

THE MAGAZINE OF LEARNING, LEADERSHIP, AND POLICY

# SESP

WINTER 2023



## Connecting Diversity, History, and Pop Culture

Jolie Matthews's research  
questions who gets represented  
—and why

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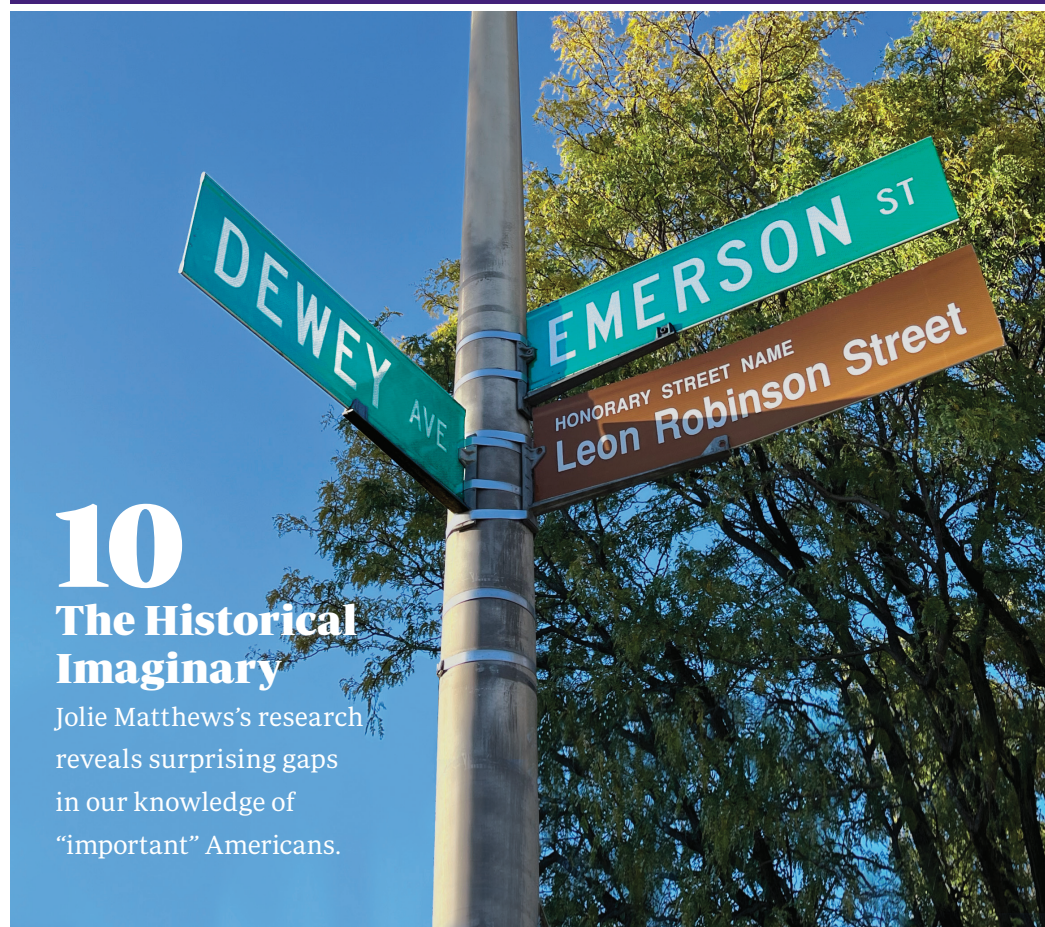
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PHOTOGRAPH BY SHANE COLLINS



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### MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

#### DEAR FRIENDS,

The timing was no coincidence. Shortly after former dean David Figlio announced he was leaving the School of Education and Social Policy to become provost at the University of Rochester, I got an email from Northwestern's own provost, Kathleen Hagerty: "Need to talk to you tomorrow, Dan—anytime!"

My first reaction was, "Oh, no!"

I mean, I love being a professor. You get to teach classes and write books and pursue whatever intellectual passions take hold in your mind. And you even get paid to do it! So why give up the greatest job on the planet?

