being able to take sometimes advanced concepts in math and make them more observable to a greater number of people is a really important skill."

Sports gambling and fantasy sports leagues have changed the industry in recent years. He called fantasy football "one of the biggest boons to the NFL" because of the way it drives more people to watch the sport. Sportsbook and fantasy league operators rely on people getting to their sites to place bets or engage in fantasy sports. Stats Perform provides fun factoids about the games that inspire people to visit their sites, Cunningham-Rhoads explained. As a so-called "fantasy football expert," he spends most of the football season pouring over data and creating player projections for the upcoming week of games. The editorial content is hosted on the company's Opta Analyst website. "A lot of our metrics are there and visible to the public," he said. The company also provides reports to pro teams and college teams with information like managerial projections and season simulations.

Cunningham-Rhoads credited the *History of Black America* class taught by Shannon King, former associate professor of history at Wooster, for opening his eyes and mind to think or see things differently. "You look at history through the lens of the present rather than trying to understand what the world context was in that moment," he said. Listening to the diversity of ideas in the class taught him to think about issues or questions from different directions. "I believe the true innovative thinking that I've been able to do at Stats Perform has been a direct line from the I.S. and classes like that," he said. ■

**OPPOSITE** Cunningham-Rhoads shared the graphic as an example of finding the right data set (1-on-1 win rate) and presenting it in a contextualized way (ELO, a rating system developed by a physics professor named Arpad Elo). The purpose of the chart is to show a player's ability to pass protect in football by using their raw collected data (x-axis) against their strength-of-competition-adjustment (ELO).

COLLEGE NEWS

## College community celebrates total solar eclipse

The College of Wooster community gathered on the quad on Monday, April 8, to experience the first total solar eclipse in Ohio in 218 years. Organized by Laura DeGroot, assistant professor of physics, and the Wooster Astronomy Club, students, faculty, staff, and community members had the opportunity to learn about the eclipse and to experience totality together. The viewing experience concluded three weeks of College events and lectures centering on the astrological marvel.

On March 28, DeGroot, several students of Meagen Pollock, professor and chair of earth sciences, and Elizabeth Schiltz, Purna, Rao, Raju Chair of Philosophy, led a lecture on the eclipse. The lecture focused on three aspects of the eclipse: an overview of eclipses and how to view them, a geological overview of the moon, and the classical history of eclipses. DeGroot emphasized the rarity of the astrological event the community would experience. “We are on the path of totality. The last time that occurred in Ohio was 1806,” DeGroot said. “The next eclipse in the continental U.S. won’t be until 2044 but Ohio won’t see another total solar eclipse until 2099.”

On April 8, crowds began to gather on the quad hours before the eclipse began. By 1:58 p.m., the beginning of the eclipse, the green was crowded with chairs and blankets holding campus community members, local families, and alumni from across the country.

Organizers made available eclipse viewing glasses, telescopes for a magnified view of the

sun and numerous sunspots, a station to create pinhole viewers to project the shadow of the moon, and several sunspotters which use mirrors to magnify the image of the sun onto a piece of paper.

The rarity of a total solar eclipse brought the community together, observed Lily Baker ’25 president of the Astronomy Club. “This is the only chance a lot of people are going to get to see a total eclipse,” Baker said. “It’s heartwarming seeing everybody here.”

Another student, Gianna Hayes ’26, enjoyed the eclipse along with classmates. “It’s really cool to see everyone coming together for this historic event,” Hayes said. “That’s a really important aspect of why we are here at Wooster: to foster a community where we can do this.”



↑ Wooster students, faculty, staff, and community members gathered on the academic quad to watch the total solar eclipse.

TOP Sunspots were visible through a filtered telescope which magnified the surface of the sun.



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Word from Wooster p. 27

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Visit [wooster.edu/eclipse](https://wooster.edu/eclipse) to see a video and more photos of how the Wooster community came together to celebrate this historic event.



## Wooster Briefs



A team comprised of five faculty members and two students from Wooster achieved an interdisciplinary breakthrough by replicating a gravitational astrophysical phenomenon in a Petri dish, with their findings featured in the January 2024 issue of *Frontiers in Physics*. Led by **Niklas Manz**, associate professor of physics, the collaborative effort demonstrated the recreation of gravitational lensing using reaction-diffusion waves, merging chemistry with general relativity principles.

**Gracelyn Jack ’25**, a music composition major, won the Cleveland Composers Guild’s Collegiate Composition Competition, an annual competition for young composers attending college in northeast Ohio. Jack’s piece, written for violin and piano, *Less than Ten Days*, was performed at the Cleveland Composers Guild chamber music concert in January. She also received a professional recording of her piece and a \$500 cash prize.



**Gracie Shreve ’24**, a theatre & dance and music double major, earned the top award for Costume Design Excellence at the Region II Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in January and will compete at the national festival in April. She received the award for costumes she created for *First to Rise, First to Fall*, a performance choreographed by Eleanor Boomhower ’25 in the 2023 Fall Dance Concert at the College.

Wooster honored the accomplishments of faculty and staff with a **Celebration of Scholars and Creators** hosted by the Libraries and the Dean for Faculty Development in Andrews and Gault Libraries in March. The event welcomed colleagues, retirees, and Wooster trustees to engage in the shared learning that is a hallmark of the Wooster community across a broad spectrum of mediums and topics from paintings and music to the role of social learning in farmers’ adaption of pesticide alternatives.

Under the direction of **Laura Sirot**, professor of biology, an interdisciplinary team of students and alumni have launched *I Came for Science*, a podcast exploring topics related to the science of sex and reproduction in accessible ways. Aiming to build appreciation and understanding of the science of sex and reproduction as well as trust



Gracie Shreve ’24



Gracelyn Jack ’25



↑ Christa Craven (left) and Makiba Foster (right) welcome attendees to the Celebration of Scholars and Creators.

← Sam Carmel ’25, Laura Sirot, professor of biology, and Isabel Espinosa ’23 used Wooster’s digital studio to record their new podcast: *I Came for Science*.

TOP LEFT Gracie Shreve ’24 worked with mentor Suwatana “Pla” Rockland, costume designer and costume shop supervisor for theatre & dance to design the award-winning costumes.

among identity groups historically marginalized in the sciences, the podcast was conceptualized as a collaboration between Sirot and biology alumna **Natalia Riusech '14**. Sirot and Riusech are joined by **Sam Carmel '25** and **Isabel Espinosa '23** who assist the team with research and production.

**Donald M. Goldberg**, professor of communication sciences and disorders at Wooster and a professional staff member at the Cleveland Clinic's Head & Neck



A Sophomore Research Program project by sociology major **Abigail Beard '23** provided the foundation for an article published in *Political Research Quarterly*. **Matthew Krain**, professor of political science; **Amanda Murdie**, professor of international affairs at University of Georgia; and Beard co-authored an article identifying mortality differences of human rights defenders in democracies versus autocracies, stemming from Krain's research on the targeting of journalists around the world.

Institute Hearing Implant Program, recently published the *Test of Auditory Functioning* (TAF). The assessment tool is designed to help teachers and auditory professionals evaluate the current level of auditory functioning of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. TAF, geared for children ages 2–13, includes 19 subtests, a 172-page tabletop easel with pictures that are whimsical and appealing to children, and a USB drive that has all the necessary audio files, downloadable score sheets, and an administrator's manual.

**Mitchell Ecklund '25**, a history and English double major and Africana studies minor, presented his junior Independent Study topic at the American Historical Association conference in January in San Francisco, California. He was selected to present “British Empire's Political and Economic Response to the Irish Potato Famine of 1845” as part of the prestigious conference's Undergraduate Lightning Round on Colonization, Empire, and Postcolonial Struggle.

**Joseph Coll**, assistant professor of political science, recently published a book providing insights into the historic 2020 election, held during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, offering best practices scholars and practitioners can turn to when similar challenges arise. Coll co-edited *Lessons Learned from the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election: Hindsight is 2020* along with Joseph Anthony, assistant professor of political science at State University of New York at Cortland.



