

THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA ALUMNI MAGAZINE

SPRING 2022

UVIC TORCH



Seeing Stars

Bright spots of inspiration
and genius—from
astrophysics to puppetry.

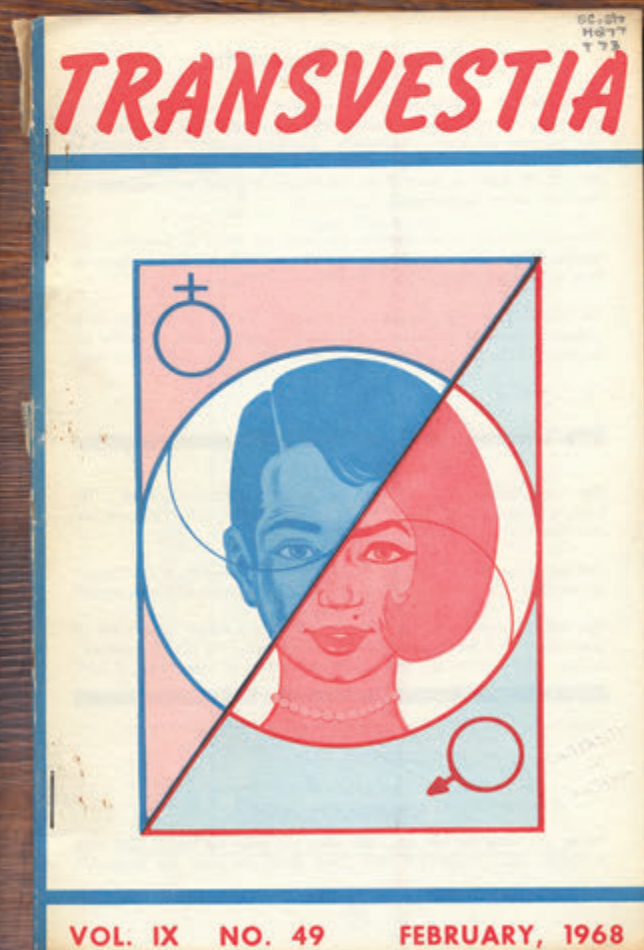
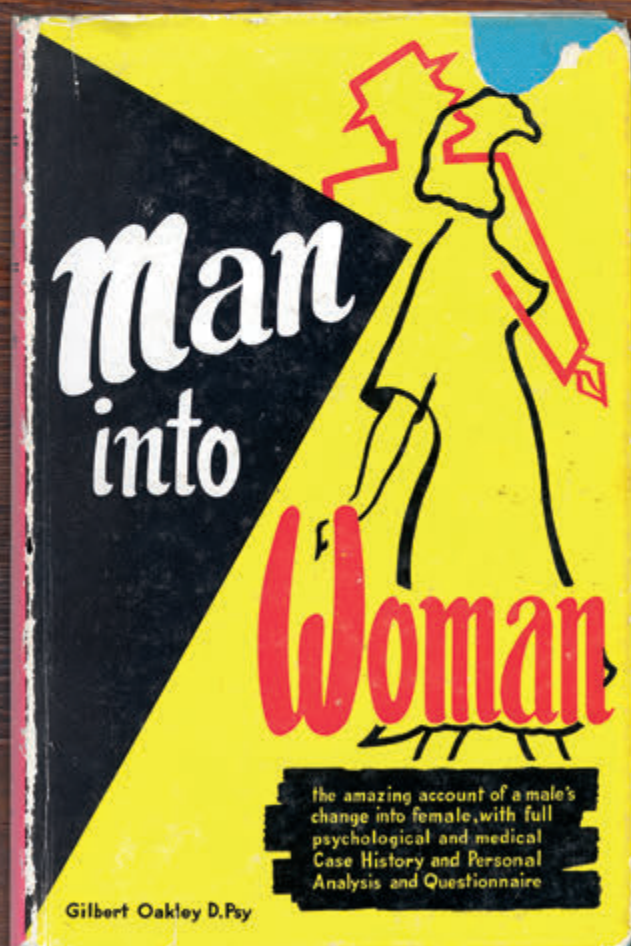
Star Collection

The Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria is celebrating more than a decade of preserving and sharing transgender history. The collection is the largest trans archives in the world.

From trading cards and T-shirts to rare documents and monographs, the holdings go back 120 years, detailing the history of pioneering activists, community leaders and researchers who contributed to the betterment of Trans+ and other gender-diverse people.

The public can visit the archives in person at the University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections & University Archives, and a wealth of digital resources are available free of charge, including the digitized FTM newsletter in the Libraries' online content platform vault.

Images are from *The Transgender Archives: Foundations for the Future* by Dr. Aaron Devor, available for free download. Learn more at uvic.ca/transgenderarchives





From left: Cover of *Man into Woman*. One of many monographs available via Transgender Archives collection. Credit: University of Victoria Libraries, Transgender Archives, RC883 E4313 1933

Cover of *Transvestia*, the first widely distributed magazine focused on the cross-dressing community. The archives hold all 111 issues, from 1960 to 1986. Credit: University of Victoria Libraries, Transgender Archives, HQ77 T73

Cover, *Takarazuka Revue*, a Japanese publication. Credit: University of Victoria Libraries, Transgender Archives, PN2926 T32T325 1953 .

Buttons from the wide collection of ephemera in the Transgender Archives. Credit: University of Victoria Libraries, Transgender Archives, various collections.



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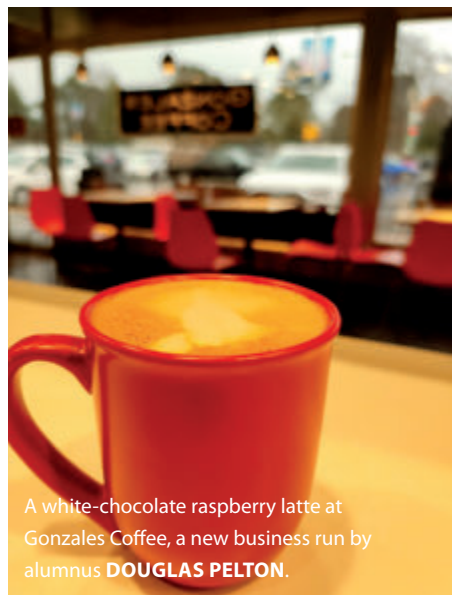
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A painting by **BRITTANEE STRANKS (ZAITSOFF)**.

Music Matters

Filmmaker **Sam Dunn** creates hit documentaries using an anthropological lens—and never forgets that the music comes first.

BY JENNY MANZER, BA '97



SAM DUNN, BA '98

"Let it go. Stopped it. Let it go. Stop it...I said to myself, 'I have absolute control of the record.'"

Those are the words of DJ and rapper Grandmaster Flash from the series *Hip-Hop Evolution*, describing how he breaks a taboo by touching the middle of the vinyl. In a Bronx studio, Flash uses "Good Times" by Chic to demonstrate the scratch-technique to host Shad Kabango.

This was a favourite scene for filmmaker Sam Dunn. "It's a rare moment in the series, and in documentary filmmaking, where you actually get someone to show you a true moment of innovation," says Dunn, speaking from the Toronto office of his company, Banger Films. "I think it was good for the viewers who weren't the hip-hop heads, who didn't know about the creativity and the manipulation of technology that Flash brought to two turntables and how it literally created a musi-

cal revolution. It helps that he's kind of an eccentric dude. It makes it all more entertaining."

Banger Films has produced successful features on bands like Rush, ZZ Top, Iron Maiden and Triumph—as well as series on metal, pop and K-pop—all the while racking up Grammy nominations and other accolades. The hip-hop series, now streaming on Netflix, earned them an International Emmy and a Peabody—and was a big hit.

"I think it was the fact that we approached it the same way we'd always approached metal and rock, and that's with a lot of care and never really dumbing it down for the audience. Something we learned from years of working in metal and rock is that you never want to talk down to the fan base, at the same time you want to try to bring in a broader audience."

The UVic anthropology grad and his team show how a range of influences—sociological, political, technological, economic—caused favourite forms of music to emerge, adapt and grow. They also deliver some comic moments—such as when Shad has to bring Philadelphia gangsta rapper Schoolly D a cake bearing his face as a pre-condition to the interview.

Dunn's first film, made with Banger co-founder Scot McFadyen, was *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*. They launched the Metal Evolution series in 2011. They'd planned to do a "big anthology music series" on other styles—and hip-hop seemed an obvious choice.

While Banger may have been early on the music-doc scene in 2005, the field is now as crowded as a festival beer tent. "Now it's a genre. We're living in a much more competitive world than when we started."

Dunn says he particularly enjoyed the recent Billie Eilish documentary, *The World's a Little Blurry*, and the intimate perspective on the young musician it provided. "Now that these films are so tightly intertwined with the business plan of many artists, it is increasingly difficult to portray artists in that up-close and personal way."

Dunn, a musician himself, says Banger's success may lie in the authenticity of their storytelling. "Whether we're working in hip-hop or metal, K-pop and pop music, we really care about the music. We never forget that the music is the reason why we're telling the story in the first place." †

TORCH

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Imagine the Possibilities for UVic

UVic is taking collaborative and courageous strides in the development of its new institutional strategic plan.

BY KEVIN HALL, PHD. • PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR



“What is it we really want to succeed at, and how do we capitalize on UVic’s strengths to make it happen?”

This is a transformative time for UVic and our world. In the face of rapidly evolving and unprecedented challenges, UVic is creating innovative solutions, delivering meaningful impact and partnering locally and globally to support positive change.

A new strategic vision and plan is needed to navigate us toward this brighter future and act as a roadmap to help us to reach for the stars—which is precisely what we’re doing. The other stories in this special issue themed “Seeing Stars” will give you a sense of UVic’s passion and our commitment to becoming a global university where people transform ideas into impact.

A DYNAMIC PLAN THAT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

As part of this strategic planning process, we have been asking the campus and the wider community to stretch their minds and to think about what the world will look like 30 years into the future. This was no easy task for many, nor should it be.

Over the past couple of years, our fast-changing world has forced us to grapple with a global pandemic, numerous environmental crises, the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools and brutal actions of war. Even something as fundamental as purity of fact and truth is under attack. In an endless sea of social media-fed opinion, where do universities stand in working together to uphold truth and encourage thoughtful and informed discourse? A bold new vision supported by strong values will help us answer these questions and respond to these challenges.

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Our current strategic framework expires next year, so we began our work in the fall of 2021 by engaging with local Indigenous community members. Since then, we have spoken with thousands of staff, students, faculty and alumni.

We’ve asked our community to think about what the role and priorities of the university

should be over the next five years. We asked about UVic’s place and partnerships. Are we contributing to solving important local problems? Can we do more to tackle global issues? What is it we really want to succeed at, and how do we capitalize on UVic’s strengths to make it happen?

We want to know how UVic can help create bright spots of possibility and potential—for our people, for our community, for the world.

HELP TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF UVIC

As convocation unfolds and we welcome a new cohort of students, I find myself thinking about the greater purpose of UVic and of higher education in general. We have a responsibility to cultivate knowledge and educate a population of super stars—future leaders who choose to make informed decisions for the good of our shared future. If our university can help foster critical thinking, produce excellent research and develop citizens concerned about their communities and the world, we will have helped create a brighter future for everyone.

We have so much to learn from our alumni. Your history with UVic and diversity of professional and lived experience brings a valuable understanding and perspective to UVic’s new strategic vision. Over the past few months, we’ve been gathering those perspectives through surveys, events and discussions.

If you haven’t already had the chance to provide feedback, I invite you to share your vision for UVic and your thoughts by visiting engageuvic.org. We are deeply appreciative to have your feedback and participation through the UVic Alumni Association’s annual general meeting, any of the regional alumni network events where I have had the pleasure of meeting you, or via the website, as your input will help UVic see a brighter future. †

Healing Technology

The Victoria Hand Project team, led by alumnus **Michael Peirone**, designs low-cost 3D-printed prosthetics for amputees in need while providing UVic students with valuable skills and training.

BY MICHAEL KISSINGER, BED '94



Victoria Hand Project's full-time staff (from left to right) **JACQUI MORELAND** (BEng '21), **KELLY KNIGHTS** (BEng '20), **KIM ARKLIE** (BEng '21) and **MICHAEL PEIRONE** (BEng '16) are all UVic biomedical and mechanical engineering alumni.

University of Victoria alumnus Michael Peirone has witnessed the impact that receiving a prosthetic device can have on a person. In February 2020, he helped set up a clinic in Kenya and recalls a visit from a seven-year-old boy named Bin-Amin. When Bin-Amin was three years old, he fell into a pile of burning goat dung, resulting in severe burns and partial amputations to all four limbs. He had to rely on his mother for most tasks, including feeding himself. After trying on the custom-made prosthetic, he immediately began walking around the room, smiling and shaking hands with his mother.