The next day I was riding my exercise bike when some weird stuff must have happened in my prefrontal cortex. In a flash, I was suddenly convinced that being the dean of SESP—okay, interim dean—might not be the worst thing to do with my life. It might even be fun! And God knows, I have always loved SESP, ever since my colleagues made a risky bet in hiring me many years ago. They decided to create a spot on the faculty for a lifespan personality psychologist who studies the stories people create to make sense of their lives. Since my epiphany on the bike, I've been writing a new chapter in my own life narrative.



I accepted Provost Hagerty's offer to become interim dean even before I knew the position comes with a prime parking spot on campus and permission to install new bookshelves in the dean's office—and before I came to realize fully what a wonderful privilege it is to serve as SESP's leader. Part of the privilege is getting to spread the good news of SESP to you today.

Feeling that we had moved into a new and less threatening phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, we began the 2022-23 school year with a sense of optimism. As students streamed into Annenberg Hall, it felt better than it had in the last several years. Things felt more alive, more vibrant.

For many of us here, it feels as if we are starting a new phase at SESP. This issue of our magazine features some of the most exciting new developments in our school. Everything in these pages is excellent, but make sure you read about professors Dan Lewis, Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, and Gina Logan, who are beginning new adventures in their own lives. Dan and Lindsay retired last year, and Gina will be retiring this spring. Their illustrious careers exemplify what I admire so much about the SESP story.

With SESP Love,

Dan P. McAdams  
Interim Dean

## What Happens When More Four-Year-Olds Attend Preschool?



Professors Diane Schanzenbach and Terri Sabol are studying how the recent expansion of universal pre-K in Chicago affects students from lower-income backgrounds. The effort is a partnership with Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago mayor's office, and the Chicago department of family and support services.

State and city pre-K programs that offer free access to early learning for four-year-olds are on the rise nationally. But the programs typically struggle to reach children from the poorest backgrounds. The Chicago model addresses this by streamlining the enrollment process and offering enough slots to serve 95 percent of eligible children.

Schanzenbach, director of the Institute for Policy Research, and Sabol, a developmental psychologist who studies child development and social policy, will study the program's effect on the wider childcare market and whether such programs can reduce educational inequities.

"Children typically enter classrooms with a range of skills, which is often tied to their early childhood experiences,"

Sabol says. "Kindergarten teachers often respond to the range in skills by remediating the students who did not attend pre-K, typically then becoming less effective at engaging and developing those students who did. By the end of the year, the groups are performing similarly and we've lost the gains made by pre-K."

The research is supported by the Crown Family Foundation, Steans Family Foundation, CME Group Foundation, Peterson Foundation, Chicago Public Schools, and an anonymous funder.

## Benvenuti in Italia

Undergraduates have a new location option for their junior year practicum: Milan. A collaboration among SESP, Northwestern's Global Learning Office, and nonprofit IES Abroad means that, for the first time, students can complete their experiential learning and global engagement requirements simultaneously.

SESP's much-loved practicum—a quarter-long off-campus internship paired with an academic seminar—has jump-started the careers of countless alumni. One student's practicum at the US Government Accountability Office led to a rotational job there; another student works as an analyst at Deloitte after completing a practicum at the Civic Consulting Alliance. But some students found it difficult to complete the practicum while also having a study-abroad experience.

In 2020, SESP introduced a remote option for the junior year practicum due to the pandemic. Adding the Italian internship means SESP students can now fulfill their practicum requirement by working for an organization anywhere in the US or in Milan.



## Making Beats with Code

Professor Michael Horn's new book *Introduction to Digital Music with Python Programming: Learning Music with Code* offers a powerful way to create music that can be linked with digital production tools.

The book serves as a beginner's guide to two platforms, including Horn's TunePad, which lets users create short musical loops that can be layered together using a simple digital interface. Horn, director of Northwestern's Tangible Interaction Design and Learning Lab, coauthored the book with Cameron Roberts, a Chicago software developer and saxophonist and TIDAL lab research staff member, and Melanie West, a learning sciences doctoral student.

West, an award-winning former recording engineer, studies the role of music in the learning sciences. "TunePad, being free and accessible, can open doors to new ways of learning through music," she says. "There's nothing like witnessing the expression on a child's face when they can program a Python loop that expresses their musical thoughts."



## Elementary Education Concentration Debuts

A new pathway for aspiring teachers allows undergraduates to pursue a concentration in elementary teaching. Previously, undergrads could only earn their secondary education license, which allowed them to teach middle and high school. Those who wanted to teach first through sixth grades could enter the master's program via an accelerated pathway.