↑ **Jenny Investment Club**, represented by Club President **RM Shahriar Hoque '25** (second from right) and fellow officers, **Rayan Dos Passos '25**, **Alan Musabeyezu '25**, and **Ben Van Horsen '25**, received fourth place and an honorable mention at the Student Managed Investment Fund Consortium in Chicago.

**TOP** Goldberg talked about his work on the *Test of Auditory Functioning* with fellow Wooster faculty and staff at the Celebration of Scholars and Creators on March 1.

**The Jenny Investment Club**, a student organization, earned its members fourth place in an international poster presentation competition at the Student Managed Investment Fund Consortium in Chicago. Investments of the Jenny Investment Club recently reached nearly \$13 million, ranking in the

top 20 college investment clubs in the nation. Each year, a percentage of the investment earnings are allocated for international student scholarships.



Read the full stories online at [wooster.edu/news](https://www.wooster.edu/news)

# Mentoring Matchup

**Abhishek Manhas '26**  
Sophomore research assistant, mathematics and computer science majors

**Désirée Weber**  
Associate professor and chair of political science

While Désirée Weber teaches in political theory, her research delves into philosophy and language. Choosing a sophomore research assistant to work with on the Ludwig Wittgenstein Project—a global effort to make the work of the recognized top philosopher of the 20th century available to readers for free in as many languages as possible—led her to connect with a student researcher she might not have interacted with otherwise. For Weber, who grew up speaking German, collaborating with Abhishek Manhas '26, who came to Wooster as an international student from India with native speaking expertise in Hindi, became a learning experience in language, translation, and its meaning in addition to inspiring conversations about Wittgenstein's studies of the same ideas. Manhas took an interest in the logical and mathematical nature of Wittgenstein's philosophies as he proofread Hindi translations of Wittgenstein's *On Certainty and Philosophical Investigations*. He worked with Weber to ensure the meaning of the work was captured accurately and with correct grammar. The pair teamed up with Michele Lavazza, director of the Ludwig Wittgenstein Project, to publish the proofed translations in

“If you get a chance to connect with somebody outside your field, it's a great opportunity to learn what the other side brings.”  
—Abhishek Manhas '26



various formats through the project's website, often relying on Manhas' experience with web coding to properly render the script in the Hindi alphabet correctly.

## What have you learned from working together?

**Manhas:** I learned to understand the intricacies of my own language, something that wasn't taught to me in school about Hindi. I get to do my own research about the language and put it on the table, and then compare it with the professor's language.

**Weber:** I've learned a ton, especially on the aspects of this project that I don't know as well, like HTML coding. We found where our different expertise intersects and how to communicate across those differences. That's led to interesting insights.

## Why is it important to develop mentor/mentee relationships?

**Manhas:** It's very important to me to get to learn stuff that I hadn't encountered before. If you get a chance to connect with somebody outside your field, it's a great opportunity to learn what the other side brings.

**Weber:** The kinds of conversations in a sophomore research assistant relationship or mentor relationship are much different than conversations that I have in class with students. When I teach these same texts in class, the conversations are structured with a different goal. My conversations with Abhishek and Michele are more open because we're learning about Hindi, verb tenses, or HTML coding of a font, for example. All three of us learned things we didn't know or encountered for the first time.

## What does it mean to you to be able to have this experience?

**Manhas:** It's rare for me to cross paths with somebody from a different field, and the fact that I get to do this and learn from her about a topic that we coincide on is something I really value.

**Weber:** It's really valuable that we're working on a project that reaches outside the College. We're making these philosophical works much more publicly accessible to a wider audience. One of the hopes I have is that Abhishek gets a sense of not just the interdisciplinary nature of this kind of work but also a collaboration that goes beyond what he can learn in a classroom.

COLLEGE NEWS

Douglass Hall renovations expand access and create energy efficiencies

The College began renovations in fall 2023 to Douglass Hall, a residence hall built on Wayne Avenue in 1929, to make the building accessible, add more living and programmatic spaces, and address structural and maintenance needs, while preserving the building’s historic features.

“Ensuring our students’ homes reflect Wooster’s welcoming and inclusive community is a point of pride for our entire administration,” said President Anne McCall. “I look forward to seeing our students gather and learn in an accessible space that demonstrates our commitment to residential excellence and honors its heritage.”

Dedicated in fall 1929 in memory of Elisha P. Douglass (Class of 1877), who sadly did not live to see it built, the renovated Douglass Hall will continue his vision of a community space where students live and learn together. According to

Notestein’s *Wooster of the Middle West*, at the building’s dedication, Douglass’ son Earl (Class of 1936) spoke of his father’s love of his alma mater and belief in education, as well as his own joy that the happiness students share in the hall makes a lasting tribute to his father.

Along with refreshing programmatic spaces like the Black Student Association lounge and formal lounge with intricate woodworking preserved from construction, modern features will ensure the building remains a welcoming home for years to come. An accessible entrance on the north side of the building and new elevator, placed on the exterior to preserve the historic beauty inside, will provide access to all levels. On the top floor, suite-style living spaces will increase the capacity of the building to 129 students, up from 109. Recommended by McCall, new music practice rooms give students an opportunity to make music within the building. A first in residential

spaces on campus, these soundproof rooms also offer a low-sensory space for students to block out noises and distractions.

Students shared thoughts about residence hall improvements through open sessions and surveys, and Scot Council representatives joined regular construction meetings. “Addressing infrastructural needs in the building, including adding air conditioning, the use of friendlier materials, and new windows will improve the overall energy usage of the building by 30%,” said Beau Mastrine, director of facilities management and planning.

Scheduled to open in August 2025, Douglass Hall is the most recent in a series of updates made to residence halls including Andrews, Brush, Stevenson, Armington, Gault Schoolhouse, and others. Moving forward, infrastructural enhancements to improve and strengthen the residential experience, belonging, and sustainability on campus, will include insights from a comprehensive study of maintenance needs for all College buildings to be completed this year.

→ Dormer windows added to the fourth floor add more light to new student rooms.

↓ The accessible entrance and elevator on the north side of the building will run from the lower-level basement up to the fourth floor.



Word from Wooster



“I started by excavating defined areas, using pick, finer tools, photo documentation, and learned how to register artifacts and document a site. After the leader learned of my interest in being a conservator, I worked with onsite conservators to stabilize and clean the mosaics.”

—Fritz Clingroth ’24 took pride in representing Wooster when he was pictured in the April edition of *National Geographic* in an article about his work in the ancient Jewish village of Huqoq, Israel, with Jodi Magness, professor of early Judaism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



“I am passionate about using mathematics and statistics to solve real-world problems, especially in the areas of health and education.”

—Jillian Morrison, assistant professor of statistical and data sciences at Wooster, was featured in the “Meet a Member” column of the February/March 2024 issue of *MAA Focus*, a publication of the Mathematical Association of America. Morrison discussed her passions in her work, including her recently published research on how social groups influence science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors’ persistence in completing their degree.

**Bria Price, MPP** (She/He... [Connect](#))  
Elevating Student Experience | Driving Retention & Success...  
1w • Edited • 0

Had a fantastic time representing the College of Wooster at the "Colleges That Change Lives" fair this week in Atlanta!

It was inspiring to connect with so many bright, curious high school students and share what makes Wooster such a special place.

A big shout-out to **Brian Luck** from the admissions team for being a great table partner!

[#CollegeofWooster](#) [#CollegesThatChangeLives](#)  
[#CollegeSuccessLife](#)  
[#ConnectingWithFutureScots](#)  
[#NoTootsieRollLeftBehind](#)

Kailey Schwallie and 62 others 1 repost

**Bria Price '14**, shared her experience volunteering with Wooster’s Office of Admissions on LinkedIn. Her partnership, along with other alumni volunteers who also attend college fairs, interview and write to prospective students, and more, helps to inspire future Scots.

Email [alumni@wooster.edu](mailto:alumni@wooster.edu) for details on ways to be involved.



King Jeju '27  
Photo by Kevin Smith

ATHLETICS

Wooster celebrated its 15th NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship recipient since 2018. Football’s **Lake Barrett '23** was chosen for the one-time, non-renewable \$10,000 award. Thirteen of Wooster’s 23 varsity sports are represented by the 15 selections since 2018.

