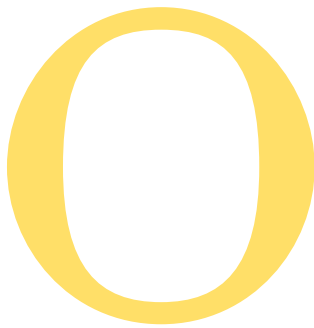




FOREVER

friends

Paired in a random room assignment
three decades ago, two graduates
find a common bond as entrepreneurs
and lifelong friends.



On a Tuesday afternoon in 1983, then freshman Jodi Parker was looking out her window in Susan B. Anthony Hall. She was waiting for her roommate, then Karen Price, to walk up the path to the dorm.

Having just met that fall, the two first-year students had already developed an important ritual.

Every Tuesday, cookies made by Price's grandmother arrived in the mail. The brown-paper package tied with a string contained snickerdoodles, or chocolate chip cookies, or peanut butter cookies—

cookies that Parker always thought “tasted like love from home.”

As the two shared each week's shipment, they talked. It was a simple way for the two of them to get to know one another, to look beyond their different habits, viewpoints, and academic interests.

Outwardly, they seemed to have little in common. An English major, Price grew up in a small, scenic village in upstate New York, where she honed a love for writing, volleyball, and homegrown vegetables; an optical engineering major, Parker grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts, the second-most-populous city in New England, and brought to campus a passion for math, science, and Chinese takeout.

Yet they felt a connection, a friendship that developed through their common ground as students, their commitments to family, and the excitement of new opportunities to test their entrepreneurial instincts.

The ties lasted through all four years as roommates on the River Campus, marriages to college sweethearts—Price married Robert Pavlicin '87 and Parker married Jacob Seidner '87—parenthood, early careers in the business world, and entrepreneurs running their own successful businesses. They've celebrated, mourned, and achieved together.

In short, the two—now known as Karen Pavlicin-Fragnito '87 and Jodi Seidner '87, '91S (MBA)—became lifelong friends.

“We have this sixth sense about each other,” says Pavlicin-Fragnito. “If one of us has something going on, all of a sudden the other is on the phone and saying, ‘I’m thinking of you and thought I should call.’”

This fall, the two friends will return to Rochester for their 30th reunion. And while the reunion is a chance to formally reacquaint themselves with campus, for the two classmates, the spirit of Rochester is never far away.

Forever Entrepreneurs

Both are now full-time entrepreneurs running profitable businesses.

Pavlicin-Fragnito, who lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, owns Elva Resa Publishing, an independent publishing company that's home to three imprints—one geared toward military families, one for general interest children's books, and one for inspirational works.

With more than 70 writers and illustrators, the company's namesake imprint Elva Resa is the leading publisher in the United States specializing in military family life. The titles in her online store, MilitaryFamilyBooks.com, range from those by self-published authors like Alia Blau Reese '95 to those published by industry giants Simon & Schuster, Penguin, Random House, and others.

In Connecticut, Seidner runs Sweet Seidner's Bake Shop, an online bakery that ships homemade cookies and baked treats to students at more than 75 colleges, universities, boarding schools, and graduate schools.

“We're always bouncing ideas off each other and tapping into each other's experiences,” says Seidner.

The entrepreneurs first whetted their appetite for business as juniors at Rochester. In the spring of 1986, prompted by surveys that indicated some prospective students thought Rochester was a public institution, the University commissioned a study to explore whether the name—“University of Rochester”—should be changed.

FOREVER CONNECTED: First honing their business skills as students, Karen Price Pavlicin-Fragnito '87 (top) and Jodi Parker Seidner '87, '91S (MBA) (bottom, with husband, Jacob Seidner '87) sold T-shirts printed with the phrase “Forever YoURs.” First introduced in Susan B. Anthony Hall in 1983, the two were roommates through all four years of college and have remained friends, encouraging each other in their entrepreneurial endeavors.





After President G. Dennis O'Brien announced the name would remain intact, the University's public relations department made commemorative buttons, emblazoned with the words "Forever YoURs." Demand for the buttons was overwhelming.

Walking across campus, Pavlicin-Fragrino overheard a classmate lament, "It's too bad they didn't put the logo on T-shirts."

That gave the women an idea. Pavlicin-Fragrino asked permission to make and sell T-shirts. She returned with the news that the University had said yes.

After asking their parents to help with financing the project, each received \$750. They researched screen-printing options and costs, and secured the OK to sell the shirts outside the dining center (using a table on loan from the University).

The response was swift. Eighty percent of the initial 500 shirts sold in the first two weeks.

The women reimbursed their parents and, having turned a profit so quickly, realized they had a knack for identifying what people want—and providing it for them.

"Selling the Forever YoURs shirts was our first real entrepreneurial venture," says Seidner. "It planted a seed in each of us that validated our business acumen and gave us confidence to pursue new ventures."

SWEET SUCCESS: After working in brand management for a decade, Seidner left the corporate world and eventually started her own business, Sweet Seidner's Bake Shop. The online bakery specializes in sending homemade treats to college students, an idea sparked when she was roommates with Pavlicin-Fragrino during her first year at Rochester.

A Taste for Business

Their current entrepreneurial success did not come immediately. Starting her career as an engineer in military defense, Seidner realized it wasn't for her.

While saving money for graduate school, she worked catering jobs, including an Inauguration Ball for George H. W. Bush, and took baking and cake-decorating classes.