The new concentration, launched in fall 2022, follows an interdisciplinary curriculum and expands the undergraduate teacher preparation TEACH ED program.

"In addition to potentially increasing the diversity of teacher candidates, this new pathway gives faculty the chance to collaborate and create new education courses that could be of interest to students in other SESP concentrations," says Kavita Kapadia Matsko, associate professor and associate dean for teacher education.

## Does \$500 a Month Make a Difference?

Human development and social policy doctoral students Phoebe Lin, Claire Mackevicius, and Sheridan Fuller are examining the impact of a new guaranteed-income program, a joint initiative between Northwestern and Evanston designed to address economic insecurity.

The Guaranteed Income Pilot Program gives 150 people a \$500 monthly stipend for one year to use as they wish. Northwestern provided \$400,000 in funding for the program; additional funds come from the American Rescue Plan, the city of Evanston, and the Evanston Community Foundation.

Professor Jonathan Guryan, an economist and Lawyer Taylor Professor of Education and Social Policy, is overseeing the project.



## “Northwestern Academy Changed My Life”



Ernest Willingham was a featured speaker during the dedication of the Morton Schapiro Northwestern Academy for Chicago Public Schools.

Ernest Willingham was a gregarious high school freshman when he first learned about the Northwestern Academy college access and enrichment program for Chicago Public Schools students. He immediately knew he wanted in.

The youngest of 11, Willingham grew up on Chicago’s West Side, where his brother, father, cousin, and best friend were victims of gun violence. But a persistent goal—ever since watching the movie *College Road Trip*—was to be the first man in his family to graduate from high school and continue to college.

“I can honestly say that Northwestern Academy changed my life,” says Willingham, now a premed junior at Boston’s Northeastern University. “The countless advising sessions, mentorship, and incredible college tours completely changed the trajectory of my academic career.”

Willingham was one of several featured speakers at the August dedication of the academy’s new name: the Morton Schapiro Northwestern Academy for Chicago Public Schools. He was joined by Chicago mayor Lori Lightfoot, Northwestern president emeritus Schapiro, interim SESP dean Dan McAdams, academy director Cassandra Salgado, and Chicago industrialist John Potocsnak.

**“There aren’t many people encouraging young Black men to go into college and pursue their dreams. That changed when I entered Northwestern Academy.”**

The academy, which serves academically motivated high school students from diverse backgrounds, was recently endowed and renamed in honor of former president Schapiro with a multimillion-dollar gift from the Potocsnak family.

Established in 2013 as part of Northwestern’s Good Neighbor, Great University initiative, the program is offered at no cost to students and is fully funded through donations.

“This gift will have an impact for years to come,” Salgado said. “We’re broadening the margin of excellence for students as they continue to represent not only the academy, as they go on to colleges, but also their communities, their high schools, and the city of Chicago.”

Last spring, Willingham testified before a US Senate committee about the pervasive gun violence in Chicago. Just days after his testimony, his niece and another friend were shot.

Lightfoot said that Willingham’s story and dedication to making the world a better place were “proof positive of why this program is so important. We need to encourage our young people to dream big—because it does make a profound difference in the quality of their lives, the quality of their families’ lives, and, ultimately, the quality of our city.”

Both Lightfoot and Schapiro emphasized the success of the program, which has already matriculated more than 300 students from nearly 40 high schools across the city. About 88 percent will be first-generation college students, and 96 percent identify as members of underrepresented groups. The students’ average GPA is 3.8.

For participants, the program can have a transformative impact. Many are high achievers, but they often have limited resources or need support to prepare for college.

“Coming from the West Side, there aren’t many people encouraging young Black men to go into college and pursue their dreams,” Willingham says. “That changed when I entered Northwestern Academy.”

He instantly connected with Northwestern’s Ian Williams, the adviser and recruiter who first came to his high school. “Even before I finished my presentation, he was clearly excited about it,” Williams recalls of Willingham. “He really understood what we were doing and why we were doing it.”

Willingham recently came one step closer to his goal of becoming a “life-changing physician” when he was accepted via an early admission program to the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. And while he has a wide network of supporters, the academy and the people in it have a special place in his heart.

“I hold dear every value taught, modeled, and emphasized at Northwestern Academy,” he says. “The experience had one of the most profound impacts on my journey.”