**Ainsley Wiesner '24** (below) debuted at the NCAA Div. III Indoor Track and Field Championships with a fifth-place weight throw of 60 feet, 9.25 inches to earn All-America First Team honors. Wiesner’s All-America finish capped a banner season for the senior, who was the North Coast Athletic Conference (56 feet, 7.25 inches) and All-Ohio (55 feet, 11.75 inches) champion. Wiesner upped her school record in the event five times this winter.

In basketball, **Nick Everett '25** was the NCAC Player of the Year and **Jamir Billings '25** earned the NCAC Top Defensive Player honor for the second time. Billings became Wooster’s all-time leader in assists during the program’s 35th consecutive 18-win season.

**Ollie Bream '25** qualified for the NCAA Div. III Swimming and Diving Championships for the second time. The junior’s 21st-place finish in the 200 butterfly (2:04.83) marked her best finish in six national championship swims. Elsewhere,



Ollie Bream '25  
Photo by Dani Johnson, NCAC

Bream’s 2:07.06 ranked 33rd in the 200 individual medley. Her 46th-place time of 57.19 in the 100 butterfly was a new collegiate best.

Wiesner was joined at the Div. III Championships by **Dylan Garretson '24** and **King Jeju '27** (left). Garretson earned All-America honors for the second time with a 10th-place finish in the pole vault at 16 feet. Earlier in the season, Garretson won the NCAC pole vault for the sixth time. Jeju, who exploded onto the scene as the NCAC Field Athlete and Newcomer of the Year, placed 14th in the long jump at 22 feet, 6.25 inches. Jeju set school records in the 60-meter dash, 200 meters, long jump, and triple jump during his debut season.



# Congratulations to retirees!

The College extends congratulations and best wishes to members of the College community who are retiring in the 2023-2024 year, including **Tabitha Conwell**, director, application development, information technology; **Lisa Campanell Komara**, head women's golf coach; **Joan Friedman**, Lincoln Professor of Religion and professor of history; **Ronald Hustwit**, Frank Halliday Ferris Professor of Philosophy; **Bill Morgan**, Theron L. Peterson and Dorothy R. Peterson Professor of Biology; **Cynthia “Rikki” Palmer**, associate professor of Spanish; **Barbara Polen**, administrative assistant, campus safety; **Thomas Prendergast**, professor of English; **Mark Wilson**, Lewis M. and Marian Senter Nixon Professor of Natural Sciences; and **Sheila Wilson**, associate vice president for auxiliary operations.



← **Conwell** joined the applications development department in 1996, working in IT for 27 years. Managing administrative software tracking student contact information and other data, Cornwell worked with colleagues to ensure key systems ran effectively and efficiently. “She was vital in the implementation of the Colleague student information system and oversaw the integration of many other software packages,” members of her team shared. “Tabby was able to balance constructive guidance with encouragement, creating an environment where her team could thrive. She was quick to give credit where due, celebrating the achievements of others.”

**“Her empathy, understanding, and humor made her a friend rather than merely a supervisor.”**  
—IT TEAM MEMBERS



Serving as a coach at Wooster for 27 years, ← **Companell Komara** coached women's basketball from 1997-2010 before starting the women's golf varsity program at the College. In its first year of existence Wooster scored a third-place finish in the North Coast Athletic Conference Championship Series. During her 14 seasons as women's golf coach, Scots earned 23 all-conference certificates, won 18 tournaments, and posted a 529-378-9 record in head-to-head competition, including a 155-60-5 record over the last three years.

**“Her relentless positivity has been a ray of sunshine in our department, and I count it an honor to have worked so closely with her. Not many get lucky enough to have a trusted sounding board like Coach LCK in their lives”**  
—RICH DANCH, HEAD MEN'S GOLF COACH



← **Friedman's** research focused on American Judaism, Jewish law, and American Jewish pop culture. Serving Wooster for 20 years, she brought Jewish religious and cultural events to the community as College rabbi. In her role with the Central Conference of American Rabbis, she is the primary author of decisions in Jewish law that guide Reform Judaism in North America. “Joan's classes on *The Holocaust*; *Zionism: Dreams and Realities*; *Jews, Judaism, and Jew Haters*; and course TREK on *Israel/Palestine: Histories in Conflict* have been critical to the current moment, and life-changing for students,” said Sarah Mirza, associate professor and chair of religious studies.

**“The empathy and ceaseless hope exhibited in Joan's work, teaching, and mentorship will be sorely missed by her friends and colleagues.”**  
—SARAH MIRZA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES



One of the longest-serving faculty members at the College, ← **Hustwit** joined the faculty in 1967. His teaching often combined studies of language with philosophy, including philosophers use of language to express theories. His value of a liberal arts education and relationships with students kept him at Wooster through years of changes, an experience he said he wouldn't trade for anything. “Ron addresses everyone he meets with kindness, patience, respect, and compassion,” said Elizabeth Schiltz, Purna, Rao, Raju Chair of Philosophy.

**“He has a remarkable ability to bring out the best in his students, and he stands as both a model and mentor for his colleagues.”**  
—ELIZABETH SCHILTZ, PURNA, RAO, RAJU CHAIR OF PHILOSOPHY



Joining the faculty in 1991, ← **Morgan** taught in biology, genetics, biostatistics, and bioinformatics. His research with students investigated how plant pathogens infect host plants at the molecular level. He helped found the biochemistry and molecular biology major, develop curriculum for BCMB and biology, and served as chair of the departments. His evolutionary teaching approach led him to become a founding member of the Network for Integrating Bioinformatics into Life Sciences Education, making national contributions to the teaching of bioinformatics.

**“Bill's humility and tremendous sense of humor helped welcome new faculty and brought a positive spirit to the faculty in BCMB and Biology.”**  
—DEAN FRAGA, DANFORTH PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY



← **Palmer**, who joined the faculty in 2000, has published work on Latin American literature and taught courses in U.S. Latino literature and culture. She brought Spanish language and culture to campus as the faculty liaison for La Casa Hispánica, the Spanish language immersion suite in Luce Hall and helped plan events centered around Latin American culture. “She had a wonderful rapport with students, completely invested in their success. Rikki formed deep and lasting friendships with her colleagues and will be remembered fondly for her dry wit, curricular expertise, leadership, and generosity of spirit,” said Brian Cope, associate professor and chair of Spanish.

**“Rikki brought abundant energy and goodwill to every aspect of her work.”**  
—BRIAN COPE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF SPANISH



← **Polen** began as a dispatcher for the Campus Safety and Security Department in 1996 and ultimately served as administrative assistant for Campus Safety until her retirement. She provided outreach to the campus community related to parking, safety training, and fingerprinting. Celebrating staff members' birthdays, she created a family like atmosphere within the office. “Barb was a beloved member of the staff and helped the department as it worked to increase a positive image with the campus community,” said Joe Kirk, assistant dean of students, who worked with her in Campus Safety for many years.

**“Her commitment and passion for our team is truly missed.”**  
—JOE KIRK, ASSISTANT DEAN OF STUDENTS



Specializing in Old and Middle English literature and theories of medievalism, ← **Prendergast** taught various topics from political theater to the occult. Joining the English department in 1996, he served as the chair for both the English and comparative literature departments before his retirement. “Tom's literary mind spans centuries. Who else in the department could teach a course on the King Arthur legends from various centuries one semester, Film Noir the next, and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales right after that?” said Daniel Bourne, professor emeritus of English.

**“I'm going to miss our chats in the hall, be it on baseball or Camelot (and how they are connected).”**  
—DANIEL BOURNE, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF ENGLISH



← **Mark Wilson '78** joined the faculty in 1981. An expert in Bryozoans and other organisms, his research spans the globe and 600 million years. He authored nearly 200 scientific studies advancing the understanding of evolution. His course *The History of Life* covered the origin of the universe through today, and he's known for his collections of fossils, rocks, and dinosaurs. He received the Undergraduate Mentoring Award from the National Association of Geoscience Teachers. “Mark is a world-class educator, researcher, and mentor, and we are so lucky that he chose Wooster as his home,” said Meagen Pollock, professor and chair of earth sciences.