"It's one of those stories where it just shows you how helpful this prosthetic hand can be to someone, and he just wanted play around, pick up things around the workshop and just see that he had a hand again," says Peirone, BEng '16, who is CEO of the Victoria Hand Project (VHP), which designed the device.

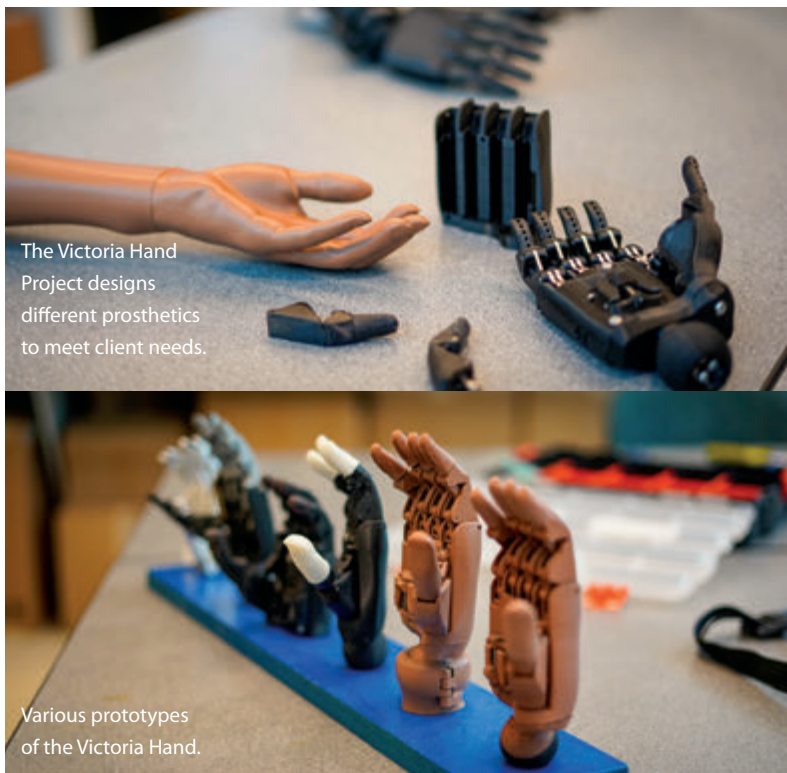
Located down an unassuming hallway of UVic's Engineering Lab Wing, the VHP is abuzz with activity. Prototypes of prosthetic limbs and photos of smiling recipients line the pegboard walls, while staff click away at their computers and talk on the phone. Boxes line the perimeter of the room alongside clear plastic tubs marked "fingertip supplies" and "demo sockets."

Amidst the workshop clutter, a bank of 3D printers and scanners methodically thrum back and forth, whirring and blipping like a symphony of fax machines. It's a strangely pleasant hum that Peirone has grown used to hearing since he was a biomedical engineering student in 2014.

"What really drew me in was the excitement of 3D printing, 3D design," says Peirone, who started as a co-op student and now oversees the day-to-day operations of the charity organization. "As a student who hadn't seen 3D printing before, I thought it was really cool. But it was working with the patients that showed me how amazing the work can really be."

LIFE CHANGER

Originally launched as a research project by UVic mechanical engineering associate professor Dr. Nick Dechev, the Victoria Hand Project now works with partners in 10 countries, designing and developing low-cost 3D-printed prosthetic devices for amputees in need. VHP helps set up clinics with their own 3D-printing equipment in regions where clients can get fitted and receive their prosthetic device in a short amount of time at little to no cost.



The Victoria Hand Project designs different prosthetics to meet client needs.

Various prototypes of the Victoria Hand.

Thanks to advances in 3D printing and declining costs, it takes approximately 36 hours to make all the components that go into a single Victoria Hand, at a price tag of \$100 US.

“This technology is changing so rapidly—the materials, the 3D printers, the software—it’s just all getting cheaper, quicker, faster,” Peirone says. “Fortunately, there’s also a lot of materials that are becoming more environmentally safe and recycled. I think that’s one of the big things with 3D printing is people are thinking, ‘Oh, all this plastic,’ but the plastic type that we are using is derived from starches, like corn, and it can be recycled.”

The devices come in four different models to meet the needs of users. To date, VHP has provided 200 prosthetic devices, instantly transforming the lives of those on the receiving end.

“Someone receiving a prosthetic arm can really change their life—it can allow them to get better work, to be able to go to school, to provide for their family a lot better,” Peirone says, adding that the device fosters more self-reliance, boosting confidence.

The focus until now has been on countries like Kenya, Guatemala, Nepal, Haiti and Cambodia, where there is a gap in prosthetic healthcare—due to cost, scarcity of trained technicians or lack of infrastructure. Thanks to a \$1-million TD Ready Challenge award, VHP is now extending its reach across North America. The goal is to help children with scoliosis and upper-limb amputees in remote and under-served communities in the US and Canada

where where income and access to prosthetic care can be a barrier.

“That was really big for us,” Peirone says. “Something that people have been asking us a lot is why we aren’t helping Canadians. And primarily we were saying, well that’s because Canadians have coverage. And something that we learned is that not all Canadians actually have coverage. It differs from province to province—there are prosthetics and orthotics centres only in major cities,” says Peirone, adding that coverage in the US can also be inconsistent.

VHP also serves as an important training ground for UVic students looking to gain experience and skills. Peirone’s team includes fellow biomedical and mechanical engineering alumni Kelly Knights, Kim Arklie and Jacqui Moreland, two co-op students and approximately 20 volunteers each semester. He estimates that 40 to 50 UVic grads have worked for VHP over the years. In addition to the feedback from prosthetic users, the VHP team values the connection with students.

“It’s also really great when we hear of students who have worked with us and developed a passion for giving back in other ways, like trying to go to school to become a prosthetist or other sorts of charity or non-profit work to give back,” Peirone says. “It definitely feels good to know that they came through VHP and developed that passion.”

Info: victoriahandproject.com. Find a video on VHP’s work at alumni.uvic.ca.



Seven-year-old Bin-Amin was all smiles after receiving his 3D-printed prosthetic at a clinic in Kenya.

A Passion for Justice

Renowned legal scholar and judge **Marion Buller, BA '75, LLB '87**, brings vast experience, optimism and enthusiasm to her new role as UVic chancellor.

BY JODY PATERSON



If it hadn't been for a timely visit to Vancouver Island, University of Victoria Chancellor Marion Buller just might have ended up a Carleton University graduate.

But it was love at first sight when Buller travelled from Ottawa to Victoria for that fateful vacation in May of 1973. She was so taken with the natural environment that she quickly set to work transferring from Carleton and enrolled in third-year anthropology at UVic, where she was one of only a handful of Indigenous students attending the university.

"UVic has done some amazing work on reconciliation and beyond since then," says Buller, who was installed as the university's 12th chancellor in April.

"In the 1970s, I would go to the room where the Native Student Association had an office and there would be nobody there. Now, there are many Indigenous students, courses, spaces and an Indigenous strategy. None of that planning and structure was in place back then."

The campus had few buildings in those years, recalls Buller, and a registration process for students that centred on everyone

lining up outside the McKinnon Gym with their punch cards in hand to register for classes.

"But you did get to speak directly to your professors because of that," says Buller. "And to me, UVic has never lost that openness. There has always been an emphasis on teaching, and a definition of success as being part of a caring community. The faculty really takes pride in being good teachers."

Buller spent a decade in the workforce after graduating from UVic in 1975 with her anthropology degree, then returned for her law degree. She was drawn by UVic's "small school" approach, which at the time was distinctively different than law schools elsewhere in Canada that generally had very large first-year classes.

All first-year UVic law students were required to take criminal law at that time. One of Buller's professors that year was Dr. Keith Jobson. She credits him with "lighting a fire in me" that led her into criminal law and ignited a passion for social-justice work.

"I just knew I had to be in criminal courts. Professor Jobson was engaging, really inspiring. I was lucky to have several professors in UVic law of the same mind."

Buller is Cree and a member of the Mistawasis First Nation in Saskatchewan. In 1994—just seven years after she graduated from law school—she was appointed BC’s first female First Nations Provincial Court judge.

During her legal career, Buller has been president and director of Canada’s Indigenous Bar Association; an active member of the BC Police Commission, the Law Foundation of BC and the Law Courts Education Society; and developed the foundation for the Aboriginal Family Healing Court, which works to return Indigenous children to their birth families.

The many papers and articles she’s written over the years highlight the inconsistencies within the justice system in terms of ensuring the rights of Indigenous people and women, and the need to incorporate the principles of Indigenous laws in the system.

Awards flooded in as the years passed: a UVic Distinguished Alumni Award in 2012; a Diamond Jubilee medal; the Rosemary Brown Award for a BC woman whose efforts uphold the values and ideals of the late Brown, a politician known for her tireless advocacy for women and minorities.

But two appointments stand out in Buller’s mind as especially significant.

In 2006, she founded the First Nations Court of British Columbia (now known as Indigenous Court). The court uses the principles of restorative justice and traditional Indigenous ways in seeking sentences that balance rehabilitation, accountability and healing for Indigenous people.

Ten years later, Buller retired as a provincial-court judge and began some of the most challenging and high-profile work of her life when she was appointed Chief Commissioner of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Buller feels “really proud” of the 2019 two-volume report that resulted, *Reclaiming Power and Place*.

“I’ve had calls from all over the world about the work we did in the National Inquiry, from people and organizations wanting to know how we did it,” says Buller. “I’ve talked to people from so many countries now that are having their own inquiries. I am so appreciative of the three wonderful commissioners and staff who worked with me—such a team!”

UVic President Kevin Hall became the first university president in Canada last year to ask permission of local First Nations to work on the territory as part of his installation ceremony. Buller did the same for her installation in April.

So many issues for Indigenous people in Canada still need to be addressed, she notes. But she takes hope from the “groundswell” of non-Indigenous allies who are committed to helping advance reconciliation, and an emerging generation of creative

and committed Indigenous leaders well-versed in working in both Indigenous and settler cultures.

“As a nation, we’re having some pretty difficult conversations about reconciliation,” says Buller. “Northern Canada worries me in particular, where we still have reserves with unsafe drinking water, substandard housing, kids having to leave home to go to high school, women having to leave their communities to give birth. There’s still a lot of work to do, but also the energy and expertise to do it.”

Buller’s appointment comes at an ideal time for advancing UVic’s own commitment to reconciliation, says President Hall.

“I am excited to be working alongside Chancellor Buller to do the hard work challenging the historic and present-day systems that limit equitable access to our institution,” he says. “Marion’s appointment reflects UVic’s unwavering commitment to listening, learning and being open to new ways of thinking and doing as we aspire to embed Indigenous principles and Indigenous-led scholarship into the fabric of UVic.”

Buller was delighted (“Not quite speechless, but close,” she jokes) when she first heard from UVic last year asking if she would consider being the next chancellor after Shelagh Rogers’ term ended.

“I got an email asking my interest, and my response was one word: ‘Yes!’” says Buller. “I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to give back to UVic for the education I was so lucky to receive.”

Buller anticipates that her diverse work experiences will be a great fit for her new role as UVic chancellor.

“I have a lot of experience with problem-solving and making hard decisions. I have a different world view to share,” she says. “I bring a lot of experience from my life, from meeting a lot of different Canadians and learning about a variety of cultural and social issues. For my own part, I expect to experience newness—to learn again, and from the best.”

Buller’s three-year term will involve plenty of travel from her home in the Lower Mainland to Victoria for meetings of UVic’s board of governors, senate meetings and convocations. But Buller notes it’s a short trip over to Vancouver Island compared to the vast distances she travelled into isolated communities during her time heading up the MMIWG inquiry.

She’s excitedly anticipating her first convocation ceremony in June. “It’s such an opportunity to celebrate hard work and a commitment to learning,” she says. “It’s a joyous occasion for everyone. I can’t wait to experience this again, but now from the chancellor’s chair.” ¶

SEEING STARS

Bright spots of genius and inspiration in science, business, engineering, entertainment, education and more—from astrophysics and clean energy to puppeteering and poetry.





Star Student

Astrophysicist Louise Edwards, BSc '01, was one of the first Black Canadians to earn a PhD in physics, she's an expert on the evolution of galaxies, her face has appeared on a Canadian stamp—and she's only getting started.

BY JENNY MANZER, BA '97
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RUBY WALLAU

Louise Edwards fell in love with the skies as a girl, staring up at the stars on the back porch with her father. “I was born and raised in Victoria, and have real strong distinct memories of hanging out with my dad on our back porch with our telescope set up. I guess it was my grandfather’s telescope,” she says.