Sofia Bahena



Jacob Kelter



Matias Martinez



Camila Morales



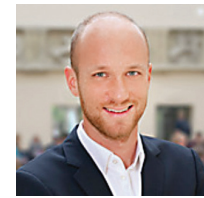
Nichole Pinkard



Brian Reiser



Terri Sabol



Hannes Schwandt



Kimberly Scott



Lilah Shapiro



Rosalie Shyu



James Spillane

## IN BRIEF

Scholars **Sofia Bahena** and **Camila Morales** joined the Center for Education Efficacy, Excellence, and Equity for the 2022–23 academic year as its inaugural early-career visiting fellows.

Faculty members **Michael Horn**, **Nichole Pinkard**, **Terri Sabol**, **Hannes Schwandt**, and **Lilah Shapiro** received promotions. Two professors received named professorships: Pinkard is the Alice Hamilton Professor of Education and Social Policy, and **Brian Reiser** is the Orrington Lunt Professor of Education and Social Policy.

**Jacob Kelter**, who studies how the power of computer modeling and simulations can help solve some of society’s most complex problems, received the prestigious Presidential Fellowship at Northwestern University.

Doctoral student **Jessica Marshall**, **Caitlin Ahearn** (BS13), and **Judith Landeros** (BS11) received 2022 National Academy of Education (NAEd)/Spencer Dissertation Fellowships. **Jennifer Higgs** (MS08) of the University of California, Davis, received an NAEd/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, and **Dionne Champion** (PhD18) of the University of Florida was awarded a 2022 NAEd/Spencer Research Development Award.

**Matias Martinez**, a doctoral student in the Human Development and Social Policy program, received a 2022–23 DevSci graduate student fellowship from Northwestern’s Institute for Innovations in Developmental Science. Martinez is designing school policies to prevent bullying and looking for strategies to help children cope with harassment.

The Master’s in Learning and Organizational Change program has been designated a new STEM training opportunity for international students by the US Department of Homeland Security.

Interim dean **Dan P. McAdams** wrote *The Person: A New Introduction to Personality Psychology*. The lively book, organized around

29 case studies, is designed to teach personality psychology to all readers, not just college students. “It puts the person back into personality,” he writes.

Professor **Brian Reiser** and his Next Generation Storylines team, including curriculum development specialist **Gail Houseman**, received a \$7.5 million multi-institution grant to help bring a robust and research-based science curriculum and teacher supports into elementary school classrooms.

A new study led by **Hannes Schwandt**, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, is the first to show in detail the stark differences in life expectancy during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic between high- and low-income people in the US, as well as the disproportionate reduction in life expectancy—even within wealthy areas—for Hispanic, Black, and Asian Californians.

**Kimberly Scott** was named associate dean for innovation and program development to facilitate new ventures and advance SESP’s diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives. An assistant professor, she will continue to serve as executive director of the master’s and executive programs in learning and organizational change.

**Rosalie Shyu** (MSED22), a math teacher at Chicago’s Kenwood Academy High School, became the ninth Knowles Teacher Fellow from SESP in the past 10 years.

Professor **James Spillane** received the 2022 Spencer Foundation Mentor Award for his generous, wise, and decades-long support of new scholars.

**David Uttal** received the 2022 International Mind, Brain, and Education Society’s translation award for his work strengthening the links between research and practice in both schools and informal contexts, such as museums and community centers.

# Connectivity Issues

*The internet of bodies—and one alumna’s race to regulate it*

By Maria Gardner

**J**uliano Pinto, a man paralyzed from the waist down, became part of history when he performed a symbolic opening kick at the 2014 World Cup. Clad in a full-body robotic exoskeleton and a headset that monitored his brain’s electrical activity, the 29-year-old accomplished a feat once considered science fiction: he moved his leg simply by thinking about it.

Pinto is not alone—millions of human bodies now rely on software and the internet for some aspect of their functionality. As technology promises to change what it means to be human, there’s boundless hope that new breakthroughs can improve and enhance lives.

But for SESP alumna Andrea Matwyshyn (PhD05), a professor in the law and engineering schools at Pennsylvania State University, the body-tech merger—also called the internet of bodies (IoB)—raises important concerns about privacy, security, fraud, and human thriving.