**“Mark is the heart of Wooster Geology.”**  
—MEAGEN POLLOCK, PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF EARTH SCIENCES



← **Sheila Wilson** served Wooster for 32 years as assistant to the dean of faculty, secretary of the College, and most recently associate vice president for auxiliary operations. Wilson's contributions ranged from coordinating events including the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Independent Study to moving from paper to electronic purchase requisitions and purchase orders. “Faculty members and staff often called Sheila beginning the conversation, ‘I know you don't do this, but you know who I should contact,’ because she could answer pretty much any question,” said Jim Prince, former vice president for finance and business.

**“We will miss Sheila's humor, her kind words for everyone, her warm personality, and her impeccable professionalism.”**  
—JIM PRINCE, FORMER VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND BUSINESS

## Commencement showcases resilience and strength of Class of 2024

After ending their high school with drive-by, socially distanced, and virtual graduation ceremonies, The College of Wooster Class of 2024 began their undergraduate education learning to navigate the hybrid classes and health regulations both in the classroom and in a world changed by the coronavirus pandemic. For them, the ceremony on Saturday, May 11, 2024, represented a first and the Scot Center filled with families excited to celebrate their moment with them.

Joining the celebration to offer the commencement address, Lamont Paris '96, head men's basketball coach at the University of South Carolina, encouraged the class who had been through so much together to recognize the preparation they received at the College to respond to failure "when (not if) it happens."

Senior speakers, Sukriti Chiripal '24 and Tyler Hilbert '24 carried the same theme in their own speeches to their classmates with Chiripal recounting her memories of finding community at Wooster and Hilbert speaking of the inspiration he draws from the positivity of his mother, a cancer survivor.

Welcoming the Class of 2024 to the Alumni Association, Sandeep Bhatia '89, past president of the alumni board, said, "As I look out at all of you, I see the newest members of a vibrant community that is more than 26,000 people strong around the globe." He also reminded them "that the opportunities to build Wooster memories don't end today" and encouraged them to stay in touch with professors and classmates, make new connections with fellow Scots in their next communities, return to Wooster



for Homecoming and reunion celebrations, volunteer, sponsor Wooster interns, and help the "next generation of Wooster students succeed just as other Scots helped you."

As the ceremony drew to a close, President Anne McCall, thanked the crowd of fans for the Class of 2024 and the many people on stage and off who made the day's celebration beautiful, as well as the newest alumni of Wooster. "I want to thank you, our former students, our graduates; thank you for having chosen to come to Wooster; thank you for having stuck with us through thick and thin," she said. "Thank you for crossing the finish line today. We are a richer community, a richer campus for your having been here."



Visit [wooster.edu/commencement](https://www.wooster.edu/commencement) for more photos and videos of the weekend's events.



↑ Sandeep Bhatia '89 welcomed Wooster's newest alumni.

→ President McCall presented Paris with an engraved clock, thanking him for his return to campus after so much time to help honor the Class of 2024.

↓ New music grad Brianna Mosley '24 (featured on page 8) preformed her rendition of "Never Enough," a song from the movie *The Greatest Showman*. She reflected on how the lyrics represent her class's elation for their moment of celebration together.

*"Rely on failure. More specifically, rely on the growth that comes with responding to failure properly. Your failures are temporary, your growth is permanent. As a College of Wooster graduate, you are prepared for obstacles, for curve balls, and for the unknown. You are prepared for failures, but most importantly, you are prepared for success!"*

—Lamont Paris '96, head men's basketball coach at the University of South Carolina



**Senior speakers** talked about how they found strength during their four years at the College.

"We found ourselves creating memories that I hope will last a lifetime. Whether it was celebrating I.S. Monday (and gorging over quesadillas during 4th meal), going on trips with friends and teammates ... or most importantly finding a community that we know will always be rooting for us."

—Sukriti Chiripal '24, psychology and economics majors from Kolkata, India

"Being different is treating each day as an opportunity, despite struggle. And being different is treating your life as a story with limitless potential, despite the restrictions the world will put on you."

—Tyler Hilbert '24, a business economics major from Plain City, Ohio



## FULFILLING PROMISES

## Reimer Endowed Scholarship encourages students interested in economics or business economics

**A**s former vice chair of the Federal Reserve and current senior fellow in the economic studies program at the Brookings Institution, Don Kohn '64 is an internationally renowned expert in monetary policy, financial regulation, and macroeconomics. But as a first-year student at The College of Wooster in 1960, Kohn had no idea what he wanted to study, much less what the future held for him.

"I sampled the social sciences. I sampled history," said Kohn, an emeritus life trustee of the College. "I took an economics course in my sophomore year, and I fell in love with the subject."

Kohn was particularly influenced by Richard Reimer, professor emeritus of economics. "Professor Reimer was really important to me personally and especially professionally," Kohn said. "I had him for several intermediate-level courses, and he was my Independent Study advisor. He was critical in putting me on the road to graduate school and in building my interest in economics. After I finished graduate school and began working in the Federal Reserve System, he brought me back to campus every couple of years to talk to his students."

In honor of his friend and mentor, Kohn and his wife, Gail, established the Reimer Endowed Scholarship in 2014. Kohn designated the scholarship to encourage students interested in majoring in economics or business economics. "I wanted to give people a little nudge toward the discipline that I have embraced and loved for so long," Kohn said.



← Sheldon Essel '26

Sophomore Sheldon Essel '26 has received the Reimer Endowed Scholarship the last two years. Like Kohn, Essel arrived on the Wooster campus without a clear plan. The Ghana native initially hoped to follow the pre-architecture track, but after taking an economics class, he realized that was a subject in which he could excel. He eventually decided to major in business economics because it adds another dimension to his studies and builds his knowledge of how firms operate.

The scholarship has provided Essel with both financial assistance and a source of inspiration. "It's a testament to how hard I've worked, and it's pushing me to work even harder," he said. "It also has inspired me to get more involved with the College and the community."

That involvement includes serving as the vice president of the African Student Union and as a trustee of the Jenny Investment Club, a student organization that manages an investment portfolio that supports student scholarships and that Kohn was also involved in when he was a student. Essel also has a part-time job at Wooster Community Hospital, where he's gaining valuable professional and interpersonal skills as a pharmacy assistant.

For Kohn, helping students like Essel succeed is his way of thanking Wooster for providing him with a world-class, liberal arts education. He especially appreciated the opportunity to work one-on-one with Reimer during his I.S., which examined how flexible exchange rates can lead to more stable markets. "We had great conversations," Kohn said. "I am grateful to

him, not only for that, but also for keeping me attached to The College of Wooster over the years. I was very happy to be able to name the scholarship for him and have him in the audience when it was announced. That was a thrilling moment."



↑ Making the gift in honor of his reunion in 2014, Kohn shakes the hand of Richard Reimer, professor emeritus of economics, for whom the scholarship was named.

**TOP** Kohn often returned to campus to talk with economics students about his work with the Federal Reserve.

# Tartan Ties



1

## Recent Events

In a series of **Wooster on the Move** events this spring, alumni, families, and friends of the College heard from President Anne McCall about her vision to frame Wooster's future. Guests also had the opportunity to meet and enjoy the company of their fellow Scots in non-traditional venues hosted by local alumni from the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, to the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington, D.C., the World of Coca-Cola headquarters in Atlanta, and the judicial chambers of Judge Solomon Oliver Jr. '69 in Cleveland. Check out the full list on page 38 of Wooster on the Move events coming up this summer and fall for an opportunity in your area! Visit [wooster.edu/alumni](http://wooster.edu/alumni) to learn more and register.



Find out more about upcoming events in the series at [wooster.edu/alumni](http://wooster.edu/alumni).



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**1** Judge Solomon Oliver Jr. '69 hosted Wooster on the Move in Cleveland in his judicial chambers.