Later, she visited the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory with her science class at Reynolds Secondary School. “I saw Saturn with the ring for the first time with my own eyes through that telescope. I still remember that, viscerally.”

Her parents were both high-school teachers—her father taught math and French; her mother taught biology and English. Academics and science were revered in their Quadra Village household. But Edwards’ fascination with space was also fuelled by her love of science fiction and pondering how much of it could be true.

She inhaled the works of Robert Heinlein, a novelist known for scientific accuracy in his fiction, and watched *Star Trek: Next Generation*. She wanted to know if phenomena like photon torpedoes or time travel could be real. “If you talk to most physicists, they probably love science fiction,” she observes.

Edwards attended UVic after high school in part because she got a scholarship, was able to live at home and could afford to go. It was also a prime place to study the stars. “UVic just happened to be one of the best places to do astronomy,” she recalls, noting the observatory was right up the road. Edwards earned a Bachelor of Science in physics and astronomy with a minor in mathematics from UVic in 2001.

Her love of space then led her to Saint Mary’s University in Halifax for a Master’s in Astronomy, then onto Laval University in Quebec for a PhD in Physics—she was in French immersion classes in Victoria, which allowed her to study at a French-speaking university. She is noted online as being the first Black Canadian to earn a PhD in astronomy, and while this is tricky to verify, she is most certainly among the first.

Edwards is currently an associate professor of physics at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, a small city halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Before joining Cal Poly in 2016, Edwards lectured in the astronomy department at Yale University and was an assistant professor of physics at Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB.

While at UVic, she was part of the co-op program, which set her on a life-long course of doing hands-on research. In fact, she started the groundwork of the research into galaxies that she continues today. UVic professors Ann Gower and Arif Babul were important influences and astronomer Dr. John Hutchings, an affiliate of the National Research Council of Canada’s Victoria-based Herzberg Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Centre, was an early mentor. They worked together at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory for a co-op term.

“He was my first research mentor and had a huge influence. He was really great. He was so

LOUISE EDWARDS was pictured on a commemorative Canadian stamp in 2002, honoring Saint Mary’s University’s 200th anniversary. After earning her undergrad at UVic, she went on to a Master’s in Astronomy there.



laid back,” Edwards says. Hutchings and Edwards wrote a paper together, working on research involving galaxy clusters. Hutchings told her that astronomy was his hobby, his true passion in life—not just his job. “He had a wonderful outlook,” she recalls.

Hutchings remembers Edwards as a star student. “She was very lively, very enthusiastic, hardworking. We wrote a paper together and she did a lot of the work. It was a good term,” says Hutchings, a retired UVic adjunct professor of astronomy and physics, who has published more than 400 scientific articles.

You don’t need to speak with Edwards long on a Zoom call to see that she’s passionate and driven. Edwards is married to Mark Beasley-Murray, an English as a Second Language teacher, and they have a two-year-old son, Skyler, and a five-year-old daughter, Willow. Edwards, as a working parent with young children, seems as if her sci-fi books imparted a secret to super-human energy. But the real reason is far more simple.

“I love my job, OK?” she says, leaning forward and clasping her hands. “I love it.”

Edwards also loves her hometown of Victoria—and returns to visit whenever she can. Her father, whose family roots are in Trinidad and Tobago, has



passed away, but her mother still lives in Quadra Village. Edwards has three accomplished siblings, who live in different parts of Canada. Victoria was “super not diverse” when she was growing up, Edwards recalls—though she says that is changing.

There are still very few people of colour working in astrophysics. At every stage of her journey, Edwards has worked to engage and mentor students to help improve diversity in her field, including through advocacy groups. She is also involved in a summer program with Yale professor Meg Urry that includes diversity and inclusivity training for students alongside astrophysics—so they better understand the barriers and how to overcome them.

Meanwhile, Canada’s physics field is still largely male and white, a 2021 survey shows. Can-PhysCounts led a national equity and inclusion survey of 3,000 people, including undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, faculty, members of research institutes, and industry and government workers. Preliminary data from the study, released in March 2021, showed only one per cent of respondents identified as Black.

Edwards stresses that while having an instructor who looks like you can be encouraging, *any* educator can help support students of colour. A National Science Foundation study suggested it’s most important that educators be willing to mentor students effectively and to care about them. Educators can also research organizations and be prepared to help connect students of colour with them—for example, the US-based National Society for Black Physicists.

“First of all, it is important that there’s space for women and people of colour in STEM. Get to know the societies, so that you can mention them to your classes or to your research students in general and get the word out, so people who can use those connections know about them.”

Edwards is an expert in the formation and evolution of Brightest Cluster Galaxies. A galaxy is a collection of stars, dust, gas and dark matter. Brightest Cluster Galaxies are particularly lacking in gas and dust—they basically have only old stars.

“Sometimes we call them ‘old, red and dead,’” says Edwards, noting that stars redden as they age. The age of old stars can help determine the age of the universe—and if researchers see red ones, they’ve found something really old. Astronomers want to know—if these galaxies are old, were they the first galaxies? Studying how galaxies evolve, and galaxy clusters, can help determine the properties of the universe.

Edwards is poised to embark on an exciting new project in northern Chile. She’s part of a team of researchers testing new technology at the Vera C. Rubin Observatory. For the Legacy

Survey of Space and Time, an 8.4-metre telescope with a novel three-mirror design will be positioned on a mountain top to take pictures of the sky every few minutes. The 10-year project will produce a massive amount of astronomical data and result in the deepest, widest image of the universe to date. It is expected to produce 500 petabytes of data, the estimated equivalent of 10 billion filing cabinets of information.

Edwards has been selected as one of the first 300 people to test the platform using simulated data, which will help her form a research project to work on, so she can jump right in when the telescope is live in two years. Since she is part of

commissioning team, she will travel to Chile in the coming months to make sure everything works. Her whole family will go along for the trip. Fortunately, her husband, Beasley-Murray, whom she met while at Yale, is fluent in Spanish. He also does the bulk of the daily child care, allowing her the space to pursue her passions of research and teaching.

Her days as an astronomer are full and busy. She savours the sunny weather in San Luis Obispo, a place Oprah referred to as “America’s Happiest City.” Edwards and her young family live just outside the Cal Poly campus in faculty housing. She still enjoys science-fiction books and films when she can. (She gives the movie *Interstellar* two thumbs up. “It’s so well done!”) But for now, her life is sharply focused on two themes. “All of my time is work and family—and that’s perfect right now,” says Edwards. “It’s the perfect balance.” †



California Greening

Two UVic Engineering grads, **Aaron Fyke** and **Tyson Woeste**, are leading the push for cleaner energy from a home base in sunny, star-filled Los Angeles.

BY MATT O'GRADY

When it comes to California, there tends to be two types of immigrants: those who've known their whole lives they were destined for the bright lights of Hollywood or the tech buzz of Silicon Valley. And then there are those who find themselves there on vacation—and are captured by the glow of the Golden State.

Tyson Woeste, BEng '02, falls into that latter category. After graduating from UVic with an engineering degree, Woeste immediately went to work as a product engineer in Maple Ridge, BC, at the North American headquarters of E-One Moli Energy, one of the world's leading lithium-ion battery manufacturers. Then in March 2004, Woeste and two friends from UVic (Steve Knoke, BA '01, and Erik Garrett, BSc '02) decided to take a two-week road trip down to Mexico's Baja California.

"We had all spent time while at UVic surfing at Jordan River and Sombrio—and so we kind of fancied ourselves as surfers," says Woeste. "We hatched a plan: drive from Vancouver to Cabo San Lucas and back—and camp/surf along the way." They drove in shifts down the coast before finally stopping for their first night at Manhattan Beach in Los Angeles.

"We stayed and surfed for a couple days, and it was here that I was captivated by the California Dream: that you could live on the beach and chase a career in a place with perfect weather." When Woeste returned to Vancouver, he spent the rest of that spring and summer figuring out how he could move to Los Angeles. He decided the best way was as a student, and so he applied to UCLA and got into its MBA program, moving down in the spring of 2005.

Woeste has been in LA ever since—working for a variety of tech companies (including virtual reality start-up Transported, which he co-founded in 2015). More recently, he joined LA's Fifth Wall Ventures as a partner, launching the Climate Tech Fund in 2019 to invest in decarbonization, sustainability and

climate-friendly technologies for the real-estate industry. (Woeste left Fifth Wall in 2021, but continues to invest in the clean-tech space.)

He says his move from engineering to venture capital was driven by the realization that "the real forces that would drive and shape civilization's transition to a sustainable energy future were those of business, capital allocation and politics." And for him, California was the place where all of that came together; the sunny skies and good surf were a nice bonus.

Still, on reflection, Woeste traces everything he's done throughout his career—especially his focus on clean-tech—back to UVic Engineering.



TYSON WOESTE with his wife, Laura, and children, Remy, three, and Miles, two, posing in their backyard.

"There were basically two people who were quite transformative for me: David Sanborn Scott and Ged McLean," says Woeste. Dr. Scott had founded UVic's Institute for Integrated Energy Systems (IESVic) to focus on fuel-cell systems, cryofuel liquefaction and energy-systems analysis, while Dr. McLean served as IESVic's executive director during Woeste's undergrad years. Scott was also working on a book at the time, called *Smelling Land: The Hydrogen Defense Against Climate Catastrophe*,

and Woeste recalls how he would use his class to get feedback on early manuscripts.

"So you had this subject matter, which [Scott] specialized in, as well as this passion to design energy systems that were low carbon," says Woeste. "Even to this day, my basic guiding assumptions about how everything works and how we should fix it are his orientation."

Over the past 30 years, UVic has developed a stellar reputation for its work in climate science—and through the mentorship of teachers such as Scott and McLean, a generation of graduates have infiltrated technology and venture capital, looking to change the world. And more than one of them have moved to California to make that happen.

Aaron Fyke, BEng '95, is the founder of Thin Line Capital, an early-stage venture capital firm based in Pasadena that invests in companies working to solve climate challenges in energy, water and food sustainability.

This year, Fyke is celebrating 20 years in Los Angeles. "For what I want to do in clean energy, California has been a long-time world leader, and I'm really proud to be part of that story. However, maintaining my ties to Canada has been important to me. Canada has been aggressive at pursuing policies that are much more focused on climate change. On a national scale, Canada is implementing a lot of things that the US doesn't have."

Still, the sheer size of LA has allowed people like Fyke and Woeste (whose paths occasionally cross) to carve out a niche in clean-tech investments, right in the heart of car culture. According to data firm Pitchbook, there were \$6.4 billion USD in Southern California "climate tech" deals in the first 10 months of 2021—twice as much as for all of 2020.

"If Silicon Valley, if the Bay Area, didn't exist, LA would be considered this massive beacon of activity for startups—but because it is there, LA is somewhat in its shadow," says Fyke. "But I have no desire to move to the Bay and be one of hundreds of funds chasing deals."

Originally Fyke planned to pursue a degree in physics at UVic, but after his first year, he realized he didn't want a career in research. "When I transferred into engineering that fall, one of the second-year classes was thermodynamics, taught by David Scott," recalls Fyke. "Almost immediately, I was like, 'This is *exactly* what I should be doing.'"

Prof. Scott became an important mentor to Fyke, leading to his chance to work at IESVic as the first undergrad involved during the organization's founding. The result of their collaboration led to a paper in the *International Journal of Hydrogen Energy*, and a continued lifelong friendship. Upon graduation, Fyke

took a job at BC Research Inc. (working on electric vehicle and transportation technologies), followed by three years at Burnaby clean-tech pioneer Ballard Power Systems.

Eventually, Fyke decided to take on bigger business challenges—and moved to Boston in 2000 for an MBA at MIT. He planned to return to Ballard, but when he graduated in 2002, North America was in a recession—and Ballard was struggling—so Fyke searched further afield for jobs, eventually landing in an LA-based company developing a solar-powered, fuel-cell hybrid airplane. That job, with AeroVironment, launched his clean-tech career in California, which has included stints in management (as co-founder and CEO of Heliogen, a solar-tech company backed by, among others, Bill Gates) as well as venture investments.

Fyke says he's proud to have played a part in growing LA's small-but-vibrant venture-capital scene. And he loves the life he has built there with his wife (a Colombian émigré he met in LA) and two kids, ages 11 and 13. He embraces the international flavour of the city of 10 million, with its mix of cultures and cuisines, and says he's even enjoyed the odd brush with celebrity. "I met

'Bill Nye the Science Guy,'" says Fyke. "The Planetary Society, of which he was president, has its headquarters here in Pasadena."

Tyson Woeste, for his part, says he's very much adopted the Southern California lifestyle. He married a volleyball player from Orange County, and now lives with his wife and two young children (ages two and three) in Marina Del Ray, a beachside community just up the coastline from where he first landed in 2004.