The ability to damage the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the software (and data) that connects devices

to the human body, she says, creates both regulatory and ethical red flags that need to be addressed before people’s personal autonomy and safety are compromised. The legal and policy effort to safeguard our bodies has become a cornerstone of Matwyshyn’s work, which blends computer security, innovation, and the law. Though her four degrees

from Northwestern give her expertise in multiple disciplines, including law, she routinely draws on her doctoral training in SESP’s Human Development and Social Policy program.

“Her work is truly interdisciplinary,” says Stephanie Pell, a fellow at the Brookings Institution who has collaborated on cybersecurity policy research with Matwyshyn. “Andrea is extraordinarily capable of taking theoretical concepts and creating public policy where an outside-

Andrea Matwyshyn

the-box solution is necessary.”

In 2017, Matwyshyn first described the IoB as a “network of human bodies whose integrity and functionality rely at least in part on the internet and related technologies.” Referencing the “internet of things”—the practice of connecting household and industrial devices to the internet—she warned that the

**“The act of blindly trusting sensors and manipulable data has implications for democracy, social trust, bodily safety, and personal privacy.”**



“Every technology can be repurposed for problematic uses. The goal is to create buffers of policy and law that discourage humans from behaving in ways that do harm.”

same security flaws that have plagued IoT products will affect IoB devices, causing physical harm to bodies, and that the law isn't ready to grapple with these issues when they arise.

The potential problems go beyond legal challenges. “As bits and bodies meld and as human flesh becomes permanently entwined with hardware, software, and algorithms, IoB will test our norms and values,” Matwyshyn wrote.

Her latest work blends IoB issues with other strands of her scholarship, such as her work on internet “fakery” and disinformation. As the world becomes “technologically messier,” she's looking to the past for cautionary tales of pseudoscience. The history of body-sensing technologies and

predictive analytics gone awry, she says, warns us against overtrusting sensors and their data classifications.

For example, during the Salem witch trials of the late 1600s, women were often subjected to various sensory-data gathering, such as involuntary physical exams to find moles on their bodies as “scientific proof” of sorcery. Such “data” was prioritized and believed over personal testimony of the accused. In some cases, the accused themselves became convinced of their own guilt due to this “proof.”

Matwyshyn connects the present with the past by arguing that “the act of blindly trusting flawed sensors and manipulable data has implications for democracy, social trust, bodily safety, and personal privacy. It can also negatively affect mental health and self-expression and meaningfully limit a human's economic opportunities.

I'm worried we'll put ourselves in a situation where the perceived legitimacy of the data streams from flawed devices will be believed over the word and experienced sensations of the human beings connected to those devices.”

#### BODY LANGUAGE

In her landmark article, Matwyshyn divides IoB into three generations. First-generation devices are on the outside of the body and can be something as unassuming as the smartphone you keep in your back pocket or a fitness-tracking watch that monitors your steps. Second-generation devices are inside the body and include things like pacemakers, artificial pancreases, and digital pills that rely on software to operate, as well as non-medical objects like chips with cryptocurrency wallets that people inject under their skin.

Third-generation IoB devices involve hardware embedded inside the brain, such as brain-computer interfaces that allow people to interact with external computers through their thoughts. Some of these devices are already in clinical trials in the private sector, and plans for their nonmedical uses worry Matwyshyn.

Imagine having a chip embedded in your brain and needing only to think of a search query for results to appear before your eyes. Maybe you catch yourself humming a familiar song and decide to stream it directly to your brain. It may seem convenient, but Matwyshyn says there's a catch.

“As they're envisioned, these third-generation IoB devices have the capability to both read and write to your brain. The information they will be generating is of very high value to everyone from future

ideas are really generated by you and which are someone else's.”

But even with the first- and second-generation devices, the data our bodies generate is unlikely to stay with us, because of information-licensing business models in the technology ecosystem.

“It gets pushed out and merged with other information, and it gets repackaged and resold,” Matwyshyn says. “Suddenly you end up with a bundle of information that may or may not be accurate attached to you. You're then forced to interact with the consequences, which could impact safety, employment, government interactions, or credit opportunities.”

In fact, insurers are already collecting data from medical devices. In some cases, people have been denied coverage for machines to treat sleep apnea if the device doesn't consistently “phone home” to the insurer that it's in use—even when patients and doctors explain that the problem is lack of reliable internet access, not disuse.