"These experiences rejuvenated me," Seidner says. She returned to Rochester to attend the Simon Business School, earning an MBA in marketing and finance. She spent the next 10 years managing brands for Unilever, Tetley, and BIC, honing her business expertise.

Her perspective on corporate life changed on September 11, 2001. "I was on my way to LaGuardia Airport for a business trip. I was five months pregnant with my son, Josh," she says. "I was on the



BEST SELLING: Since launching her company Elva Resa, Pavlicin-Fragnito has grown it into the leading publisher of books and resources for military families. She began the venture when she was married to her late husband, Robert Pavlicin '87, who was a Marine. For the wedding, she asked Seidner and other friends and family members to make squares (below) for a quilt.

Whitestone Bridge on that beautiful, sunny day when the second World Trade Center tower was hit. I decided to turn around and go home.”

When it came time for Seidner to return to work after maternity leave, she realized she didn't want to travel. She retired from corporate life two weeks later. As a stay-at-home mom, she started, grew, and sold part-time businesses, including a bridal gown partnership.

When her daughter, Mollie, left for college, Seidner followed her passion for baking. Remembering her shared-cookie experience at Rochester, she gave her niece a special gift: she baked and sent her cookies every month of her freshman year.

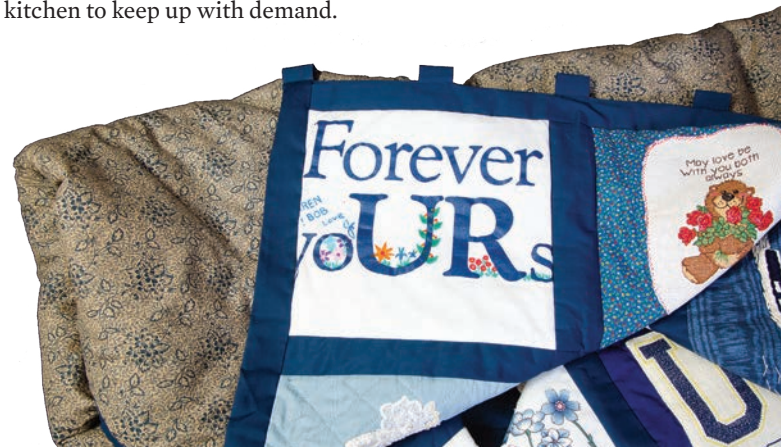
“My niece had never been away from home, so I wanted to help her meet people,” Seidner says. “She could walk down the dorm hallway and say, ‘Do you want a cookie?’ What college student doesn't want a cookie?”

Two years later, Seidner did the same for another niece. The

positive responses confirmed her new business focus: homemade treats for college students.

Seidner sent Pavlicin-Fragnito boxes of cookies to see how they traveled and tasted, then sought her friend's advice on potential business names and e-commerce platforms.

After two years in business, Sweet Seidner's Bake Shop offers a variety of cookies, brownies, macarons, and traditional Jewish treats like hamantaschen, rugelach, and babka. As the business has grown, Seidner transformed her home's basement into a commercial kosher kitchen to keep up with demand.



MELIORA WEEKEND 2017

Ready for Reunion?

Both Karen Pavlicin-Fragnito '87 and Jodi Seidner '87, '91S (MBA) are helping organize this fall's 30th reunion for the Class of 1987.

A key part of Meliora Weekend, October 12 to 15, the celebration is an opportunity to discover what the years have brought for the campus and former classmates.

"I'm looking forward to seeing what's changed, to reconnecting with people," Seidner says. "You never know what possibilities that holds for you."

While all graduates are invited to join Meliora Weekend festivities, many of the class-specific activities are based in reunion classes. Organized by five-year increments—this fall is the 2's and the 7's—reunion has evolved from a simple celebration of nostalgia, says Paul Lanzone '03, assistant vice president for alumni relations and constituent engagement.

The activities are designed as a way for classmates to build ties and networks not only with one another, but also with other alumni and with current students. Reunion is an important way to see how the University and its programs are continually moving forward and to be involved in what that means for each generation.

"Our campuses have changed visibly over the years, and coming back is a very tangible way to stay engaged," he says. "You definitely get the sense that the University has moved into the future, but there's still this tradition of research and education. There are so many palpable sensory experiences that bring back what those four years were all about."

Jane Zimelis Cohen '67, one of three chairs organizing her 50th class reunion and a vice chair of the newly formed National Alumni Board, has attended every reunion since 2000—except in 2014, the weekend her son got married.

Highlights of this year's program, notes Cohen, include a class dinner performance by the YellowJackets—joined by past YellowJackets members from the classes of '67 and '66 and some past Tritones members—and an interfaith memorial service organized by a representation of diverse clergy who graduated in '67.

Cohen met her husband, Lawrence Cohen '66, at the University. The pair established the Lawrence J. Cohen '66 and Jane Zimelis Cohen '67 Endowed Undergraduate Scholarship Fund in 2004.

Reunion is "mostly about the people, but it's also about being able to touch base with the physical place where I really became the person that I am," she says. "The University has continued to give me opportunities to lead, to be enriched, and to interact with fascinating, intelligent people. It's a big part of my volunteer life."

For Alan Carmasin '67, another reunion organizer and a retired senior associate director for University Advancement, it's heartwarming to catch up with former fraternity brothers.

He also looks forward to creating new associations: "I make new friends that I didn't know in school, but who I see at every reunion now. Some of them I stay in touch with."