As for the surfing that lured him south? Well—the passion remains, says Woeste, but he isn't catching as many waves as he used to: "Not with two kids—not even close. But one day—one day—I'll get back." †



AARON FYKE and son at home in Pasadena.

Space to Grow

Astrophysicist **Julie Claveau, BSc '09**, has taken a fascinating career trajectory to her current work on the James Webb Telescope, which will reveal new secrets of the universe.

BY MICHAEL KISSINGER, BED '94



Billed as a successor to the Hubble Telescope, the James Webb Telescope will allow scientists to better understand how planets, stars and galaxies are born and evolve over time. Uvic alumna **JULIE CLAVEAU** is a program scientist at the Canada Space Agency working on the James Webb Telescope mission.



For someone who's spent most her life gazing up at the stars, Julie Claveau is very down to earth. Take a quick orbit around the UVic Science grad's social media universe and you'll discover Claveau is not only a Program Scientist for the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) who's been working on the newly launched James Webb Space Telescope, but a mother of three, a blogger, a YouTuber, an avid World of Warcraft gamer, violinist, dancer and former lifeguard. Her Instagram feed straddles the seemingly distant galaxies of astronomy, family, gardening and baking.

"People often have these stereotypes that if you're an astrophysicist you're this kind of person... But there are so many different facets of a person that adds to what they have to offer to the world, or a team," Claveau says on a Zoom call from her home in Montreal while intermittently getting interrupted by one of her school-aged children. "I really want to give back to the world just so people can learn from what I know."

The trajectory of Claveau's journey to working with the international space community on a \$10-billion telescope that's been billed as one of the most ambitious engineering initiatives

ever attempted is far from a straight line. There are stops along the way in Australia, Kitimat and Victoria. Her job experience includes everything from working in fast-food drive-thrus to a decade of climbing the rungs of federal bureaucracy.

Claveau became enthralled by outer space as a child when she would lie on the lawn, night or day, and stare up at the sky. "I would lie there for hours trying to imagine how far infinity was. Like, 'Oh, I'm looking this far... but it keeps going and it keeps going,'" she says. "It was a very mind-blowing concept to wrap my young brain around, that I still can't wrap my head around today."

Claveau grew up in Chicoutimi, Quebec, lived in Australia with her family for a time (where she became fluent in English) and graduated from high school in Kitimat, before enrolling at UVic as a science student. She eventually narrowed her focus to physics and astronomy.

"That's where all of my loves are. There was enough challenging problem-solving to satisfy my thirst. There was enough creativity and freedom in order for me to express myself. So that really was the turning point.... When I found physics and

astronomy [at UVic], it was so true to my heart, it was so engrained in my soul, it just made me so inherently happy that I knew I found my place.”

Julio Navarro was Claveau’s astronomy professor. “There are those students who are very proactive, and they are always trying to get to know more,” Navarro says. “She was very intense, as well. She would come to my office hours and ask me questions, so she was very passionate about astronomy. I think that’s one of the things that separates her from an average student—this passion for astronomy that you only see rarely.”

While attending UVic, Claveau subsidized her studies by working as a naval reservist at HMCS *Malahat*. Her father had been in the military and she was an air cadet in high school, so it was a natural fit. After graduating from UVic in 2009, Claveau returned to Quebec, feeling aimless and unsure of what to do with her physics degree.

After a few years working for Health Canada, Claveau realized she needed a change. She saw there was an opening at the Canada Space Agency for a mission planner for the RADARSAT-2 Earth observation satellite. Her background in physics, military operations, administration and project management ticked all the boxes.

Once at CSA, Claveau made it known that she was an astrophysicist and wanted to work in astronomy. Colleagues noted her passion and drive. Word got around and two years ago, she became Program Scientist for Space Astronomy, acting as a conduit between Canada and other countries, governments, space agencies and universities. Her primary focus, however, has been the James Webb Space Telescope mission. More than 25 years and \$10 billion in the making, the Webb Telescope is a collaboration between NASA, CSA and the European Space Agency (ESA), involving more than 1,000 people from 17 different countries.

Webb is often described as the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope, which launched in 1990 and has well exceeded its 10-year life expectancy, but it’s different, says Claveau. For one thing, it’s bigger. Webb’s primary mirror is 6.5-metres across, compared to Hubble’s 2.4-metre span, and consists of 18 gold-coated hexagonal sections resembling a honeycomb.

Webb’s home is also considerably farther away. Whereas Hubble floats 547 kilometres above Earth, Webb orbits the sun in line with Earth, 1.5 million kilometres away at what is called the second Lagrange point or L2. Due to its proximity to the sun, Webb relies on a tennis court-sized sunshield, which, along with the mirrors, had to be folded up in an origami pattern in order to fit into its rocket.

Unlike Hubble, Webb is designed to capture infrared light, allowing the telescope to see farther into the universe than ever before, which will allow scientists to better understand how planets, stars and galaxies are born and evolve over time. Claveau compares Webb to a time machine.

“We will be able to see about 13.5 billion years ago, because light takes time to travel,” Claveau says. “The light of our sun takes about eight minutes to get to us... So, when you look at the sun, you are actually looking eight minutes into the past. When we use Webb to look at this far distant light, we’ll be looking back at the beginning of the universe. Just being able to see that will have tremendous impacts on every single field of astronomy possible. We might discover things that we never thought existed... It’s going to completely revolutionize astronomy and our general understanding of the universe.”

Canada’s contribution to Webb is also significant. The CSA provided the telescope’s Fine Guidance Sensor (FGS) and the Near-Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph (NIRISS). The FGS helps Webb point and focus on specific objects with an accuracy Claveau compares to “seeing a baby’s hair from a kilometre away.” The NIRISS contains a highly sensitive camera that will determine the atmospheric compositions of exoplanets, which are planets light years beyond our solar system that orbit stars other than the sun.

“So far, we’ve been able to identify exoplanets... but we don’t know if they are inhabitable or if there could potentially be life there,” Claveau says. “With Webb, we will be able to know the composition of the atmospheres of those exoplanets, which means we will potentially find new life or habitable planets.”

Although Webb was launched into orbit on Christmas Day in 2021 from French Guiana on an ESA Ariane 5 rocket, it will take approximately five to six months before the first official images are produced and transmitted back to Earth. Thanks to Canada’s contributions, Canadian scientists are guaranteed at least five per cent of Webb’s observation time and will be among the first to benefit from Webb’s powerful instruments.

Claveau is also co-chair of the Women in STEM Advisory Committee at the Canadian Space Agency, and is helping organize a 2023 event with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) to promote women’s empowerment in space.

“Never stop looking up—I think it was Stephen Hawking who said that,” Claveau says. “As humans we are always looking down at our feet or we’re focused on our day-to-day existence. But the moment you start looking up, you have an out-of-body experience where you feel so small and immediately you are in wonder. Be curious, look up and dare to dream.” 🌟

Hidden Wonder

Puppeteer and UVic theatre grad **Ingrid Hansen** stars in hit children's shows and navigates the "complex universe" created by legend Jim Henson—all while never being seen.

BY JOHN THRELFALL, BFA '96



Left to right: Kira Hall, Aymee Garcia and UVic grad **INGRID HANSEN** puppeteering Marjory the Trash Heap on *Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock*.

If you made a list of the most fun careers, “professional puppeteer” would surely be somewhere near the top. And for any fan of fuzzy fur and funky foam, it doesn’t get much bigger than Jim Henson and *Sesame*—which is exactly where one stellar alumna is making a name for herself—even though she rarely shows her face.

Ingrid Hansen, BFA '09, has lead roles in the Jim Henson Company’s *Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock* and *Sesame Workshop’s Helpsters*, and is quickly becoming one of Canada’s top puppeteers. A self-described “theatre creator, puppeteer, voice actor and prison-theatre artist,” Hansen’s resume is filled with shows on leading networks, including Apple TV+, Amazon Prime, Treehouse, Teletoon, Peacock, APTN and YouTube.

“You have to be a little bit insane to want to do this, but I absolutely love it,” Hansen says with a hearty laugh. “On *Helpsters*, for instance, I got to create an original character: I play a big, loveable, goofy orange monster named Heart, who’s the size of a refrigerator.” But this means more than just putting on a costume: in fact, it takes three people to bring Heart to life. (Hansen handles the voice, mouth and left arm.) “I have a great

support team.... If I get too hot, they shove an electric leaf-blower down the collar and give me a shot of fresh air.”

The Kelowna-raised Hansen has three seasons of the Emmy-winning *Helpsters* behind her, performing alongside celebrity guests like Hollywood star Danny Trejo, Broadway legend Alan Cummings and Grammy-winning singer Norah Jones, as well as a team of top-tier LA comedy writers. “Working on that show is a dream! It’s so full of personality.”

Given the candy-coloured nature of most kids’ shows, it’s easy to think that a puppeteer simply has fun professionally—but, as with any specialized art form, there’s a lot more to it than that.

“Every day is pretty fun, but I have incredibly long hours and it’s technically, mentally and physically challenging,” she says. “Puppeteers call ourselves ‘professional problem solvers’ because everything a puppet does is kind of a stunt: puppets don’t have opposable thumbs, can’t do basic things like pick up a pencil and they break all the time. We constantly have to find tricks and create solutions to make them look alive.”

Hansen is also thrilled with her four-month gig on the Calgary-filmed *Fraggle Rock* reboot—a show she loved as a child.



Left: Ingrid Hansen as the character Heart (orange monster) on *Helpsters*.
Right: Hansen puppeteering Num Num Bird on *Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock*.

“Any time it was on we all freaked out and ran to the TV,” she recalls. “I remember being fascinated by all the creatures—the humans, the Fraggles, the little green Doozers and the big monstrous Gorgs.”

Bringing the walkaround character Ma Gorg back to life meant Hansen had to both study the original character work and add her own distinctive flair, while wearing a rebuild of the original costume. “I was wearing a puppet that was older than I was... and it didn’t even smell.”

Fraggle Rock is a great example of how puppetry—a performance tradition spanning cultures and continents that dates back at least 2,500 years—embodies more than just cute characters.

“*Fraggle Rock* was created by Jim Henson as an international children’s series with the goal of ending war,” she explains. “All these creatures are interconnected in ways they don’t always understand... it’s a really complex universe for a children’s show, where they dive into deep topics like division, exclusion and water shortages—but still with that overarching theme of interconnectivity between all living things.”

Hansen is no stranger to big topics herself. She was co-artistic director (alongside fellow theatre grad Kathleen Greenfield) of the SNAFU Society of Unexpected Spectacles. Hansen also worked with Victoria’s acclaimed prison theatre company, William Head on Stage (WHoS), since 2008.

“I feel honoured to work out there,” she says. “The incarcerated artists are the most hard-working, ingenious people I have ever known: it really challenges them to work on a creative pro-

ject that requires intense teamwork and trust. And it continually grounds me in the power of the performing arts as something relevant that can be life-changing on both sides of the curtain.”

Having co-authored and performed in 21 live SNAFU shows—including the award-winning productions *Little Orange Man*, *Kitt & Jane* and *Interstellar Elder*—Hansen also managed to stay busy during COVID. “I’ve been very fortunate to be able to keep creating,” she says. “SNAFU did *Epidermis Circus*, which was a livestream for the National Arts Centre performance series as well as a live drive-in show in Victoria and Vancouver, created a podcast show with WHoS, performed in Victoria’s outdoor SKAMPede festival and developed a series of short films that will be released soon.”

She has also maintained her campus connection over the years, whether by showcasing a solo show at the Phoenix Theatre or working with alumni at WHoS and Theatre SKAM’s SKAMPede festival. Indeed, just the day before this interview, she gave a talk to current students in the Fine Arts 101 “Creative Being” class. (Her advice to these future creatives? “Don’t wait for somebody else to give you a job. Make what you want.”)

Finally, given the current renaissance of puppetry and animation, does she still have any dream gigs to check off? “If they make any more of the new *Dark Crystal* show, that would for sure be on my bucket list—they used every puppeteer in the UK to make it. But really, I’m working on my dream project now,” Hansen concludes with a bright chuckle. “I’m so grateful—I feel like the luckiest little fart-face in the world. And I’m having a lot of fun doing it.” 🍌

World of Words

Star poet, UVic associate professor, filmmaker and world traveller **Shane Book**, BA '99, finds inspiration in hip-hop, jazz and never staying in one place.

BY MICHAEL KISSINGER, BED '94



When Shane Book began teaching poetry workshops at the University of Victoria in 2017, he had to fill out a form listing the number of times he had moved. After some mental gymnastics, he arrived at an approximate number: 65.