**2** President McCall addresses guests at the Wooster on the Move event alongside Judge Oliver.

**3** Trustee Emeritus Jim McClung '59 hosted the event series in Chicago at Wrigley Field, complete with a private tour.  
*Photo: Liz Farina Markel '02*

**4** Alumni and attendees take in the view from the press box at Wrigley. *Photo: Liz Farina Markel '02*

# Alumni Achievements

## '50s

**Eleanor (Keep) Harle '56** wrote, “Last summer, at age 88, I built a labyrinth out of 18-pound stones in my backyard. It was built in response to my total healing from bladder cancer and COVID-19. I also received a Master of Arts in Christian Leadership from Dubuque Seminary in 2022 and now function as a lay pastor in the Presbytery of South Dakota.”

## '60s

**Nurene Armajani '64** wrote, “I’m retired at last! I’ve been living in Deventer, a beautiful old city in the east of the Netherlands since 1984. I have spent time doing a lot of gardening, teaching a small weekly painting and drawing class, cleaning out my art materials, singing in two choirs, and visiting with my son, his wife, and two kids.”

**Lin Davis '66** wrote, “My poem, ‘Pantoum for Pulse Orlando,’ was featured in the 2023 *Tidal Echoes* journal, as well as my piece about working at Chicago’s Beacon Neighborhood House with a team of Wooster students and Ray Day, professor of sociology, when I was a student.”

*Alumni updates and photos of weddings or encounters included in this issue were submitted online by March 31, 2024, and edited for clarity, style, and length. Digital images of high resolution (files sized at least 1-3 MB) work best. Images that do not meet the quality standards necessary for printing cannot be included.*

## '80s

**LuAnn (McClernan) Duffus '81** wrote, “My husband Keith and I moved in 2021 to the Florida panhandle near Destin so that I could take a model-based systems engineering position with the U.S. Air Force. I love the job, the people, and the mission. We travel frequently back to Ohio and try to catch up with Wooster friends when we do.”

## '90s

**Sarah McCulloch '97**, folk singer-songwriter and country musician, released her third full-length album titled *Driving Me Home*. Her music has been recognized by the State of Florida's Division of Arts and Culture for her significant contribution to country music and was added to the state's Folklife Program's online encyclopedia of Florida music.

## '10s

**Chase Fuller '19**, a physics alumnus, became the lead author on a paper published in January centered around research he conducted as a student mentor during the summer of 2019. “Light-Sensitive Diffusion Diodes for Reaction-Diffusion Waves” was published in the *International Journal of Unconventional Computing* and co-written with physics and computer science alumnus **Daniel Cohen-Cobos '23**, Niklas Manz, associate professor of physics, and John Lindner, professor emeritus of physics.



## Weddings

- 1 Nicholas Neary '11** married **Emily (Williams) Neary '13** in Cancun, Mexico.
- 2 Bailey Bowers '17** and **Jordan Shusterman '17** were married on Aug. 13, 2023, at Jorgensen Farms in Westerville, Ohio. Pictured are **Claire Trescher '16**, **Stephen Schreiber '17**, **Jason Rhee '17**, **Michael Whitaker '17**, **Jackson Groat '17**, **Bailey Bowers '17**, **Jamie Lackner '17**, **Jordan Shusterman '17**, **Skylar Ruprecht '17**, **Cat Fiorito '20**, **Conor Maley '17**, **Bailey (Williams) Pituch '17**, **Emily Hatcher '17**, and **Sarah McGrath '17**. **Jack O'Neill '17** was also in attendance. The wedding was photographed by **Jessica Love '04**.



Read and share more class notes online at [wooster.edu/classnotes](https://wooster.edu/classnotes).

## ALUMNI PROFILE

# Douglas Buchanan '06 makes music to share meaning

Composer Douglas Buchanan '06 won the 2024-2025 Dominick Argento Chamber Opera Competition along with librettist Caitlin Vincent for their work *Bessie and Ma*. The award is just one of many accolades Buchanan has received since graduating with his bachelor of music in piano performance from The College of Wooster.

“I credit so much of my musicianship to what I learned at Wooster,” Buchanan said. “The Wooster Music Department was the perfect place for me. It met me where I was and then prepared me to enter into the broader musical world. The tools and skills that I learned during my undergraduate studies were vital to completing this opera.”

*Bessie and Ma* is based on the lives of Elizabeth “Bessie” Coleman, the first female African American aviator, and Miriam “Ma” Ferguson, the first female governor of Texas. It was one of three finalists for the competition, which is awarded by the National Opera Association and supports the composition of chamber-scale operas designed for production in college, university, and conservatory opera programs. An excerpt of the work was performed at the NOA 2024 National Conference along with excerpts from the other two finalists. As the winning



**“I credit so much of my musicianship to what I learned at Wooster.”**  
—DOUGLAS BUCHANAN '06

opera, *Bessie and Ma* will be produced in its entirety at the NOA 2025 National Conference in Savannah, Georgia.

“When they announced we had won, the cast was elated because they had really come to love it,” Buchanan said. “The performers told us they were grateful to have good music to sing within an important story to tell. That was really meaningful to me. I don’t want to make music for the sake of putting more sound in the air. I want to do it to make meaning and share important stories.”

Buchanan has been making music since childhood. When it came time to choose a college, he was drawn to Wooster for two main reasons. As the son of a Presbyterian minister, he appreciated Wooster’s Presbyterian roots, and as a bagpiper, he wanted to join the Wooster Pipe Band. In addition to achieving that goal, Buchanan was a conducting assistant, bass principal, and organist for the Wooster Chorus; co-conductor of the Wooster Concert Band;

and percussionist for the Scot Symphonic Band and the Scot Marching Band. He is grateful to the music faculty, particularly professors Peter Mowrey, Jack Gallagher, John Russell, Nancy Ditmer, and Jeffrey Lindberg, for fostering a love for conducting and working with instrumental and vocal ensembles.

After graduating from Wooster, Buchanan earned two master’s degrees in music in composition and music theory pedagogy and his doctorate in musical arts in composition from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University. He has worked as a composer, conductor, performer, and educator throughout his career. As the director of music ministries at St. David’s Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland, he serves as the conductor and organist and directs the professional chamber choir at concerts, choral services, and weekly liturgies. He is also the artistic director at the Maryland Choral Society and a lecturer at the Peabody Conservatory.

“The training I received as an organist and conductor at Wooster has been invaluable,” said Buchanan, who met his wife, Kelly Gesch Buchanan '06, on the first day of classes in Peter Mowrey’s *Music Theory I* course. “In addition, every theory and composition course I took has helped me write and arrange music professionally.”



ALUMNI PROFILE

# Kennedy Schultz '91 teaches cultural competency across diverse sectors

BY ANNA WHITING '26

**K**ennedy Schultz '91 loved that The College of Wooster had a community that was both diverse and tight-knit. Coming from a large high school, the first thing she noticed while touring campus was that everyone seemed to know each other, all creating a community centered around learning in collaboration with each other. In her career as an intercultural competence trainer, Schultz relies on many of the skills she learned at Wooster as she helps groups foster their own diverse and inclusive communities in a globalized world.

During her time at Wooster, Schultz completed her degree with majors in French & Francophone Studies and cultural area studies. The cultural area studies program gave students interdisciplinary approaches to learning about a variety of societies and cultures through the

study of modern history, politics, economics, and languages. Schultz's majors provided skills and knowledge to understand cultures other than her own and work with and alongside people from multicultural communities.

The opportunity to study abroad in Strasbourg, France allowed her a hands-on way to approach cultural differences in an increasingly connected world. "The things that I learned through the interdisciplinary nature of the courses and Wooster's focus on liberal arts, a study abroad experience, and my own journey to learning about cultural differences was really valuable," Schultz explained. "In the work I'm doing now, it is essential to identify bridges to differing perspectives to engage more effectively in our diverse communities."

After attending graduate school and receiving a doctorate in French literature, Schultz worked to teach French to a variety of age groups, beginning as a college professor before moving toward childhood language education. She started her own business in 2010, developing world language curricula for school-aged children, while also serving as a language teacher at a local school. "Through that experience, I came to understand that no matter what language you're speaking or what cultural group you're working with, there are patterns in how we communicate and understand each other," she said.