—Robin L. Flanigan

For more about Meliora Weekend: Rochester.edu/melioraweekend.



FAMILY FOCUS: Shortly after her son, Josh, was born, Seidner began to focus on her own business ideas, launching her bakery after her daughter, Mollie, left for college. She and her husband, Jacob Seidner '87, met at Rochester.

The Bonds of Friendship

During their first year on campus, mutual friends set up Seidner and Pavlicin-Fragnito with blind dates to the NROTC ball. Seidner and her date, Bob Pavlicin, didn't hit it off that night, but remained friends.

During their junior year, Bob and Karen started dating. In preparation for their wedding in 1991, Karen sent a letter to close friends and family members asking for decorated fabric squares that she could stitch together to make a wedding quilt.

Recalling that she had a few leftover "Forever YoURs" shirts, Seidner dug one out and cut a square around the logo. She painted flowers into the design to represent a phrase the two roommates used to encourage each other during tough times: "Think of flowers."

Very tough times came a decade later for the Pavlicins. When their son, Alexander, was 18 months old, Bob was diagnosed with stage-four colon cancer. Though he was given a prognosis of less than a year, he survived two years before passing away in February 2003.

"Initially I told Karen that I could not attend the memorial service in Minnesota," says Seidner. "I had not been on a plane since 9-11. I was too scared to fly and too embarrassed to admit it." Without telling Karen she was coming (just in case she couldn't do it), she made the trip to Minnesota.



CONTINUING THE TRADITION: Pavlicin-Fragnito's son, Alexander, moved into Tiernan Hall late this summer as a member of the Class of 2021, planning to double major in engineering science and international relations.

"I am eternally grateful I was able to get on that plane," Seidner says. "The look on Karen's face when she saw me come through the door at the memorial chapel almost brought me to my knees. We hugged for a very long time."

Two years later, Pavlicin-Fragnito's dad died suddenly of a heart attack. About the same time, the corporation she worked for restructured, so she took the opportunity to leave the corporate world.

"As a single mom, I wanted a flexible schedule that allowed me to be there for Alexander and that also used my talents and passions in meaningful ways," she says. She gave her publishing company, which had been a part-time venture, new attention.

The first book she wrote for military families, *Surviving Deployment*, had been published weeks after Bob's death, and forms the foundation of Elva Resa's portfolio of resources on military life.

She also advocates for military families in Washington, D.C., and works with nonprofits, military units, chaplains, and school teachers around the world to support military families.

"When Bob was sick and after his death, Marines came from all over to support us—and they still do," she says. "This is just one way I can repay that kindness."

As she left the corporate world, she focused on her own writing.

She wrote her first children's novel, *Perch, Mrs. Sackets, and Crow's Nest*. The story about a young boy who finds the courage to face the changes in his life won several awards, including a Moonbeam Children's Book Awards Gold Medal for middle-grade fiction.

She also turned to songwriting.

"The songs I wrote during that time helped me sort through my grief and find faith to go on celebrating life," she says.

With encouragement from Seidner and others, she released a 12-song CD, *Little Bit of Faith*, and has donated the profits to cancer research. (She also created the Andermax Foundation. Seidner serves on the board of the foundation, which awarded its first grant from the Fightin' Bob Fund to the University's James P. Wilmot Cancer Institute.)

Even now, "I still receive notes from people who share how the songs are helping them through their grief," she says.

This year, Pavlicin-Fragnito's publishing company celebrated 20 years in business. Pavlicin-Fragnito married Geno Fragnito in 2011 and gained two stepdaughters, Ciana and Malaina. Geno plans to join Karen for Meliora Weekend in October.

A Lifelong Legacy

With two of their children in college—Mollie Seidner is a sophomore studying biomedical engineering at Washington University in St. Louis; Alexander Pavlicin is a member of Rochester's Class of 2021, planning to dual major in engineering science and international relations in a program that will allow him to earn bachelor's and master's degrees—the women have been taking stock of the


ways in which new traditions are built.

One of those has origins in a spider plant that Bob purchased from Pavlicin-Fragnito during a volleyball team fundraiser their senior year. "Over the years, we've shared little offshoots with friends and neighbors when we moved, or they moved, so that mama plant has babies all over the country," she says.

As her son prepared this summer for the move into Tiernan Hall, the same dorm where his father had spent his freshman year, he asked if he could have one of the offshoots.

Alexander's spider plant made the trip with him to Rochester, where he hopes to establish his own legacy of the kind that he's seen grow in the lifelong friendships and connections in his family.

"Jodi's mom once said, 'I love that you two never run out of things to talk about,'" says Pavlicin-Fragnito. "We both give a tremendous amount of love, time, and commitment to each other and our friendship.

"We are ever grateful for that initial random roommate assignment." 

Robin L. Flanigan, a Rochester-based freelance writer, contributed to this story.





Building a Better Network

Tapping into the global community of Rochester's alumni, Alumni Relations looks to expand and deepen the connections that graduates have with the University and with one another.

Interview by Scott Hauser

In many ways Paul Lanzone '03 was the quintessential Rochester student. A talented musician, the California native first became interested in the Eastman School of Music. But the more he discovered about the University, the more interested he became.

Though he decided during his college search not to pursue a life of music performance, he remained committed to the University, drawn by the Rochester Curriculum and the idea that he could largely map out an academic path that aligned with his interests.