"I think I'm on the spectrum of it's beneficial and then it's not beneficial," says Book, who was born in Peru to a white Canadian father and a Black Trinidadian mother. His father worked for the Canadian International Development Agency, helping communities establish clean drinking water, so Book spent much of his childhood split between Ghana and Ottawa. Book's mother was a teacher at Ghana International School. As an adult, Book crisscrossed the continent several times over chasing degrees, fellowships and teaching gigs, with stints in New York, Philadelphia, Iowa City, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Nashville, Bowling Green, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria, to name a few. He also lived in Brazil, Cuba, Italy, France and Trinidad and Tobago.

"It's made me a little bit more flexible than the average human being in terms of change," Book says. "You have to be when you're a kid and you're moving around and you're the new kid in the school—and culturally more fluid because I'm comfortable in a lot of different cultural milieus. It probably would've made me a good spy."

MULTIPLE ART FORMS

As it turns out, the skills required to be a secret agent are transferable to that of an award-winning poet and filmmaker. Book's

first poetry collection, *Ceiling of Sticks*, won the Prairie Schooner Book Prize and the Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writers Award. His second collection, *Congotronic*, was shortlisted for the Griffin Poetry Prize. According to publisher House of Anansi: "Book's poems splice, sample, collage, and jump-cut language from an array of sources, including slave narratives, Western philosophy, hip-hop lyrics and the diaries of plantation owners."

In 2013, Book made a short film called *Dust*, based on one of his poems. His second film, 2017's *Praise and Blame*, is billed as "a dark comedy about poets, exiles, burglars, secrets and the intellectual elite," and stars Costas Mandylor of the *Saw* movie franchise. Both films screened at more than 50 festivals around the globe and won numerous awards.

Lately, Book, an associate professor of Writing at UVic, has been delving into the Criterion Channel's enjoyably gritty catalogue of blaxploitation films from the early 1970s, such as *Shaft*, *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* and *Across 110th Street*, while completing his third poetry collection, slated for release later this year. *All Black Everything* is a mashup of voices and styles that's both performative and musical. "It has a lot of hip-hop references and these kinds of attitudes that you see in hip-hop, this kind of braggadocio and that kind of stuff that is maybe not as common in poetry," Book says. "And then it also has more modernist, lyric poems. So, it's a real mixture."

Originally, Book had intended to sample lyrics from rappers throughout the collection until his publisher informed him that securing permission would be costly—to the mic-dropping tune of \$26,000. So, Book's been rewriting 93 of the passages that contained hip-hop lyrics, keeping only three. He won't say who made the cut except that the trap-infused rhymes of Atlanta rapper Young Thug will make an appearance. "I feel like a lot of poems that I read now are very sanctimonious. People are really like, 'I'm going to teach you something. This is my wisdom.' And I just was getting tired of that. I wanted to write something not trying to teach people. There's meaning hidden in there, but it's trying to be fun, entertaining."

FORM AND FREEDOM

Book's first exposure to rap and hip-hop came while living in West Africa, when his school friend Kevin, an American kid,

introduced him to hip-hop records and breakdancing.

"It blew my mind. I was like, 'This is what I want to do.' So we started breakdancing. We claim to have introduced breakdancing to Ghana. I think we probably did."

Book says rap's wordplay and "progressive elements" had an immediate and lasting impact on him, from its DIY aesthetic to connecting him to his roots.

"Just making something out of very little, like just a turntable and a microphone. There's also something simpatico [about rap]. It is essentially a Caribbean music. Like it's morphed into what we know of it today, but I think of the similarities to old-school dancehall, reggae, and then even going to calypso [from] Trinidad—like that political talk, talking about the day, the news, that way of music being super verbal. I think it's in all of those forms and it probably really influenced me because it's really valued. And I think verbal dexterity in Black communities is really valued."

Despite the lyrical nimbleness, sampling, remixing and cross pollination that hip-hop offers, Book is also a fan of traditional poetic structures. In his poem "Santa Cruz," for instance, he employs a sestina, a form that goes back to the 12th century, and features the intricate repetition of end-words in six stanzas and an *envoi* (or short final stanza).

"I think that's the benefit of form—it allows you to have something to work against."

The creative spark that experimentation within tight structures can ignite is also what attracted Book to the early bebop of Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus and later the more avant-garde jazz explorations of Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman. Before setting his compass on poetry, Book had aspirations of becoming a professional jazz saxophonist. "I think I liked jazz because it seemed like individuals would coalesce as a group and then leave, go off and do their solo and then come



Congotronic was Book's second collection of poetry. His latest, *All Black Everything*, is expected out soon.

back, always returning... There's something about the formal constraints of jazz with moments of freedom."

Since joining UVic's Writing department, Book has had time to reflect on his own experiences as a student in the 1990s. During his first year as an undergrad, Book lived in a tricked-out 1979 Dodge extended van with raised fibreglass roof, evading UVic security and the ever-vigilant local police and parking enforcement. Now he occupies his former Writing instructor and novelist Jack Hodgins' office and walks the same halls of his early mentors, poets Lorna Crozier and Patrick Lane.

He says returning to the very place that helped form his younger self made him reflect. "It definitely made me look at my life again in a pretty unvarnished way, like really take stock and face certain things that I thought I had overcome and try to not feel like I'm part of a *Groundhog Day* scenario. Like what was that last 20 years of struggling? What was that about? But it's been great."

Like most poets, Book has spent much of his professional life hustling—for grants, scholarships, fellowships and teaching positions. It's arguably the least romantic aspect of a poet's life.

"You feel at times like you're working in a small outpost, for a tiny country with one embassy, and you're the only representative," Book says.

As for the current state of poetry, Book is cautiously optimistic. If book sales might be down, the internet is also helping poetry reach a younger generation. "I was never worried about why anybody would read [poetry] or if they wouldn't, because if I think about it too much I would probably go into a state of despair," Book says, laughing. "But I think poetry will always exist as long as people have language... I think poets really revivify and clean up the language and restore the dignity to the language and at their best give people the experience of what it's like to be a human being." ¶

Meet the 2022 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients

The University of Victoria and the University of Victoria Alumni Association celebrate the recipients of the 2022 Distinguished Alumni Awards in three categories (Presidents' Alumni Awards, Emerging Alumni Awards and Indigenous Community Alumni Awards). Visit uvic.ca/distinguished-alumni to read the bios and interviews with all recipients.

Presidents' Alumni Awards

Top awards given by the president of UVic and the president of the UVAA to distinguished alumni. The Presidents' Alumni Award is the Alumni Association's highest honour. This award recognizes the outstanding lifetime accomplishments of alumni who have earned national or international regard or have had significant local impact as a result of their outstanding professional achievements and/or service to society.

DAMINEH AKHAVAN

Bachelor of Engineering, 2005;
Bachelor of Science, 2006; Master
of Business Administration, 2011.
Senior engineer in the
aerospace industry, diversity in
STEM advocate

LYNNE BEECROFT

Bachelor of Arts, 1982; Master of
Education, 1994
Olympian and Vikes field-
hockey coach

KAREN CLARK COLE

Bachelor of Arts, 1991
CEO and co-founder of Blink UX;
executive director of non-profit
Girls Can Do

SARAH HUNT, TŁALIŁILA'OGWA

Bachelor of Arts, 1999; Master of
Arts, 2007
Kwakwaka'wakw writer,
researcher, professor and
community activist

DEREK JUNO

Bachelor of Commerce, 2011
Social entrepreneur, speaker
and founder of Elysium Retreat

ROBERT NIVEN

Bachelor of Science, 2001
CEO, founder and chair of
CarbonCure Technologies

MADELINE REDFERN

Bachelor of Laws 2005
COO of CanArctic Inuit Networks
Inc.

DOUGLAS WHITE

Bachelor of Arts, Geography
Resource Management 1972;
Diploma in High Performance
Coaching, 1992
Vikes and Olympic Rowing
coach



DAMINEH AKHAVAN



LYNNE BEECROFT



KAREN CLARK COLE



SARAH HUNT, TŁALIŁILA'OGWA



DEREK JUNO



ROBERT NIVEN



MADELINE REDFERN



DOUGLAS WHITE

Emerging Alumni Awards

Recognize the outstanding professional achievements and/or contributions of recent alumni to the community. Recipients must have been graduated 10 years or less at time of nomination deadline.

DEVESH BHARADWAJ

Bachelor of Engineering, 2017
CEO and co-founder of Pani
Energy

CAROL LINNITT

PhD in English, and Cultural,
Social and Political Thought, 2021
Journalist, editor and co-
founder of *The Narwhal*

KIM SENKLIP HARVEY

Master of Fine Arts in Writing,
2021
Director, playwright, actor

SAGE LACERTE

Bachelor of Arts, 2020
CEO and founder of Sage
Initiative

BRYCE HUGO JONES

Bachelor of Science, 2016
CEO and founder of Flash Forest

Indigenous Community Alumni Awards

Recognize contributions of alumni to Indigenous communities, which have improved outcomes for Indigenous people and contributes to Truth and Reconciliation.

DENIS ST. CLAIRE

Bachelor of Arts, 1970
Educator, archaeologist and
ethnographer

SHALENE JOBIN

Bachelor of Commerce, 2001 from
University of Alberta; PhD,
Political Science and Indigenous
Studies, 2015 from University of
Alberta
Educator, author, Canada
Research Chair in Indigenous
Governance

JACYLIN "JACE" MEYER

Bachelor of Education, 2011
Advocate for Indigenous
entrepreneurs, educator,
speaker and artist

MARION NEWMAN - NEGE'GA

Bachelor of Music, 1993
Opera singer, radio host,
teacher, dramaturge, director
and arts advisor

LYDIA HWITSUM

Law degree in 1997, Certificate of
Administration of Aboriginal
Governments in 1993; and a
Diploma in Public Sector
Management in 1993
Leader in Indigenous
governance

LOU-ANN NEEL

Certificate in Administration of
Aboriginal Governments, 1995;
Diploma in Public Sector
Management, 1995.
Kwagiulth artist, curator and
arts advocate

CORY STEPHENS

Bachelor of Commerce, 1996
Business instructor, mentor and
champion of Indigenous
entrepreneurship



DEVESH BHARADWAJ



BRYCE HUGO JONES



CAROL LINNITT



KIM SENKLIP HARVEY



SAGE LACERTE



DENIS ST. CLAIRE



LYDIA HWITSUM



SHALENE JOBIN



JACYLIN "JACE" MEYER



LOU-ANN NEEL



MARION NEWMAN - NEGE'GA



CORY STEPHENS

2023 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

Now is your chance to nominate an exceptional graduate for the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Awards! The UVic Alumni Association is looking for remarkable alumni to celebrate in three award categories – Presidents' Alumni Awards, Indigenous Community Alumni Awards and Emerging Alumni Awards. Visit uvic.ca/distinguished-alumni to learn how to submit a nomination.

Between Sisters

Aggie and Mudgy: The Journey of Two Kaska Dena Children, by UVic anthropology alumna **Wendy Proverbs**, traces the 1,600-kilometre voyage of sisters forced from their remote village to Lejac Residential School.

BY JENNY MANZER, BA '97

WENDY PROVERBS



Aggie and Mudgy are the names two sisters chose for themselves because they rejected the names assigned to them when they were baptized into the Catholic Church. Their Indigenous names, those given to them by their Kaska Dena community in a remote BC village, were lost over their years in residential school.

“They didn’t like the names the priests gave them, so they renamed themselves. To the day they died, they still called each other Aggie and Mudgy. That’s quite powerful, I think. They never accepted the priest’s names,” says author Wendy Proverbs.

The two sisters are the main characters in Proverbs’ novel for preteens, *Aggie and Mudgy: The Journey of Two Kaska Dena Children*, published by Heritage House last fall. The book follows the Indigenous girls, aged eight and six, as they travel from their home village of Daylu to Lejac Residential School in central BC. They are accompanied by an unkind priest, Father Allard, a sinister man who wears long black robes. The novel is complemented by illustrations from Alyssa Koski.

Their trip covers a stunning 1,600 kilometres, including a border crossing and transport by riverboat, mail truck, paddle wheeler, steamship and train. Even more astonishing is the fact that this part of the story is factual—based on the true story of Proverbs’ biological mother, Mudgy, and her aunt, Aggie.

Proverbs was adopted as an infant during the era known as the Sixties Scoop, when many Indigenous children were removed from their families and placed in the child-welfare system. She was fortunate to be adopted into a loving family, and grew up in Prince George. As an adult, she began to learn more about her birth family. While working on her Masters at UVic in 2012, she received a copy of

her aunt’s memoir, which included details about that long journey. Proverbs shakes her head at the fact that the priest was also able to cross over into Alaska and back with the girls—apparently without being questioned or delayed.

In deciding to write about the story, Proverbs set out to honour the women and make sure they weren’t forgotten. “This was an opportunity to give Aggie and Mudgy a voice, and they also represent many other children across our country that went through many similar situations and were never heard.”