#### UNBLURRING THE LINES

At Penn State, Matwyshyn also serves as the associate dean of innovation at the university's law school and the founding faculty director of both the Penn State Policy Innovation Lab of Tomorrow, which focuses on interdisciplinary technology policy, and the Anuncia Donecia Songsong Manglona Lab for Gender and Economic Equity, a technology equity research lab and legal clinic. And she is a senior special adviser on law, technology, and the digital economy for the Federal

Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

As part of the computer-security community, Matwyshyn regularly speaks at conferences. The field moves at the speed of attackers—outpacing conference proceedings and journal articles—so she stays current by engaging with builders, breakers, regulators, and users on an ongoing basis.

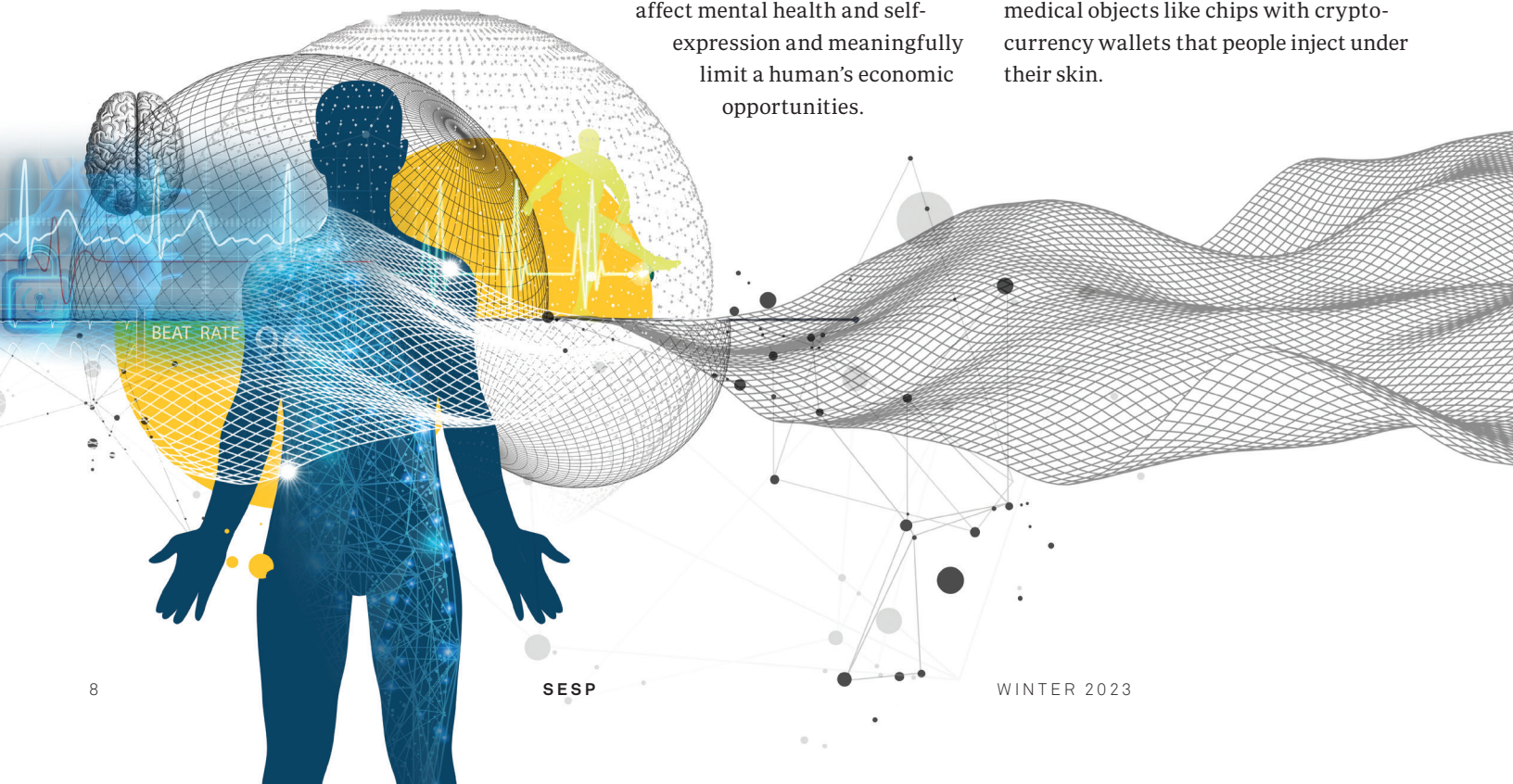
What makes Matwyshyn stand out is her “direct, consistent involvement within the computer-security industry,” says Mark Stanislav, vice president of product security at FullStory, who has collaborated with Matwyshyn on federal public policy work. “It's exceptionally different from most academics—let alone those in the legal profession.”