"I just thought it sounded really unique and intriguing," Lanzone says. "I still liked the ties to Eastman because I wanted to maintain the music aspect."

Now the assistant vice president for alumni relations at the University, Lanzone says his journey to Rochester and the ways in which the University have influenced his

LISTENING TO ALUMNI: "It's incredibly important in everything that we're doing that the alumni voice is represented, that alumni are active partners, and feel a sense of ownership," says Lanzone.



POWERFUL PARTNERS: As part of efforts to build a stronger sense of partnership with alumni and other constituencies, Lanzone has led efforts to organize a national alumni advisory board and to enhance regional alumni networks.

life and career have stayed with him.

“In my first year, I took a class on mysticism and poetry. I had no idea what I was getting into. The professor was fascinating, and the content was just really interesting. So the next semester, I took another religion course, and another, and eventually realized that I was passionate about these studies. I declared my major in the religion department sophomore year.”

More than a decade later, Lanzone’s enthusiasm remains.

“I really believe in the University. I believe it is a very special place. I have my personal experiences with it, but I have the great fortune now to travel the world and see the Meliora spirit in action throughout our student and alumni communities. It’s a remarkable institution that provides amazing education and formation of individuals.”

Since May 2016, Lanzone’s role has been not only to share that appreciation for the institution, but also to build on the engagement that exists among alumni and

establish a strong infrastructure for alumni to connect with the University and with one another.

Over the past 15 months, he’s worked to put together a new strategic plan and a national advisory board of alumni. He’s also taken a hard look at the way alumni relations has traditionally operated.

The goal, he says, is to build a “culture of partnership” between alumni and the institution.

Have you identified any particular priorities during your first year or so?

When I came in last May, one of the first things I wanted to do was to look at all of our programs. What were we doing? What is the core work that we should be doing? How are we going to measure success? What are we going to prioritize over the next several years? I have been working to build that with our team and with many internal and external stakeholders.

A big priority in the alumni relations strategic plan is, how do we engage volunteers effectively and offer a high-quality experience across the board? We’re such a large organization, and with so many different people working with alumni volunteers—how do we make sure we’re handling those relationships in the best way for everyone?

How do you plan to tap into the alumni perspective on engagement with the University?

For the past year, we have been putting together an alumni board. We’re still recruiting, but we hope to have about 30 people by next year. We’re being very purposeful in the formation of the board to make sure that we have diverse

“I really believe in the University. I believe it is a very special place. I have my personal experiences with it, but I have the great fortune now to travel the world and see the Meliora spirit in action throughout our student and alumni communities. It’s a remarkable institution that provides amazing education and formation of individuals.”

representation by school, geography, class year, industry, race, ethnicity, and gender identity.

The board will also represent all of our core volunteer groups, making sure that our other alumni programs, like the Diversity Advisory Council, class programs, the regional network leadership cabinets, the school alumni councils, are part of an overarching strategy.

We have recruited an executive committee—three amazing representatives of the alumni population—who are very excited to help to lead this kind of strategic advisory group. Carol Karp ’74, a University trustee, is the chair. The vice chairs are Jane Zimelis Cohen ’67 and Drew Mittelman ’68, both of whom have been very active in alumni and volunteer circles. It will be the role of the board to make sure that we continue to have broad representation and viewpoint.

How do you balance your work in engaging alumni with the overall advancement goal of raising philanthropic support?

Alumni Relations is a unit within the Office of Advancement. Advancement’s goal is to work with our various constituents and partners

to support and advance the University, through philanthropy, volunteerism, events, and personal connections.

Alumni Relations is a really critical part of the overall Advancement strategic plan. Chief Advancement Officer Tom Farrell ’88, ’90W (MS) has developed the plan, called the Rochester Model. Balancing engagement with philanthropy is a cornerstone of that plan.

We know that when a University has a strong, connected alumni community, the institution and the alumni community benefit in a number of ways. You certainly see that in philanthropic support, but you also see it in internships and job placement for students. You see it in the institution’s reputation nationally and internationally.

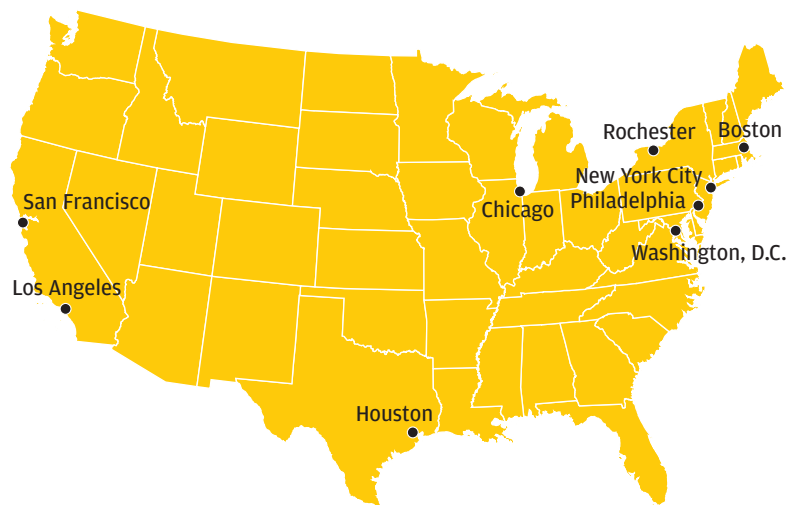
It’s a self-fulfilling cycle: if you have alumni who feel good about the University and stay connected, you see a positive impact on the University and its alumni community.