Proverbs created a fictional present-day story as scaffolding around the painful true details. The contemporary story begins with eight-year-old Maddy finding an old photograph of two young girls and asking who they are. Loving grandmother, Nan, shares the tale with Maddy over several days as they chat, drink tea, bake pies and go on field trips. The warmth and care of the contemporary family adds a gentle touch to the narrative for middle-school readers.

“Children maybe need a little cushion to... comprehend the harsh reality of what happened to these children,” observes Proverbs. Along the

way, readers learn historical and geographical facts about the many places—a kind of love letter to the land.

Proverbs intentionally chose the middle-grade audience after seeing a gap in books available about reconciliation. She is also hoping to reach young, open minds. “I don’t believe there’s enough literature aimed at that particular age group to get their minds thinking about Indigenous life and Canada and how we arrived at today—and how they relate and see Indigenous people. I think that was my original goal.”

While she had her aunt’s memoir as source material (a work written for immediate family), Proverbs also visited archives and consulted church records, although many from residential schools have not been made public. While researching, she found a note about her uncle, who, sadly, appeared to arrive at Lejac after his sisters. Proverbs discovered he was sent home to Daylu after contracting tuberculosis and died there in 1938.

Proverbs made an intentional decision to have the scope of the book only cover the journey, not life at residential school, though the fictional grandmother, Nan, alludes to the difficulties the girls faced there. “It was more about their journey and about the survivors, which are the fictional family of Nan and Maddy—and how they are more or less resilient, carrying on with life, and that sort of gives the whole fullness of the story.”

Reading the book, one is struck by Koski’s illustrations of the small sisters, side by side, alone together. “In their hearts, they knew what they were born as, but between the sisters they were just Aggie and Mudgy, and that was a deep bond. It was just the two of them for so long. They were just eight and six when they left their communities,” says Proverbs. “If there was one blessing, it was that they had each other.”

In her own life, Proverbs is married to UVic alumnus Trevor Proverbs, BA ’74, a strong supporter of her writing. They have two children, Geoff and Tracey. Proverbs is now a grandmother herself—much like the character of Nan—and she



Aggie and Mudgy: The Journey of Two Kaska Dena Children by Wendy Proverbs.

adores her grandsons. “They are my shining lights. I love being a grandmother.”

Proverbs attended UVic as a mature student, earning a Bachelor of Arts and then a Masters, both in anthropology. She says her UVic education made her a better writer. “My degrees provided a comprehensive understanding of human and cultural development, but also a deeper understanding of Indigenous people and their vital contribution to the vibrant society that we exist in now.”

Proverbs enjoys writing for middle-grade readers, and is currently researching a book on adoption, a topic she believes is under-covered in literature for young people. *Aggie and Mudgy* has earned several nominations, including for the Governor General’s Literary Awards and the Indigenous Voices Awards. In March, the book won a Jeanne Clarke Award, given by the Prince George Public Library to recognize outstanding contributions to promoting local and regional history. Proverbs hopes the book will be widely available to schools. “My dream is for this to become a tool within the educational systems for librarians and teachers to pick it up and to share it with their class.”

The real Aggie and Mudgy went on to have difficult adult lives. The two sisters survived residential school, but were not well educated—and economic times were tough. They both worked as domestics. Aggie married and Mudgy had two common-law unions—though the relationships were not good ones. Proverbs’ mother, Mudgy, had 12 children, of which 10 were either put into foster care or placed into adoption. Proverbs has reconnected with several of her biological siblings, and has become particularly close to her birth sister, Barb, who lives in Sechelt—and was able to read an early draft of the book.

As Proverbs writes in the acknowledgments, her birth mother, Mudgy, gave her the gift of siblings. Together, she and Barb travelled to Daylu to see where their biological mother and aunt were born. “The significance of two sisters returning to Daylu close to 85 years after another two sisters were forced to leave was not lost on us. However, that is another story to tell.” ¶

The Biking Baker

Theatre grad **Markus Spodzieja** went from the stage to starting a unique kosher bakery.

We profile UVic alumni who recently made a bold life change.

Name: **MARKUS SPODZIEJA**, owner/operator of The Bikery Baked Goods

Age: Three decades' young (30).

Hometown: I like to say that I've been born and raised on the Island, but specifically: Tofino > Comox Valley > Campbell River > Victoria.

UVic degree and year: I graduated in 2015 with a BFA in Acting from the UVic Phoenix Theatre department.

What I used to be: I've been, in order of appearance: warehouse picker, pirate, stagecraft carpenter, food runner, costume actor, bartender, bar manager, barista, prep cook and tech support customer service guru. After graduation I also worked a year with Working Class Theatre, but was finding that theatre wasn't as much my calling as it once was.

Then I had the idea to: In 2017, an article was shared with me regarding the City of Victoria's new pilot project: The Mobile Bike Vending Permit. The idea was to take a business and find a way to integrate it onto the back of a bicycle. My job at the time had been giving me some creative licence in the kitchen, and I had become really taken with the idea of pretzels. I successfully crowdfunded some capital, enough to purchase a bike, materials to build a cart attachment and supplies/ingredients.

How I did it: Through The Bikery's infancy, I worked two successive full-time cafe jobs that allowed me the use of their space in the mornings when their establishments were otherwise closed. I would bake off a few dozen pretzels, load up the bike and hit the streets. Using social media to tag photos and locations, I slowly built a following of tourists and regulars around the city. Eventually this turned into farmers' markets, office orders and door-to-door deliveries utilizing an online

ordering system, until finally, in 2021, we were able to open the doors of our very own environmentally-focused kosher bakery space.

What I love about my new life: I love the regulars. The monthly, weekly and sometimes daily friendly faces that keep coming back because something as simple as a fresh bagel or pretzel is enough to make their day just a little bit brighter. I don't want to over embellish too much—the hours are long and the multitasking exhausting. But being able to stand back and watch a fully stocked storefront of baked goods—the result of a full morning's work—gradually disappear before your eyes is extremely rewarding.

What I miss about my old life: I miss evening activities. Going out to theatre, enjoying the night life of Victoria, or digging into a good board game with friends. Starting work at the stroke of midnight is a quieter life for sure.

One lesson learned: Pace yourself. The beginning of a new endeavour is exciting and can quickly become all-consuming. The biggest lesson learned is how to transition your headspace and responsibilities in a healthy way to accommodate the brand-new life you're about to undertake. You can't run a marathon without warming up first.

One person who helped me: Narrowing this down isn't fair to my family, who instilled in me the work ethic I have today; the countless local business owners who have helped guide me through the trials of early entrepreneurship; my business partner, Kimanda, without whom our business in its present kosher form would not exist, and my wife, Rina, who has been my rock and guiding light through thick and thin.

One trade secret: A cup of flour is 150g, a cup of sugar is 200g and an egg is 50g. Never underestimate the power of simple mind-math calculations.

You can find me: The Bikery can be found in the Victoria Public Market at 1701 Douglas St., facing the far side of the building. We offer no cost, emissions-free delivery on orders over \$10 when placed online at thebikery.ca. Look for our pretzel bike hitting the streets again this summer! 🥨



Cool Beans

UVic alumnus **Doug Pelton** enjoys serving locals at **Gonzales Coffee**.

We profile enterprises run by UVic alumni.

UVic alumnus Doug Pelton, BSc in Computer Science '89, has owned a couple of software companies over the past 25-plus years and still runs Priologic Software Inc., a direct link to his Computer Science degree from UVic. His family bought Keating Pizza three years ago and, more recently, also developed an old Starbucks location in Fairfield Plaza into Gonzales Coffee. Keating Pizza was around for 30 years before he took it over, and Gonzales Coffee is a startup. Pelton runs Gonzales Coffee with the help of manager Sam Benson, a former Café Fantastico employee.

"I thought about retiring, but it seemed more interesting to try another type of business. It has been especially interesting over the past few years with COVID and now the resulting supply-chain issues and increasing wages across both industries. Lots of problem solving," says Pelton.

My business: Gonzales Coffee/Keating Pizza Inc.

What we do: Neighbourhood coffeeshop using Drumroaster beans and baking muffins, cookies and Liege Belgian Waffles from scratch.

Our team is: Our manager/cook and baristas are committed to quality, delivering high-quality food and drinks and excellent service.

Why we're unique: The food is made in-house or locally. We partnered with Drumroaster Coffee, one of the best local roasteries. We use real mugs when possible.

Our ideal customer is: Our neighbours in the mall and living in the surrounding communities of Gonzales, Fairfield, Oak Bay.

I wasn't expecting.... The length of COVID-19 and the increased food costs due to supply-chain issues and labour costs due to labour shortages.

We'll know we're successful when: Already there. Operating at a small profit and being the neighbourhood place while paying fair wages to our staff.

Where to find us: 1548 Fairfield Rd., Victoria (the old Starbucks location in Fairfield Plaza), facebook.com/keatingpizza

Bottom line: Running the business gives me purpose, keeping busy and interacting with all sorts of people. 🙌





Today, 34 UVic alumni can thank Frank for their degrees.

Frank Williams did not consider himself a wealthy person. He was a Victoria College alumnus who received financial assistance from a caring community member to pay for his education. Frank believed enough in the power of education and giving back to leave a gift to UVic students in his Will.

Who will tomorrow's students thank?

Find out how you can support UVic students through a gift in your Will:

Greg Kuhn, Associate Development Officer, Legacy Giving
250-721-6001 | legacydev@uvic.ca

uvic.ca/legacygiving



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A New Future for Law

Dr. Athena Madan and Drew Mildon launch an award to support Indigenous law students in UVic's joint-degree program.

BY ERIN HALL



DREW MILDON and DR. ATHENA MADAN
with their son, Deven.

Drew Mildon had not planned on becoming a lawyer. He hitchhiked across Canada to earn a degree in English from the University of Victoria before pursuing graduate studies in literature. Then he read an interesting legal decision.

"I was doing my master's in literature at UBC, when I read the Delgamuukw decision on Aboriginal title. It seemed like the biggest justice question in Canada, and I was fascinated with it. Reading that court case, I knew that was what I wanted to do for a living," he says.

Fast-forward 20 years and Mildon, BA '99, JD '06, is exactly where he wanted to be. Today, he is a partner at Woodward & Co. LLP where he works with First Nations governments and organizations in their fight for self-determination. The team at his legal firm was happy to provide support as UVic's ground-breaking program took shape. UVic now offers the world's first joint-degree program in Canadian common law (Juris Doctor, or JD) and Indigenous legal orders (Juris Indigenarum Doctor, or JID).

Not content to stop there, Mildon and his wife, Dr. Athena Madan, recently created the Presquito Murdoch Indigenous Law Award to support Indigenous students pursuing the joint-degree program. At the heart of their generous donation is a commitment to "creating, making and holding space for Indigenous voices."

The award honours the accomplishments of their grandmothers, who did not have access to educational opportunities but persevered to raise families

and give back to their communities. "My own ancestors are Cordilleran Filipino, who are politically active Indigenous land defenders," says Madan, who is the first person in her family to get a university degree. "My Lola would sit outside the gated area of the school in her village and squint through the slats of the wooden fence to learn how to read and write. She was self-taught because of her own will; the political will wasn't there for girls at the time to be educated."

"My hope is that someone might be inspired by our grandmothers' stories and feel more able to give to their own communities," adds Madan, who recently joined UVic as an assistant professor of sociology. "Hopefully, the fruit of their labours will assist with self-determination and help facilitate our own commitments to reconciliation in the Canadian landscape."

The couple hopes that the new law program will help amplify Indigenous laws and that these will be recognized to guide reconciliation. Despite frustrations after witnessing "continuing bureaucratic opposition to meaningful self-determination opportunities," Mildon is confident the JID is a step in the right direction.

The JD/JID is a four-year program, which combines classroom learning with field studies conducted in collaboration with Indigenous communities. Students obtain the full content of UVic's Common Law degree, together with enhanced skills to work productively with Indigenous legal orders.

The first cohort of the new program graduated this spring—and its impact is already apparent. "I interact with the work the Indigenous Law Research Unit is doing out there in the world. We're seeing its impact already on all sorts of levels, not the least of which, incorporation of Indigenous law into BC legislation," Mildon says. "The impact [the JD/JID] is going to have on the broader scale in Canada and internationally is unquestionable. This ball is rolling in a way that is not going to slow down or stop anytime soon." †

Class Notes

News and photos from around the alumni world

1960s

MARY SPILSBURY ROSS, Victoria College '60, has published a historical mystery novel called *No Intermission*. Ross's life is a gala of dance,



MARY SPILSBURY ROSS

travel, art and the written word. During the 1960s, she danced professionally through 11 countries in Europe and the Middle East before returning to Canada, where she taught ballet and modern-jazz dance before turning to writing. Her first publication, an international cookbook called *Frugal Feasts*, became an instant bestseller and led to a newspaper column that she penned for five years. *No Intermission* was inspired by her theatrical career, love of fine art and years of family travel. Ross lives on Vancouver Island. Find more information at mspilsburyross.com.