Schultz realized that she didn't want to focus solely on language learning but also how to bridge cultural differences with respect and understanding. She founded KMS Intercultural Education, a consultancy firm that helps

businesses, schools, and nonprofits develop their skills in navigating cultural differences in our increasingly connected and diverse world. Whether administering cultural competency assessments for corporate clients, developing a new workshop, or helping teachers who work with multicultural classrooms, Schultz sees each new project allowing her clients to build intercultural skills and helping her to better understand other people and their experiences. "It's the best of both worlds!" Schultz said. "I get to keep learning and help others learn new things."



Schultz's experience at Wooster sticks with her to this day—many of the skills that she uses in her job are skills that she honed as an undergraduate. Her senior Independent Study project, for example, gave her a chance to dive deeply into a topic that interested her, producing a thesis on the subtle political messaging of popular children's books. Besides that, the project also taught her to plan a research product, find resources, and structure an argument, which she says were extremely helpful as she made the transition to graduate school. "Those same concepts of being able to make those connections in a cogent argument became vital later, working in cultural education," Schultz said.



SCOT VOLUNTEER

## Betsy O'Brien Anderson '94

PRINCIPAL, O'BRIEN ANDERSON CONSULTING LLC



**F**or Betsy O'Brien Anderson '94, an alumna of the communication studies program at The College of Wooster, volunteer work for the College is a way to say thank you to the institution that had such an important influence on her and her career. "Four years of liberal arts learning, mentored research, quality faculty, collaboration, a diverse community, and engaging opportunities, such as volunteer programs and a robust study abroad program, left me ready to begin my career and make a difference in the world," she said. As her term on the Alumni Board ends, Anderson reflects on her service to the College and the impact she has made.

### What inspires you to volunteer with Wooster?

My experience as a student at Wooster helped shape who I am today. The classes I took, the friends I met, the professors who mentored me, and the opportunities I had, all had a major influence on me. I participated in the ski club, served as an Admissions tour guide, worked on *The Wooster Voice* student newspaper, eventually serving as the managing editor, and studied abroad in Vienna, Austria. I want to give back to ensure that others have similar opportunities

and experiences.

### What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

I love meeting people from across the country and around the world. I've also enjoyed learning more about the College—the challenges, opportunities, and needs—knowing that I'm contributing to the overall mission and helping make an impact, even if it's small.

### What have you taken away from the experience?

It has allowed me to reconnect with classmates and to meet new friends. It's been incredibly rewarding and has kept me connected to the campus. I think I've gotten more out of the experience than I have given!

### Why would you recommend volunteering to others?

The College of Wooster depends on engaged alumni and volunteers and needs our continued support. A little bit goes a long way. Bring your experience, expertise, and passion, and there are a variety of ways we can all contribute and give back to Wooster.

Contact [alumni@wooster.edu](mailto:alumni@wooster.edu) to learn more about how you can volunteer with Wooster.



## Wooster Encounters

**3 Michele (Burden) Johnson '71** wrote, "Linda (Barth) Craft '70 and Rick Craft '70 joined my husband Bruce Johnson and me on a trip to France this fall. We spent several days in Strasbourg where Linda and I had spent the summer of 1969 with other Wooster students as part of the Wooster in Strasbourg program. The four of us found the school where we lived during our time in Strasbourg and reconnected with a French woman with whom we became friends in 1969."

**4 Dale Osterman '77** wrote, "I went to my first ever masters swim meet in Auburn, Alabama, wearing my Wooster swimming and diving t-shirt and ended up talking to **Ted Hammond '76** for five minutes before finally realizing exactly who he was and that we were swim teammates at Wooster! Ted traveled from neighboring Georgia, then set a national U.S. Masters Swimming record for 100-meter freestyle in the 70-74 age group at this meet! I had another Wooster swim team shirt with me that I gave to Ted."

**5 Erin (Powell) Hickey '09** wrote, "Friends **Anna (Fleming) Kegel '09**, **Natalie Offen '09**, and I met up in Gig Harbor, Washington, in March 2024."

UPCOMING EVENTS

- SCOTS IN THE OUTFIELD

Boston, Massachusetts

July 29, 2024
- CHICAGO JAZZ ORCHESTRA WITH PROFESSOR JEFF LINDBERG

Chicago, Illinois

Aug. 25, 2024
- HOMECOMING WEEKEND

Oct. 18-19, 2024



Wooster on the Move

Hear from President Anne McCall about her vision to frame Wooster’s future at a series of upcoming events.

- CHAUTAUQUA, NY

Aug. 16
- HOUSTON, TX

Oct. 8
- SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Oct. 10

→ Register to attend and find out all the latest event information at [wooster.edu/alumni](https://wooster.edu/alumni).



ASK A SCOT

An interactive platform that allows students and alumni to harness the power of the Scot network, Ask a Scot allows you to seek advice on graduate schools, job searches, and more. No login, registration, or username required. Learn more at [askascot.wooster.edu](https://askascot.wooster.edu).

Michael Bernstein ’11 explores little-known psychological phenomenon in new book highlighted in TIME magazine

BY ANNA WHITING ’26



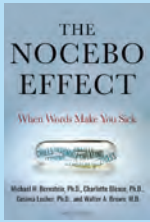
Michael Bernstein ’11 has dedicated his career to understanding how subconscious expectations can impact health. For example, many people are familiar with the placebo effect, where a person experiences a benefit, such as the alleviation of pain, because they believe it will occur. As the editor of *The Nocebo Effect: When Words Make You Sick*, Bernstein and coeditors, Charlotte Blease, Cosima Locher, and Walter A. Brown, helped to explain the less well-known, but just as powerful, “nocebo effect,” where a negative outcome or side effect occurs because a person believes that it will occur. The first book exclusively on the topic, the work explains both how this effect functions and how it can be ethically mitigated by medical professionals. The authors also wrote an article published in *TIME* magazine in April, introducing audiences to the topic.

The idea for the book was originally proposed to Bernstein by his colleague, Walter A. Brown. “Brown noticed that while there were several books and popular news articles about the placebo effect, very little had been written about the nocebo effect,” Bernstein explained. A collaborative effort between several researchers, with Bernstein serving as editor, the book aims to bring information about the nocebo effect to a wider audience, especially those who may not have a background in medicine or psychological research.

As a psychology major at Wooster, Bernstein set the stage for his career by taking part in mentored research that gave him skills both in conducting psychological studies and communicating results with a wider audience. “In particular, the experience of I.S. gives students the opportunity to develop a research question and formulate a method for answering it. My early exposure to the research process allowed me to enter graduate school well prepared for doing a thesis and dissertation,” he said. Bernstein received a master’s degree, doctoral degree, and postdoctoral fellowship in psychology from the University of Rhode Island before serving as an assistant professor in the Department of Diagnostic Imaging at Brown University’s Warren Alpert Medical School. He also serves as the director of the Medical Expectations Lab at Brown University, a lab specifically dedicated to understanding how expectations and the placebo effect impact health.

Ultimately, Bernstein believes that a better understanding of the nocebo effect is not only beneficial to the scientific community, but also to people in the wider world as they navigate the medical system. “A doctor’s first duty is to ‘do no harm.’ We need to understand how patients may be negatively impacted, even if unintentionally, by what a provider says,” he explained. “We hope that after reading the book, people will gain a greater appreciation for the fact that expectations are powerful.”

RECENT ALUMNI BOOKS



MICHAEL BERNSTEIN ’11

*The Nocebo Effect: When Words Make You Sick*

Mayo Clinic Press, 2024

“The nocebo effect” is a phenomenon best summarized as the occurrence of a harmful event that stems from consciously or subconsciously anticipating it. Researchers are beginning to understand the power of this effect and investigating strategies that can be adopted by both clinicians and patients to reduce the nocebo effect. *The Nocebo Effect* is the first book to investigate this phenomenon, and offers a wide variety of topics and angles, by the researchers in this emerging field.



SUSAN WILSON BOWDITCH ’64

*Journeys Become a Life*

Windrift Valley Designs, 2023

Author Susan Wilson Bowditch ’64 experienced journeys that took her across the world, from Peace Corps training in Hawaii to living in the Philippines. From these places and those visited with her husband and developing family in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and Macedonia, she gathered fabrics and stories. Every piece of cloth, experience, and journal entry was woven into a life spent traversing the globe, immersed in new cultures. Readers can share her intercultural adventures, assembled into a tapestry reflecting a life of learning.