What will alumni see as the plan rolls out?

As it became clear that we needed to better align our volunteer and alumni voices into our decision making, one area that we began focusing on is building and strengthening our regional network. We think that our regional strategy is really going to be the foundation of our alumni relations work, providing an infrastructure where all of

Rochester Regional Networks

Alumni Relations has begun developing a series of regional networks to better focus activities, programs, and opportunities for alumni and for others who have a connection to the University to volunteer, network, and stay connected. Open to all alumni, parents, donors, and students in each region, the networks are part of a strategic planning effort to build a stronger sense of connection among Rochester’s key constituent groups. For more information, visit Rochester.edu/alumni/regional-network.



our programs and activities can play out. We have designated a staff person for each major region to convene our volunteers in the area and to come up with annual plans for each region.

What events should we be doing? What’s working in the region and what’s not? Do we need more admissions recruiters in a particular area? Or, are there better companies we can tap into for internships and job opportunities for students?


And making sure that we’re involving alumni leaders in that conversation and they feel that alumni can own their Rochester network.

Other priorities include class-based activities, beyond milestone reunions. And we’re building newer programs to focus on diversity and inclusion efforts, alumni career services, and helping student groups stay in touch with alumni over time.

Why did you want to lead in this way?

As an alumnus, as someone who’s been in the industry for a number of years, I have long been intrigued by the potential for Rochester. When I saw the Rochester Model plan and learned about Tom’s vision and the support he has from President Seligman and the Board of Trustees, it was exactly what I had wanted for the University. I thought it sounded exciting, and I knew it was time for me to be part of it.

We, as the University, know that we can and should better engage and support our alumni community. And we have been working very thoughtfully on how to do that.

It’s incredibly important in everything that we’re doing that alumni are active partners and feel a sense of ownership—and that, at a very strategic, high level, the alumni voice is being represented. 

WHAT THEY DID *this* SUMMER

Summer is prime time for undergraduates to dive into research on the River Campus.

What's true for faculty members and graduate students can also be true for undergraduates: summertime is prime time for research.

During the “quiet” months of June, July, and August, the River Campus is home not only to Rochester students pursuing special projects, but also to undergraduates from universities across the country who take advantage of the resources of a tier-one research university that places a high priority on affording research opportunities to undergraduates.

Working alongside faculty helps students hone problem-solving skills in a way that regular coursework may not. Unlike solving a homework problem to which the answer is known, or reporting on a question or topic that's already been well studied, research is “the process of creating new knowledge, of finding solutions where none are known,” says Wendi Heinzelman, dean of the Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences. “That's a very different skill from what you get in the classroom,” but one that's critical to almost any career path.


Myriad programs support summer research for undergraduates. Several of these programs fall under the umbrella of the National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) initiative. REUs are designed and carried out by faculty, and funded by the foundation.

Several students participate in programs of the David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity that help prepare low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented minority undergraduates for graduate school.

In addition to the field-specific experience they gained, summer researchers also learned firsthand what research entails—and whether it's a career they want to pursue.

“You can spend a lot of hours trying to figure things out,” says Graham Palmer, a computer science major from the University of Michigan who took part in an REU. “You begin to wonder if you're being productive. On the other hand, you are able to decide your own path.”

Joy Nicholas '19, a health, behavior, and society major from Washington, D.C., got a comprehensive research experience, thanks to mentors Ann Dozier, a professor and chair of public health sciences at the Medical Center, and Holly Widanka, a senior health project coordinator in the department. To help answer the question of whether race and ethnicity is associated with suboptimal infant feeding practices, Nicholas did everything from stuffing survey envelopes to analyzing collected data.

Her findings? “Hearing about research and actually doing it is completely different,” she says. “You learn so much by being involved in different aspects of it. I really liked it. I can see myself doing this.” 





ARTS

Exploring Public Art

As a Take Five Scholar, Madison Carter '18 is taking a close look at how public art—such as murals, sculptures, even performance art—influences social interactions in the city of Rochester. This summer, the English literature and environmental studies double major from Rochester interned with Richard Margolis, a well-known area photographer who documents art, architecture, and landmarks, and then compiles his photos into searchable databases. Carter contributed to the descriptions of each piece of public art, researching the stories associated with their creation, and contacting the artists themselves for their input. She also identified additional works of public art to include in the database.

—Sofia Tokar

GREETINGS: Carter, posing before a community mural that adorns the side of Park Avenue restaurant Hogan's Hideaway, researches and documents public art in the city as part of a larger online project directed by photographer Richard Margolis. The searchable public art database is at Rochesterlandmarks.com.



ANTHROPOLOGY

Immersive Research

“To appreciate the meaning of humanity, it’s necessary to take all people into account,” says Daniel Reichman, an associate professor of anthropology. “And we begin to understand different cultures when we immerse ourselves in their respective communities.”

For the past 15 years, the University has offered students the Malawi Immersion Seminar—a three-week research experience in Gowa, a remote village in the southeastern African nation, in which students carry out individual projects, living and working among the community members.

The program is the brainchild of Joe Lanning ’00, ’07 (MA). When Lanning was an undergraduate majoring in anthropology, his professors encouraged him to go abroad. He heeded that advice and, in his junior year, went to Kenya for a four-month experiential learning program that involved homestays in urban and rural areas. That experience inspired him to join the Peace Corps following graduation, where he served two years in Malawi.