1970s

SUSAN J. WRIGHT, BA '74, began her studies in anthropology and ended up in law. After a fascinating legal career that took her from the board rooms of Calgary to the streets of Beijing, Wright changed

paths again, this time leading to the world of fiction as an author of legal thrillers and suspense. Her debut novel, *Box of Secrets*, was short listed for the 2021 Crime Writers of Canada Awards of Excellence for Best Unpublished Manuscript. *Box of Secrets* became an Amazon bestseller for legal thrillers and is available at Owl's Nest Bookstore in Calgary and Amazon Canada.



SUSAN J. WRIGHT

STEPHEN C. NORTON, BSc '78, MPA '86, has just published his seventh novel, *Fallen Meteor*, the fourth in a series on advanced technology and alien AI. His previous three-book series followed a Canadian archeologist-translator and her encounters with ancient scrolls depicting dramatically different biblical stories. Norton's books are available on Amazon and at stephencnorton.com. He says he's finding retirement often busier than when he was working full time.

1980s

DAVE PASIN, BA '82, is president and CEO of InTech Environmental, which focuses on the development and sale of green industrial cleaning products used in aerospace,

transportation and military cleaning applications. InTech Environmental recently purchased Pink Solution, the manufacturer of plant- and mineral-based, vegan, green consumer cleaning products, including laundry detergent, fabric softener, hand soap and Pink Solution Clean & Scrub all-purpose cleaners.

Double grad **DR. DOUG BRIGHT**, BSc '84, PhD '91, received UVic's REACH Award for Excellence in Research Partnerships. Bright, who works for environmental consultants Hemmera, teamed up with UVic prof Dr. Caren Helbing to develop a method of collecting environmental DNA to locate endangered animals without disturbing their habitat and to get early warning of invasive species.

ROY CULLEN, MPA '88, has had a busy few years. In 2020, he completed a mystery novel, *A Cursed English*, which takes place in Provence, France. That same year he won the seventh annual Amartya Sen Essay contest for his essay "Pulling the Plug on Money Laundering in British Columbia, Canada: Lessons Learned and Actions Required." The contest is sponsored by Global Financial



ROY CULLEN

Integrity (GFI), Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) and Yale University's Global Justice Program. He is currently working with a company to develop his book *Beyond Question Period, or What Really Goes on in Ottawa* into a movie or TV series, in hopes of garnering support in Hollywood.

DAWN DOIG, BSc '88, practised as an audiologist for 23 years in different parts of Canada, Kuwait, England and Saudi Arabia before completing her Master of Education degree from the College of New Jersey. She is currently the English-Language Learning coordinator at the American School of Yaoundé in Cameroon, and the author of 15 children's picture books. Doig is donating all proceeds from her book sales to help raise funds to build a new school for the deaf and an orphanage in Cameroon. For more information, go to dawnidoig.com.

JERRY CARTER, BSc '80, has retired after a successful 38-year teaching career. Stops along the way included a few years as a teacher on call, followed by a year teaching in Princeton, then Esquimalt High School and Lambrick Park Secondary before spending the last 28 years at Oak Bay High School. Carter says he loved coaching the golf team at Oak Bay where teams won a provincial gold medal, two silver medals and two bronze medals over that span.

The UVic Vikes women's field hockey team coached by double grad **LYNNE BEECROFT**, BA '82, MEd '94,

captured its third consecutive national championship title this year. Beecroft was also honoured with a Distinguished Alumni Award in April.

KATHERINE KNIGHT, MFA '84, has been making the festival rounds with her award-winning documentary, *Still Max*, about artist Max Dean. Earlier this year, the film screened at the Victoria Film Festival.



A still from **KATHERINE KNIGHT's** documentary *Still Max*.

1990s

GRAHAM CROSS, BSc '90, is currently in the physics department at Trinity College/University of Dublin as a faculty member as well as a principal investigator at CRANN, the nanotechnology institute connected to the college. In addition, Cross created the spinoff company Adama Solutions. For his efforts with Adama, Cross was awarded a Company Founder Award for 2021 by the college's Research and Innovation division.

CARMEN GORGICHUK, MFA '94, has been a faculty instructor of piano and musicology/theory at Northwestern Polytechnic (formerly Grande Prairie Regional College, AB) since 1997. Her research on women composers was published in the chapter "Sisters of Faith and Genius:



CARMEN GORGICHUK

Hildegard von Bingen and Nannerl Mozart" in *The Composer on Screen-Essays on Classical Music Biopics* (McFarland & Co. Inc.). Gorgichuk was the first female chair of the fine arts department in her institution's more than 50-year history, managing music, visual arts and drama from 2017 to 2021. She is currently on sabbatical studying music business through Berklee Online, Boston, and is creating an online version of the course Women in Music. She is the mother of three sons, all of whom attended UVic.

Naval reservist **DR. PATRICK MONTGOMERY**, BSc '91, MSc '93, was promoted to commodore last summer and is currently the commander of the Naval Reserve of Canada, as well as chair of the mathematics department of Camosun College.

Three UVic Alumni have become provincial court judges. UVic law graduates **SCOTT MULDER** (LLB '97), **MICHAEL MUNRO** (BA '85, LLB '90) and **NINA PUREWAL**, QC (BA '02, LLB '05) were appointed earlier in the year. Mulder has 22 years of experience in family and criminal law in northern BC and will sit in Quesnel. Munro, who has been a sole practitioner throughout his

career as well as teaching at UVic, will sit in Victoria. Purewal has a background that includes human rights work in Tanzania and child and youth advocacy. She will also serve in the north.

RACHEL DUNSTAN MULLER, BA '92, has launched a website, sticksandstonesandstories.com, to celebrate the one-year anniversary of her children's podcast, *Sticks and Stones and Stories*. Muller is the author of four trade-published children's novels and the recipient of a Canada Council Grant for an upcoming theatrical production, *Once Upon a Fiddle*. During its first year, episodes of Muller's podcast were downloaded in 307 cities in 36 countries, on every continent except Antarctica. The podcast is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and most other platforms.

Five Indigenous lawyers were elected to the leadership of the Law Society of BC and three are UVic alumni. **KELLY RUSS**, BA '90, **LINDSAY LEBLANC**, LLB '05, and **BRIAN DYBWAD**, LLB '93 all graduated from UVic. "It will be significant. I think it will be inspirational for other Indigenous lawyers coming up through the ranks," Russ told the CBC. "It's an opportunity for the law society and us to break down the barriers of acceptance that may have existed, in some people's minds, of the law society and how we can influence the legal profession as benchers, as lawyers, as judges from an Indigenous perspective."

UVic adjunct theatre professor **JACQUES LEMAY** and his wife, UVic alumna **JANIS DUNNING**,

Cert. Bus. Admin '98, are among 135 new appointments to the Order of Canada. Lemay and Dunning were both named to the Order of Canada by Governor General Mary Simon, LLD '16, in recognition of their outstanding and numerous contributions to the arts and to young artists in Canada.

LOU-ANN NEEL, Cert '95, Dipl '95, has been appointed to the newly established role of Indigenous lead on Creative BC's funding programs team. The veteran artist and arts administrator will spearhead the design and delivery of a suite of targeted programs to support Indigenous filmmakers. Neel was the first Indigenous Curator in the history of the Royal BC Museum, caring for the Indigenous Collections, and is the recipient of a 2022 Distinguished Alumni Award in the Indigenous Community Alumni Awards category.

Eight UVic alumni lit up *Vancouver Magazine's* 2022 Power 50 List. Among them: YVR CEO and SFU Chancellor **TAMARA VROOMAN**, BA '91, MA '95; TELUS president and CEO **DARREN ENTWISTLE**, LLD '16; Polygon Homes chair **MICHAEL AUDAIN**, Victoria College '60, LLD '09; North Delta MLA **RAVINDER "RAVI" KAHLOH**, CBA '03, DBA '05; Seniors Advocate for the Province of BC **ISOBEL MACKENZIE**, BA '87, MBA '97; Tula Foundation co-founder and director **ERIC PETERSON**, Hon. DSc '17; Nature's Path founders **ARRAN** and **RATANA STEPHENS**, Hon. DEd '21.

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University
of Victoria

2000s

LAURIE D. GRAHAM, BFA '08, has a new book of poetry called *Fast Commute*. Publisher McClelland & Stewart describes the work as: "A powerful book-length poem on environmental destruction and the violences of the colonial nation-states from the acclaimed author of *Settler Education*... It also wrestles with the impossibility of speaking ethically about 'the environment' as a settler living within and



benefiting from the will to destroy that so often doubles as nationalism." Find out more at

lauriedgraham.ca.

EDWIN WONG, BA '04, has published his second book, *When Life Gives You Risk, Make Risk Theatre*. It expands on the ideas laid out in Wong's debut book, *The Risk Theatre Model of Tragedy: Gambling, Drama, and the Unexpected*, and the notion that chance is a powerful and misunderstood force that directs the action, both on and off the stage. His vision of drama is one where risk is the dramatic fulcrum of the action. By making risk the cornerstone of their craft, actors are able to soar to new heights, as exemplified by the three prize-winning tragedies included in the book. The plays are paired with six theatre essays that explore chance, risk and uncertainty. Also, in his quest to define this global arts movement, Wong created the Risk Theatre Modern Tragedy Competition, a contest juried by

an international panel of professionals that awards \$13,000 to playwrights each year.

UVic alumna **SHANNON MALOVEC**, BSc '04, MSc '13, was named one of *Business in Vancouver's* Top 40 Under 40 for 2021. Malovec, the chief digital innovation officer for the Provincial Health Services Authority, was also named one of the top 10 women leaders by Digital Health Canada, and worked on BC's digital-health response to COVID-19.

Two companies run by UVic alumni made the annual 2022 Global Cleantech 100 list out of thousands of submissions from around the world. Both CarbonCure Technologies helmed by **ROBERT NIVEN**, BSc '01, and Pani Energy, led by **DEVESH BHARADWAJ**, BEng '17, are on the list chosen by Cleantech Group to mark private, independent and for-profit companies making an impact in sustainability. This year's list included entries from 94 countries. CarbonCure enables the concrete industry to improve operations while reducing carbon footprint. Pani Energy aims to accelerate the world's transition to a sustainable water supply. Both Niven and Bharadwaj were also honoured with a 2022 Distinguished Alumni Awards this year.

Journalist, editor and children's author **SARA CASSIDY**, MFA '07, has a new book out, published by Groundwood Books. Illustrated by Geraldo Valério, *Flock* tells the fantastical tale of a flock of feathery friends who show up for a feast. According to the publisher, "this delightfully

outlandish story explores a child's wonder, a parent's preoccupation and an ordinary afternoon that escalates into a surreal adventure."

Business in Vancouver has included **LAURA CUNDARI**, LLB '07, on its Top 40 Under 40 list for 2021. Cundari is a partner at the law firm Blake's, and has extensive experience litigating and arbitrating disputes in the food, beverage and agribusiness, energy, mining, construction, cannabis, hospitality, retail, technology and infrastructure sectors.

Multimedia platform Canadian Immigrant honoured **ZEN THARANI**, BSc '02, in its Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards. Tharani, a Health Information Science graduate, is CEO and founder of digital health consulting company Xenex Consulting.



A still from **SEAN HORLOR's** documentary, *Someone Like Me*.

UVic grad **SEAN HORLOR**, BFA '04, and Steve J. Adams' documentary *Someone Like Me* has been busy on the festival circuit including this year's Victoria Film Festival. The film follows the parallel journeys of a gay asylum seeker from Uganda and a group of strangers from Vancouver's queer community who are tasked with supporting his resettlement in Canada.

KENDRA JOHNSTON, BSc '05, cracked *Business in Vancouver's*

Top 40 Under 40 list for 2021. Johnston is the president and CEO of the Association for Mineral Exploration.

CHRYSTAL PHAN, BA '07, created "Once for a While," a series of oil paintings that "explore a Vietnamese family's awkward attempts at integrating into Canadian life." They were exhibited earlier this year at St. Matthias Anglican Church in Victoria.

JESSICA VERHAGEN, BA '07, made *Business in Vancouver's* Top 40 under 40 list for 2021. Verhagen is the CEO of Hydra Energy, a hydrogen energy provider for commercial fleets.

In February, **KYLE WILSON**, BA '03, started a contract as tech editor for the reference team of the New York-based digital research publication *Insider*.