ALLEN COMSTOCK ’64



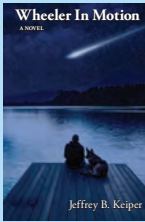
Seasonings: prayers of praise and complaint

Haley’s Publishing, 2024

Written by the retired Rev. Allen M. Comstock ’64, this book is an illustrated collection of prayers of both praise and complaint for each occasion in the liturgical year.



Email [wooster\\_magazine@wooster.edu](mailto:wooster_magazine@wooster.edu) to share your book!

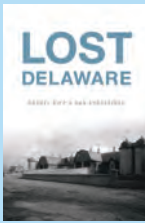


JEFF KEIPER ’86

*Wheeler in Motion*

Independently Published, 2023

In the second book of a fiction series, retired detective Tom Wheeler is just settling into a tranquil, domestic life in Cleveland when trouble from his past comes back to haunt him. A Russian mob boss has Wheeler in his crosshairs with a dual motive of revenge and greed and will stop at nothing to achieve his perverse objectives.

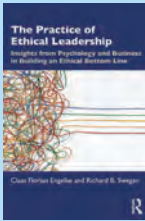


DAN SHORTRIDGE ’02

*Lost Delaware*

The History Press, 2024

This book chronicles more than 70 vanished places, businesses, and institutions from the first state’s history, including stories of a neighborhood wiped out by flooding, a nightclub turned into a children’s museum, a closed synagogue, and multiple mansions lost to fire or development.



RICK SWEGAN ’71

*The Practice of Ethical Leadership: Insights from Psychology and Business in Building an Ethical Bottom Line*

Routledge, 2024

This book considers ethics as a practical discipline at the heart of decisions, reasoning, shaping, and ordering organizations. Both engaging and accessible, it offers effective suggestions for selecting and developing ethical leaders and invites readers to self-reflect and understand how to build ethical cultures within their organizations and beyond.



CHRISTOPHER WALKER ’92

*Don’t Falter*

Black Spring Press Group, 2024

*Don’t Falter* is the story of Anna Fetlock, a schoolgirl learning to spy in a surveillance-heavy United Kingdom. Her parents, unbeknownst to Anna, belong to a secret underground sheltering a pair of environmental protestors fleeing prosecution. When she discovers the hidden couple, Anna faces an impossible decision—does she choose her family or the state?

In Memoriam

Since the last issue, the *Office of Alumni and Family Engagement* became aware of the deaths of the following alumni by March 31, 2024. Contact [alumni@wooster.edu](mailto:alumni@wooster.edu) with information about the deaths of alumni or for more information. View alumni obituaries at [wooster.edu/classnotes](https://wooster.edu/classnotes).

’39, **Jack L. Hagaman**, Sept. 8, 2022, East Syracuse, NY

’43, **Alicejean (Shreve) Thomson**, Feb. 21, 2024, Cleveland, OH

’44, **Ruth (Newell) Holroyd**, Aug. 20, 2023, Webster, NY

’45, **Jane Louise (Hoop) Fithian**, Feb. 16, 2024, Fuquay Varina, NC

’45, **Margaret G. (Goldsmith) Hydorn**, March 15, 2024, Saint Albans, ME

’45, **Margaret L. (Stoll) Shaw**, Feb. 26, 2024, Canfield, OH

’47, **Hope Tsui Fong (Yee) Lee**, Sept. 11, 2023, Honolulu, HI

’48, **Josephine G. (Garver) Bichsel**, Jan. 23, 2024, Delaware, OH

’49, **Nova J. (Brown) Kordalski**, Feb. 27, 2024, Bay Village, OH

’49, **John R. Milligan Jr.**, March 23, 2024, North Canton, OH

’49, **Barbara (Kinsey) Sable**, Feb. 7, 2024, Boulder, CO

’50, **Earl R. Shaw**, Feb. 25, 2024, Palm Desert, CA

’50, **James A. Webster**, Jan. 1, 2024, Mount Vernon, OH

CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE →

## In Memoriam

'51, <b>Bruce B. G. Cunningham</b> , Jan. 19, 2024, Traverse City, MI	'58, <b>Alan M. Peabody</b> , July 13, 2022, Redmond, WA
'51, <b>David M. MacMillin</b> , Dec. 26, 2023, Peterborough, NH	'59, <b>John D. Mosher</b> , Feb. 24, 2024, Norfolk, VA
'51, <b>Morley E. Russell</b> , Nov. 9, 2023, DeKalb, IL	'59, <b>Patricia (Alcorn) Prutz</b> , Jan. 22, 2024, The Villages, FL
'53, <b>Barr P. Ingle</b> , Feb. 15, 2024, Rochester, NY	'60, <b>Mary M. (Mercer) Krogness</b> , Feb. 8, 2024, Cleveland, OH
'53, <b>Dorothy M. (McGrew) Schirtzinger</b> , Dec. 10, 2023, Chillicothe, OH	'61, <b>Alain De Maynadier</b> , March 27, 2023, Charlottesville, VA
'53, <b>Keith A. Shearer</b> , Dec. 26, 2023, Wooster, OH	'61, <b>Frances J. Johnston</b> , Nov. 3, 2023, Rockville, MD
'54, <b>Patricia A. (Mack) Churchman</b> , Feb. 8, 2024, Rockingham, VA	'61, <b>Stephen D. McClellan</b> , July 15, 2023, The Villages, FL
'54, <b>Rachel (Collins) Eby</b> , June 20, 2023, Shelburne, VT	'61, <b>James McCorkel</b> , Feb. 3, 2024, Holmdel, NJ
'54, <b>Suzane J. (Jacobs) Park</b> , Dec. 5, 2023, Columbus, OH	'61, <b>Mary M. (Madden) McKee</b> , Jan. 17, 2024, Chicago, IL
'56, <b>Robert E. Johnston</b> , Dec. 30, 2023, Dacula, GA	'61, <b>Robert M. Weinberg</b> , June 17, 2022, Seattle, WA
'57, <b>Anne B. Mayer</b> , March 19, 2024, Northfield, MN	'62, <b>Rebecca B. (Baird) Bergstresser</b> , Jan. 21, 2024, Garland, TX
'57, <b>Robert E. Schubert</b> , Dec. 22, 2023, Prairie Village, KS	'62, <b>J. Michael Miller</b> , Jan. 29, 2024, Neptune Beach, FL
'57, <b>Louise (McClelland) Urban</b> , Dec. 31, 2023, Fairfax, VA	'62, <b>G. David Wallace</b> , Feb. 20, 2024, New York City, NY
'57, <b>Margaret L. (Luce) Young</b> , Feb. 5, 2024, Easton, MD	'63, <b>Jane (Mead) Silva</b> , March 13, 2024, Ashtabula, OH
'58, <b>Harry B. Bradley</b> , May 13, 2023, Penn Valley, CA	'64, <b>Lynda (Miner) Cryer</b> , Feb. 23, 2023, Huntington, NY
'58, <b>Stan Galehouse Jr.</b> , Dec. 20, 2023, Doylestown, OH	'64, <b>John F. Rudge</b> , Nov. 21, 2022, Cumming, GA
'58, <b>Dorothy J. (Hartman) Landis</b> , March 9, 2024, New Cumberland, PA	'64, <b>David J. Vermeulen</b> , Jan. 31, 2024, Ulster Park, NY
	'66, <b>William E. Kehret</b> , Sept. 21, 2023, Portland, OR
	'66, <b>James N. Point</b> , March 26, 2024, Rogersville, TN