“TEACHERS ALL AROUND”: Students in the Malawi Immersion Seminar get a taste of anthropological field research—in which instruction, both formal and informal, comes from locals.

“The Malawi Immersion Seminar is a marriage of my experiences in Kenya, U of R’s anthropology department, and the Peace Corps,” says Lanning, who completed his

PhD in anthropology at the University of Georgia. “And it fulfills the Corps’ principle of bringing the culture of your host country back to the states.”

It also serves Rochester’s educational mission, which emphasizes both global outreach and hands-on research.

“The students are there to be trained in anthropological research methods and to learn about a different culture,” says Lanning, who has traveled with the students to Gowa every year since the program’s inception. There are formal instructors, such as Geoffrey Mlongoti, a self-trained engineer and native Malawian, who assists with community mapping, coordinates homestays and other logistics, and helps students with their research. But, as Lanning adds, “Their teachers are the Malawians all around them.”



One participant this summer, Rachel Ellison ’18 researched breastfeeding practices in Gowa and the cultural influences on those practices.

Megan Runkle ’18, a Take Five Scholar, studied food—specifically the varying ways people in Malawi think about food, as compared to the ways people do in the United States.

“I haven’t traveled outside the country very much,” Runkle said prior to her summer research experience. But “learning about things from a different perspective,” she anticipated, “will be helpful on any career path I choose.”

Lanning concurs. “The lessons from the immersion program can be applied in their schools, neighborhoods, and travels,” he says. “Learning about different cultures has value, whether it involves someone across the street or halfway around the world.”

—Peter Iglinski

Read more about the participants in last summer’s Malawi Immersion Seminar on the 2017 Malawi Immersion Seminar blog at <https://malawiimmersion2017.wordpress.com>.

One Question Led to Another

Growing up as a young black man in the Bronx, Winston Scott '19 says he didn't think a lot about racism. But there was one instance he recalls that mystified him at the time it occurred and stayed with him long after.

He was riding on a bus when a woman boarded, approached the empty seat next to him, hesitated, and chose another seat.

Scott didn't realize the potential significance of that encounter until a class in African-American studies at Rochester opened his eyes to dimensions of racism in the United States that have famously played out on buses, as well as in other public spaces.

NOTICING RACE:

Scott (right, center) asks what happens when black children discover racism—and learns, with help from Guiffrida and Tetenov, how to design a study “from the ground up.”

His experience generated some questions. What happens when African-American children start to perceive racism directed toward them? How do the children react? And more specifically, why does racism play a part in motivating some students to go on to college, while it seems to deter others?

Scott, a double major in African-American studies and anthropology, started taking a closer look this summer through a research project he designed under the supervision of Doug Guiffrida, an associate professor of counseling and human development at the Warner School.

Scott's research is not part of an ongoing faculty project. Rather, Guiffrida says, he's helping the research newcomer “develop his project from the ground up.”

He started by teaching Scott to review the existing literature in the field to identify how his study could make a fresh contribution. He also arranged for Scott to work with PhD student Serina Tetenov on transcribing and coding an interview she conducted for her dissertation on nonverbal communication in clinical observation.

“It was rough in the beginning to take an hour-long recording and actually type everything verbatim,” Scott says. But the most illuminating part of the exercise, he adds, was going back over the transcript and



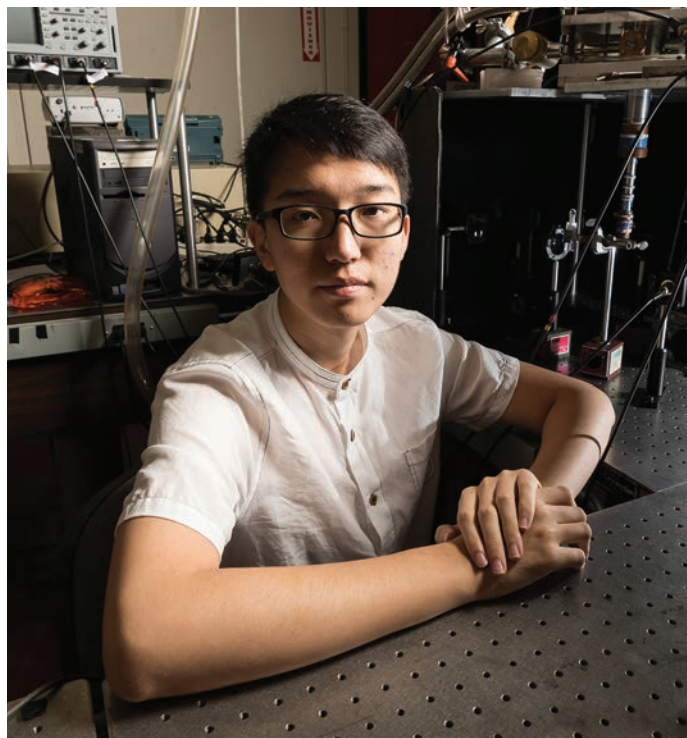
coding the parts that “basically correlate to what you are looking for, figuring out what does or does not make sense for the study.”

While many scholars have explored the relationship between racial identities and educational outcomes, Scott is contributing his own qualitative research to the overall body of work. “It will include the students' perspectives,” Guiffrida says, “not just from a survey, but from interviews with college freshmen and sophomores about their experiences when they first realized there was racism directed at them.”

Scott ended the summer with a formal proposal for the project.

Says Guiffrida: “I think it's going to be an interesting study.”