MUNEESH SHARMA, Dipl '04, joins the ranks of several UVic alumni on *Business in Vancouver's* Top 40 under 40 list for 2021. Sharma is the director of government affairs at real-estate company BOMA British Columbia.

SEBASTIAN HUEBEL, MA '09, teaches history at the University of the Fraser Valley and recently published his first book, *Fighter, Worker, and Family Man* (University of Toronto Press). Drawing on a rich archive of diaries, letters and autobiographies, the book sheds light on the the gendered experiences and discrimination that German-Jewish men faced between 1933 and 1941. More

information at utorontopress.com.

2010s

SARAH WRIGHT CARDINAL, PhD '18, has been honoured with the Ehor Boyanowski Academic of the Year Award by the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC. More information about this honour can be found at cufa.bc.ca/awards.

CARL WATTS, MA '10, has published his first book of poetry criticism called *I Just Wrote This Five Minutes Ago* (Gordon Hill Press). According to the publisher, Watts "makes the counterintuitive argument that it is the nebulous lack of



professionalism and prestige that makes poetry vital" and shows how contemporary poetry creates meaning and value, how poetry might get real work out of us, locating and grounding us among real people and a real practice.

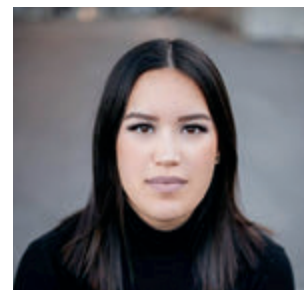
Double grad and ethnobotanist **LEIGH JOSEPH**, BSc '10, MSc '12, successfully pitched CBC's *Dragons' Den* for a \$200K investment in her Indigenous plant-based skincare company Skwálwen Botanicals. Since striking the deal, Joseph has been able to hire more staff and now has eight Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) women working with her—and there are big plans for the future,

including moving into a larger production space.

English and Writing graduate **LISE GASTON**, BA '10, won the 2021 CBC Poetry Prize for her poem "James," which was selected from nearly 3,000 English-language entries. Gaston, who is the daughter of UVic Writing prof Bill Gaston, said she wrote "James" in hopes that her poem could speak to other parents who have also endured the loss of a child.

The University of Victoria Faculty of Law has created a legacy fund to honour and recognize alumnus **JOSEPH ARVAY's** exceptional accomplishments during his legal career. The Joseph Arvay Legacy Fund gives law students the opportunity to work with not-for-profit and public-interest organizations. Arvay, LL.D '18, died at 71 in December of 2020.

ASIA YOUNGMAN, BA '13, has a new film, *This Ink Runs Deep*, that showcases Indigenous tattoo artists across Canada who are "reviving ancestral traditions that disappeared during colonization." It screened as part of the exhibit *Body Language: Reawakening Cultural Tattooing of the Northwest* at UVic's Legacy Art Galleries.



ASIA YOUNGMAN

TAHIRA KARIM, BEd '12, is an artist, designer, educator and activist living in Paris. In December, she released *I Stand Up For Me*, "an active book that encourages children, especially girls, to build language that boosts self-confidence, confidence in being who they are, setting boundaries, and saying NO." More information at tauska.com.

SARAH JIM, BFA '19, received the ProArt Early-Career Artist Award, which recognizes the potential of an early-career artist. Other UVic alumni recognized for their contributions to the arts community at the 2021 Greater Victoria Regional Arts included Theatre SKAM and the teams behind Puente Theatre and Intrepid Theatre.

NAIMA SALEMOHAMED, BSc '14, is the winner of Digital Health



NAIMA SALEMOHAMED

Canada's Emerging Leader of the Year Award. According to Digital Health Canada, Salemohamed is an avid networker and a champion of using social media effectively to connect with others in the healthcare space. She is eager to share her journey in the Health Informatics world and has demonstrated her commitment to improving, sharing and building the Health Informatics community. She is known for her leadership, social awareness, health-system transformation vision and her passion for digital health.

2020s

Anthropology grad **LETITIA POKIAK**, MA '21, has been honoured by the Western Association of Graduate Schools for her master's thesis "Meaningful Consultation, Meaningful Participants and Meaning Making: Inuvialuit Perspectives on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and the Climate Crisis." The association, which represents all the graduate schools in western Canada, 14 U.S. states and western Mexico, awarded Pokiak the Distinguished Masters Award in Humanities, Social Sciences, Education and Business. For her thesis, Pokiak went home to Tuktoyaktuk in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, and interviewed 18 elders, harvesters and land-claim negotiators, including her uncle, to seek their perspectives on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and how climate change had affected the region over the past 40 years.

Former Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives intern and alum **CHRISTOPHER TSE**, MSW '20, was featured by the United Nations Association in Canada for his anti-racism video, *Eyes Open*, on the 20th anniversary of the Durban Declaration, which established "a comprehensive international framework for fighting discrimination and intolerance."

A group of UVic grads has launched a new online business called VINN, aimed at changing the way consumers buy cars. The venture is fuelled by a fleet of UVic-trained talent including **LANDON MARSHALL**, BSEng '21, **NATALIE ALLABARTON**, BCom '20, **JORDAN SANDBERG**, BSEng '21, **GRAHAM SELA**, BSc '21, **DARIAN MORRISON**, BSEng '21, and **TATUM BERG**, BA '20. **CHET FLANAGAN**, a UVic political science major/business minor student, is COO. Read more here: uvic.ca/alumni



SANDRA MEIGS, professor emeritus at the University of Victoria and former chair of the visual arts department, gets the career retrospective treatment in *The Way Between Things: The Art of Sandra Meigs*. Published by ECW and designed by Torch graphic designer Clint Hutzulak, BA '89, *The Way Between Things* is a collaboration with Victoria curator Helen Marzolf. The book explores the hard-to-pin-down career of the shape-shifting visual artist, Governor General's Award winner and recipient of the prestigious Gershon Iskowitz Prize.

According to ECW, "the book tracks how Meigs herself understands her art and her career, a story told through 17 major projects that best demonstrate her preoccupations; four essays written by Meigs and accompanied by sketches original to the book; as well as long-term research and investigations."


Room of 1000 Paintings. Installation view. 1986. Multiple paintings, acrylic on canvas, wall treatment; *Popeye*: 5'7" x 4' x 2'. Marine enamel, papier-mâché, Ethafoam. Photo by Peter McCallum.

Writing and English double-major **ELI MUSHUMANSKI** is the City of Victoria's new Youth Poet Laureate. Mushumanski is the third YPL to come out of UVic's Writing program in the past 10 years.

IMAN RONAGHI, DBA '21, opened Emerald Eye Care in

Colwood. He offers UVic students 20 per cent discount on glasses and sunglasses and does direct billing for most plans.

Fine Arts grad **RAIN CABANA-BOUCHER**, BFA '19, has been awarded the sixth annual Tanabe Prize from the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Cabana-Boucher

is a Michif/British settler interdisciplinary artist whose practice explores autobiographical themes in relation to place and politics. The Tanabe Prize is an annual award given to BC artists whose primary medium is painting. Cabana-Boucher was recognized in the emerging artist category. 

What's New With You?

Be in the next Class Notes. Send news and photos to: torch@uvic.ca

Farewells

UVic Vikes soccer alumnus **MACKENZIE RIGG**, BCom '19, passed away on March 11, 2022, 19 months after being diagnosed with a brain tumour. He was at his home in Kelowna with his mother Barbara, father Chris and sister Madeline around him. Rigg concluded his five-year soccer playing career at UVic as captain of the Vikes in 2018-19. After being diagnosed with stage four brain cancer, Rigg, along with teammates, family and friends raised more than \$120,000 toward brain-tumour research.

SYLVIA ISOBEL ALICE KELLY (Victoria College '44) was born in Nanaimo in 1927 and received her teacher's degree from the Normal School in Craigdarroch Castle's Victoria College. In 1946, at the age of 19, she began teaching grades 1 to 4 in a one-room country school on Gabriola Island before moving to North Vancouver's Lonsdale School as their music specialist. In 1949, she married her first husband and attended the University of

California at Berkeley for a BA in Geology. She completed post-graduate work at Oregon State University in Corvallis, followed by employment for the White Pass & Yukon Railway doing geological work in the 1950s. She then returned to teaching her own-devised remedial reading classes for Westview Special Education School in North Vancouver.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Kelly stayed home to raise her two children, instilling a love of music, the arts and the great outdoors. Kelly was a supportive mother and faithful wife, outliving two great loves: a first husband of almost 24 years, and a second one of more than 44 years. She is also predeceased by her brother, Grainge, and sister and best friend, Joyce. Kelly will be missed by her son, Mark, and daughter Hilary Wallis, grandchildren Alec, Thomas, Shayla, Genean and Maria, and beloved nieces and nephews.

UVic professor **GEORGE BEER**, (1935–2022) lived his best life in the world of ideas, yet he was very self-effacing, giving credit to others. A friend remarked that George was a polymath—a person of wide-ranging knowledge or learning. This is true. George lived his passion for science, technology, engineering



GEORGE BEER

and maths. Joining the UVic Physics Department in the late 1960s, he watched the university grow in size and reputation. He published more than 114 academic papers on anti-protons, pions, muons, kaons, exotic and chaotic particles.

George was involved in the first iterations of the internet in the 1970s, owned one of the first programmable HP calculators—a precursor to smartphones—and was present at CERN (an acronym for European Council for Nuclear Research) for the first data sharing via what was to become the worldwide web. His passion for photography led him to Spectron photography and microgels into his late '80s.

George's best character traits were persistence, kindness, humour and generosity in terms of time given to students and team members, high-school science fairs, donations to charities and lastly the Beer Knight scholarship fund that he and his wife, Leslie (Knight), set up for students in the STEM disciplines.

George saw the universal connection to patterns in nature, and that's where his spirit lives—a "Happy Fractal" re-united with all the people he loved.

—**LESLIE KNIGHT**

Painted out of a Corner

Brittane Stranks (Zaitsoff) spent her life striving, then an unexpected diagnosis caused her to change her perspective—and pick up a paintbrush.

BY BRITTANEE STRANKS (ZAITSOFF), BA '08

When I was in school, it seemed that nothing else mattered but studying and getting as high marks as possible. I was always striving to be the best and get the best marks. I intended to do more schooling after undergrad. I wasn't sure if I was headed for law school or if I wanted to seek my PhD in psychology, but I knew I wanted to do more after receiving my undergrad degree in psychology from UVic in 2008.

Throughout my career, I worked with the Calgary Police Service, the City of Calgary and the disability sector, helping others. I also worked at a law firm to discover if I really wanted to make the leap and go to law school.

After suffering a workplace accident myself I realized that I wanted to be the change that needed to be realized in worker's compensation, so I rose up the ranks to being a case manager with the Worker's Compensation Board of Alberta. I had goals of becoming a policy advisor and being someone who could make real change—not just in the company but in the lives of workers.

Unfortunately, after having my daughter, I developed neurological symptoms that turned out to be Multiple Sclerosis. The MS made it impossible for me to do my job or to work at all. I was barely able to get up in the morning to play and care for my beautiful daughter. I have been officially disabled since 2018. I have been told here is no chance of me going back to work.

I was at my lowest point, just trying to hang on to anything, to not completely lose myself and give up. Then, I remembered an art class that I took as an elective course at UVic. I had always wanted to paint, but I never had the time because I was so focused on school, and then my career and then my daughter. So, I picked up a paintbrush, dabbled in some paint and just began to create. I never realized how fulfilling it could be.

These days, I have sold my artwork to friends and family and also donated my artwork to local charities and not-for-profit organizations to help them do their work. This was huge for me, because I was still able to make a difference and contribute to people's lives on a real level.

I guess I'm trying to say—take pride in your achievements and make the time to celebrate them! You never know what you will accomplish in the future. I hope it's great things, but life can throw a lot at you. When you're working, sometimes your achievements just get lost in everything you're striving towards. So, it's really important to take the time to celebrate all that you can do while you're able to do it. And what you may have set out as your dream career goal may not be what actually brings you the most joy and the most fulfillment in your life. Don't be afraid to let your career naturally take its course, even if it's not what you originally thought it would look like. You will still end up somewhere beautiful. 🎨



Brittane Stranks (Zaitsoff) lives and paints in Calgary, AB.



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First Class

University of Victoria law professor and acting dean Val Napoleon greets the first graduating class of UVic's JD/JID law program at a special-recognition ceremony held at the Songhees Wellness Centre.

Four years ago, the University of Victoria launched the world's first law degree to combine the study of Indigenous and non-Indigenous laws. This spring, students in the inaugural class of this historic program crossed the stage to receive their degrees.

UVic's joint program in Canadian common law (Juris Doctor, or JD) and Indigenous legal orders (Juris Indigenarum Doctor, or JID) equips students with knowledge that allows them to work across multiple legal systems.



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