'67, <b>J. Davidson Frame III</b> , Nov. 19, 2023, Arlington, VA
'68, <b>Jonathan C. Jones</b> , Feb. 22, 2024, Philadelphia, PA
'69, <b>John P. Cook</b> , Dec. 28, 2023, Wooster, OH
'70, <b>Sharon L. Abner</b> , Jan. 10, 2024, Lees Summit, MO
'70, <b>Margaret E. (Adams) Fleming</b> , Jan. 25, 2024, Dover, MA
'72, <b>Michael R. Keller</b> , Dec. 20, 2023, Dublin, OH
'72, <b>Grant W. Underhill</b> , Dec. 31, 2023, Chapel Hill, NC
'74, <b>John R. Wetherbee</b> , Dec. 14, 2023, Savannah, GA
'77, <b>Gary D. Braun</b> , Feb. 24, 2024, North Tonawanda, NY
'83, <b>Mark F. Giuliano</b> , March 2, 2024, Decatur, GA
'84, <b>Barbara (Neighbarger) Conkle</b> , Feb. 22, 2024, Melbourne, FL
'84, <b>Cheryl Lower</b> , Feb. 29, 2024, Sterling, MA
'85, <b>Thomas C. Glovier</b> , March 5, 2023, Center Township, PA
'87, <b>Miriam Edith Krowitz</b> , June 18, 2023, Laredo, TX
'89, <b>Jeffrey E. Banyay</b> , Feb. 21, 2024, Cincinnati, OH
'91, <b>Michael S. Knapic</b> , March 15, 2024, Wooster, OH
'95, <b>Jennifer R. Howard</b> , Oct. 9, 2021, Cleveland Heights, OH
'06, <b>Bethany Ann Comella</b> , Jan. 2, 2024, Lyons, NY
'12, <b>Natasha L. Blaise</b> , Feb. 10, 2024, Valley Stream, NY

### FACULTY & STAFF

**Donald Beane**  
Jan. 11, 2024, Wooster, OH

Beane began his service to the College in 1962, when he was appointed an assistant professor of mathematics, a position he held until his retirement as professor emeritus in 1994. He also served as a professor of education beginning in 1974. Beane advised numerous committees at Wooster and was also active in many statewide and national organizations such as the Ohio section and national section of the Mathematical Association of America and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

**Richard Bromund**  
March 15, 2024, Wooster, OH

Bromund served the College for nearly 40 years, beginning as an assistant professor of chemistry in 1967 before retiring as professor emeritus in 2006. During his professorship, Bromund took six research leaves which took him to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Eli Lilly, U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. In 2018, Nathan W. Bower '73, a former student of Bromund's, established the Thomas A. Sanborn and Richard H. Bromund Endowed Fund in Chemistry to support stipends or other research-related expenses for chemistry students working on projects with a faculty mentor. Bromund was celebrated by students and faculty alike for his dedication and love of teaching.

## Q & A

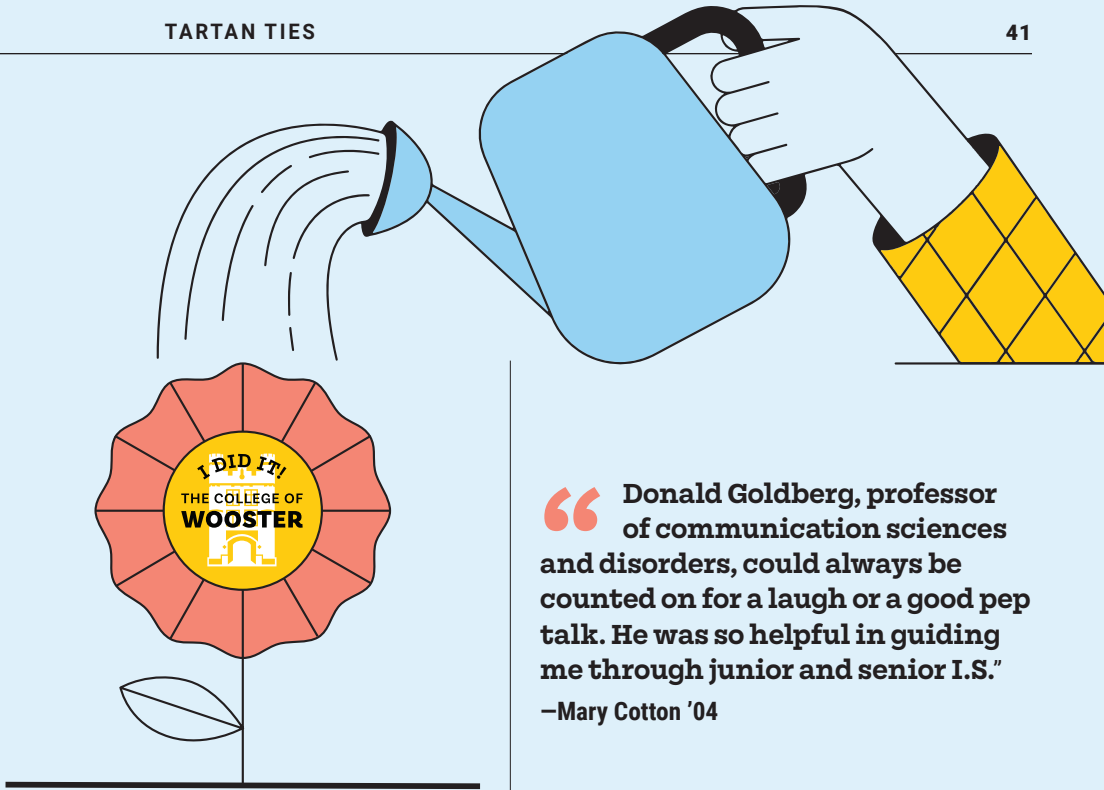
We asked and you answered! Thanks to all the alumni who shared their experiences with I.S. and the mentors who supported them. Read some of our favorite responses below and participate in the prompt for the next issue.

Who were the mentors or guides who helped to support you throughout the Independent Study process and how did they do it?

“ Prof. Hayward was my amazing advisor, but Melissa Young Schultz was my boss at the time, working in the web development department at the College, and helped me make sure the digital side of my project was sound. At the end of the project, I had an impressive website I had constructed myself, which I used as my portfolio and helped me secure a job at a marketing agency. Now I'm approaching the next levels of my career and what I learned working with Melissa has catapulted me far beyond people my age in my field, fast-tracking my career and helping me achieve professional and personal goals.”  
—M. Sophia T. Giordano-Scott '19

### FOR THE NEXT ISSUE:

As we celebrate the graduation of the Class of 2024, we want to hear from you! Thinking back to your own experience, we want to hear what tips you have for making the most of the first years after graduation.



“ Donald Goldberg, professor of communication sciences and disorders, could always be counted on for a laugh or a good pep talk. He was so helpful in guiding me through junior and senior I.S.”  
—Mary Cotton '04

“ Matthew Krain, professor of political science, was a giant support and mentor for me throughout my years at Wooster. We met during my *First-Year Seminar* in 2002, and Dr. Krain was my second reader for my senior I.S. He was always so easy to talk to and provided valuable feedback. I remember always being at ease whenever we worked together. I'm forever grateful for the connections I made at Wooster, especially with Dr. Krain.”  
—Anne Fine '06

“ My advisor was Terry Kershaw, former associate professor of sociology. I was looking at a small sample and conducting qualitative interviews for my I.S. project. Dr. Kershaw gently guided me on how best to phrase my research questions in the most effective way possible. He led me forward with suggestions and helpful insights about the subject matter and research styles. He gave me the lead, supported my ideas, and steered me where I needed to go. Thank you, Dr. Kershaw.”  
—Karen (Roemer) Carl '87, P'19

“ My friends—we had a gang who met during freshman orientation week, and we were best friends through our four years and are still close to this day. We all varied in majors and interests but cheered each other on during our I.S. projects.”  
—Care Crawford '79





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## **A Zealous Audience for the Class of 2024 Commencement**

The College of Wooster's Scot Center overflowed with families, friends, and fans from the Scot community at Commencement for the Class of 2024. After the alternative celebrations endured for them in 2020 amid public health restrictions, the crowd was eager to watch the graduates receive their diplomas. As students, they navigated through meeting their classmates covered by face masks, hybrid learning, mentored relationships at six feet apart, and distanced extra-curricular activities. The celebration showcased how the ups and downs in their journey at Wooster prepared them for their next steps after graduation. Read more about the graduation ceremony that captivated one of the largest audiences seen in the Scot Center in recent years inside.

Also, learn about what some of Wooster's newest alumni took away from their capstone experience of original research, scholarship, or creative expression. And hear the stories of alumni who took their Independent Study experience further after they earned their Wooster degrees.