—Bob Marcotte



TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

Glass Act

Tianhao Yu '19, a chemical engineering major from Fushun, China, spent the summer in the lab of chemistry professor Lewis Rothberg studying and testing materials for OLED—organic light-emitting diode—displays.

Rothberg and Yu's efforts expand on the work of Ching Tang, professor emeritus of chemical engineering, who created the first efficient OLEDs in 1987 while at the Eastman Kodak Company. OLED screen displays provide a crisper picture than most LCD (liquid crystal display) screens, and the research may help improve the screen displays of devices such as cell phones and televisions.

The proprietary OLED materials Yu tested were developed by the Rochester-based company Molecular Glasses. The company is developing materials to address two current technology challenges: making OLEDs that emit blue light more efficiently and increasing the lifetime of the devices that use blue emitters.

“It's tough to make a blue OLED that lasts a long time while retaining the efficiency,” Rothberg says.

But Yu is up for the challenge. “Physical chemistry has a lot of industry applications. It's exciting to be able to work in a lab, especially as an undergrad, and know what ‘real’ chemists do, and also be on the cutting edge of these new technologies.”

—Lindsey Valich

A SHARPER DISPLAY: Yu (left) assists professor of chemistry Rothberg on research to help a Rochester-based company improve its OLED display technology.



MUSIC, DATA SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

What We Learn When a Machine ‘Listens’ to Miles Davis

Neither Jake Altabef nor Graham Palmer is a student at the University. Altabef is a junior in computer systems engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and Palmer is a senior in computer science at the University of Michigan.

But both students spent the summer on the River Campus as participants in a National Science Foundation-funded Research Experience for Undergraduates, or REU, program called Computational Methods for Understanding Music, Media, and Minds.

AUDIO-FILES: Visiting students Altabef (above, left) and Palmer (center) assess recordings of a Miles Davis classic with Eastman musicologist Mueller (standing) and Hajim School audio engineer Roessner.

For eight weeks, they studied a recording that was first released nearly four decades before they were born.

“So What,” the first track on Miles Davis’s album *Kind of Blue* (which many critics consider the greatest jazz album of all time) was first released

on vinyl in 1959. Since then, it’s been re-mastered in multiple formats, including on cassette in 1987 and compact disc that same year, and in 1997, 2009, and 2013. And that’s what Altabef and Palmer were focused on.

How has the sound quality of “So What” changed over the

course of all those re-masters? Is the song “brighter” in some formats than others? Is there less background “noise” on disc than on vinyl?

Altabef and Palmer were able to capitalize on some of the University’s core strengths—in music and data science research as well as in multidisciplinary research opportunities for undergraduates.

They worked alongside two mentors from different, but related, disciplines: Darren Mueller, an assistant professor of musicology at the Eastman School of Music and an expert on cultural aspects of music, and Steven Roessner, a Grammy Award-winning lecturer in audio and music engineering, as well as an expert in recording techniques and analyzing sound quality. To answer their core research questions, they relied on data. Data gleaned using cutting-edge computational tools can reveal aspects to music that our ears can’t. “Data is a type of computer-generated listening that may or may not be the same as our own listening,” Mueller says.

Altabef and Palmer say they were grateful to spend time with a track that resonates across generations.

“I enjoy it,” Palmer says. “It has its own feel—kind of laid-back, but at the same time, virtuosic.”

“I have never truly listened to jazz, so getting into it is actually really cool,” says Altabef. “It’s very different from popular music. Elegant.”

—Bob Marcotte



RESIDENTIAL LIFE

One Community

Eunice Noel spent her days in Goergen Hall, researching corneal cross-linking, and her evenings in Gilbert Hall, cooking dishes like teriyaki chicken and Cajun alfredo pasta—and making friends.

Noel, a Miami native and senior at the University of Florida, says her experience in Gilbert Hall made it easier to expand her network beyond her lab partners. “You may work with just a few students in the same lab, so having the opportunity to see people in the dorm hallways, kitchen, and even the bathroom while brushing your teeth is a great way to get a conversation in.”

READY TO ROC: Noel, a University of Florida senior, shows her Rochester spirit at the Kearns Center Field Day, one of several events to foster community among summer researchers.

Noel was one of 61 undergraduate students from 14 universities conducting research as part of summer programs run by the David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity. The Kearns Center’s overall mission is to expand the pipeline of students from low-income,

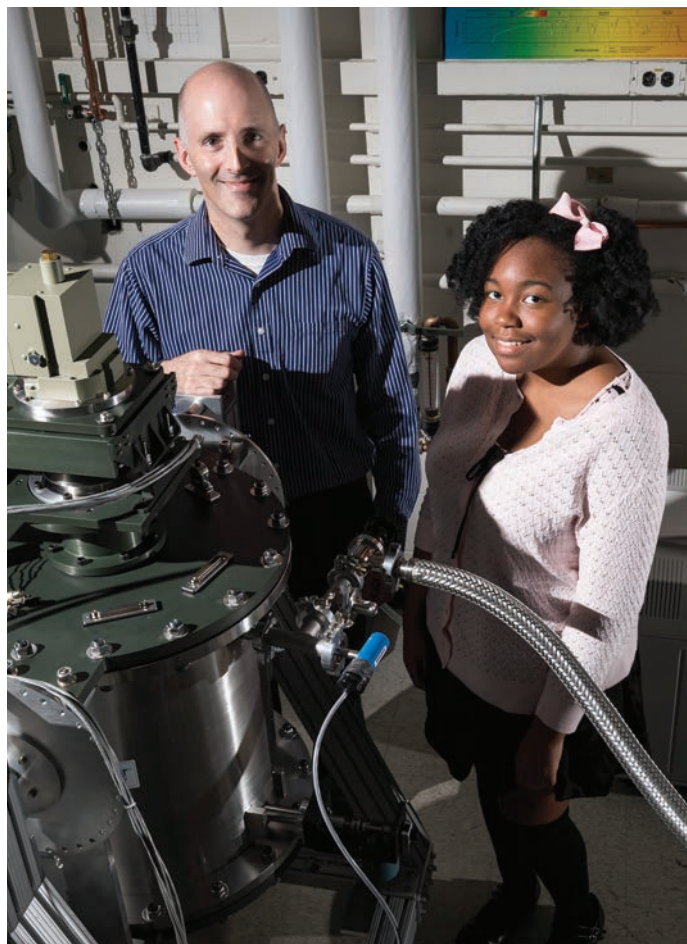
first-generation, and underrepresented minority backgrounds who pursue college and graduate degrees. Its summer programs are designed to attract more such students to careers in research. Developing a sense of community that fosters tight friendships and builds networks—especially among first-generation and underrepresented minority researchers—is an important part of succeeding at that goal.

All 61 students lived in Gilbert and were randomly paired with their roommates. Assigned, Harry Potter-style, to “houses,” they competed against each other in community-building events.



Noel’s roommate was Penelope Subervi ’19, a Rochester biomedical engineering major from New York City. Subervi likened the pairing as “a flashback, like freshman year all over again,” adding that “Eunice and I get along great and hang out a lot.”

—Jim Mandelaro



PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY

Lights, Camera, Asteroid!

In 2021, when NASA launches an infrared space telescope known as NEOCam (short for Near-Earth Object Camera), they will use an infrared light sensor developed by Rochester researchers.

The sensor is designed to survey space for near-Earth objects, track them, find out what their orbits are, and determine whether or not any of them are going to hit Earth.

This summer, Diarra Bell ’20 worked with Craig McMurtry, a senior research engineer in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, on a project to help improve the sensor’s performance.

Whether it’s the camera in a smartphone or the sensors for NEOCam, all digital imaging devices produce images composed of pixels. In order to transform the pixels into an image, cameras contain a lens that focuses the light and directs it to a sensor. The sensor breaks down the image created by the light into pixels. However, during that process, the pixels cause blurring in the image.

Bell studied the magnitude of that blur, known collectively as noise-pixels, in a device similar to one that will go on NEOCam. Her work contributes to the development of a computer program to measure the clarity of the images produced by the sensor.

Bell, who is from Brighton, just outside Rochester, participated in Rochester’s Pre-College Experience in Physics (PREP) program while in high school and is planning to major in either astrophysics or computer science.

“I am very interested in infrared technology, so this is a great opportunity for me to actually work on research that is both computer science- and physics-related,” she says.

—Lindsey Valich

A BETTER SENSOR: Bell, working with McMurtry, helps improve an infrared sensor that will be part of NASA’s Near-Earth Object Camera (NEOCam), to be launched in 2021.



MOVING EXPERIENCES: Hannah Rubin '21E (above, left), a student from Bedford, Massachusetts, who's enrolled at both the Eastman School of Music and the College, arrives at Eastman's Student Living Center, where she gets help with her move from Sophie Volpe '20E; Emily Garrett '21 (below, left), from Phoenix, gets assistance from D'Lion Genesis Galindo '20 for her move.

PHOTO ESSAY

Fall Looks

The first days of the fall semester are filled with events, activities, and ceremonies to welcome new and returning students as they begin a new year on campus.





GREAT GREETINGS: First-year students like Nathalie Leon '21, from Haworth, New Jersey, and their families were met by Rocky, a cappella groups, and other campus greeters as they prepared to move into residence halls.



FIRST PLACE: Sarina Regehr '21 (above, left), from Waban, Massachusetts, Annabelle Zhou '21, from Davis, California, and Isabel Lieberman '21, from Acton, Massachusetts, work to arrange Regehr's room in the new Genesee Hall.



INTERNATIONAL IMAGES: Jing Shi '21 (left), from Ningbo, China, poses for her student ID photo, one of the tasks international students completed when they arrived on campus.



MOMENT FOR MEDICINE: David Lambert, associate professor of medicine and senior associate dean for medical student education, takes a selfie as first-year medical students assemble after the Dr. Robert L. & Lillian H. Brent White Coat Ceremony.

SCHOOL SERVICE: Johvanny Rodriguez (left), from Jersey City, New Jersey, and Hao Chen, from Taiyuan, China, help weed the grounds at Rochester's School No. 17, one of more than 90 organizations at which first-year students volunteered during the annual Wilson Day of community service.





LIGHT MOMENTS: First-year students take part in the Candlelight Ceremony at the end of their first full day on campus, one of several annual events that mark the transition to life as a Rochester student.



CAMPUS WELCOME: The Yellowjacket Pep Band entertains students and parents as they gather on the Eastman Quadrangle for the annual convocation ceremony, where students are officially welcomed to campus.

GATHERING INFORMATION: After moving in, students and their families visit an informational expo in the Feldman Ballroom in the Frederick Douglass Building, where University service and academic organizations provide information about their work to support students on campus.