As she describes it, her work is ultimately about the arms race between two groups of “hackers”—those who are building new technologies and systems and those who attack and compromise them. Given the challenges to autonomy, thriving, and democratic processes that often arise from new technologies, the line between the two groups can easily become blurred.

“Every technology can be repurposed for problematic uses,” she says. “The goal is to create buffers of policy and law that discourage humans from behaving in ways that do harm while at the same time encouraging positive outcomes. The same knife that is used in a kitchen to make a brilliant salad can be used to hurt people, too.”

The data our bodies generate is unlikely to stay with us, because of information-licensing business models in the technology ecosystem.

employers and marketers to insurers and, of course, malicious attackers. And because these devices may push personalized content into your brain, you may risk losing track of which information and





# What's in a Name?

*It may be more important than we think*

By Gayle Worland

**W**hen Jolie Matthews walks down a street or into a building, she can't help but think of the prominent person it's named for—and all that implies. The same thing happens when she's watching a superhero movie, reviewing a history textbook, or scanning social media for reactions to a hit TV series.

Who, Matthews continually asks, gets represented in the public sphere? Who gets left out? And why? An assistant professor of learning sciences at SESP, Matthews is fascinated with what's called the historical imaginary—how the past is represented by educational institutions, museums, and other cultural influences such as movies, novels, memes, family stories, and even the names of the buildings, streets, and monuments that surround us.

A fan of everything from Marvel movies to *Doctor Who* and *The Tudors*, she is part of a growing field of research that explores how connections among diversity, history, and pop culture shape our understanding of the past, present, and future.

"We internalize a lot from popular culture," explains Matthews, who earned her doctorate in learning sciences and technology design from Stanford University. "What do our media and history narratives communicate about different people? What does it mean to have diverse representation?"

These questions are part of what makes Matthews's teaching at Northwestern popular with students, says psychologist David Rapp, a learning scientist and director of SESP's undergraduate programs. By looking closely at the media people constantly consume, Matthews applies a "theoretical lens to topics that people think about every day," such as race, diversity, education, politics, pop culture, and communication, he says. "She's hitting a lot of issues. It's compelling work, and she's on the cutting edge of it."

## **"A past that never was"**

As an undergraduate at New York University, the California-born Matthews concentrated on ancient, medieval, and Renaissance studies and initially considered history for her graduate career. She then earned a master's degree in writing at the University of Southern California.

"I'm a huge fan of popular culture, especially historical dramas and pseudohistorical fantasies, and how people talk about a past that never was," she says. For example, while watching fantasy TV shows set in fictional historical worlds, some audiences have no issue with dragons and magic, yet "they will say it's historically inaccurate to put a person of color or a woman in a certain role."



In 2019, Chicago renamed Congress Parkway for Ida B. Wells, the investigative journalist who shed light on the violence of lynching and rallied against gender and racial discrimination. In 2021, Chicago unveiled a monument paying tribute to Wells; it was the city's first to honor a Black woman.

In a recent paper, Matthews and her coauthor, SESP graduate student Dustin Tran, delved into superhero films. They explore how even shows and films with seemingly diverse casts still promote problematic stereotypes and tropes concerning race and gender.

Those observations are part of what makes working with Matthews exciting, Tran says. "I am always surprised by her knowledge of pop culture and how she's able to connect it to our research interests. As graduate students, we often like to separate school from our social lives, but Jolie asks us to make connections between them and think about media differently."

#### Name a prominent American

In another ongoing study, Matthews is surveying a broad range of Americans about the 10 people they view as the most important or famous in US history. In addition to questions about their in-school and out-of-school experiences, participants are asked to list five important or famous Americans from each of the racial and ethnic categories used by the US Census: Asian; Black; Latino or Hispanic; Native American or Alaska Native; Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian; and White.

Inspired by a similar 2008 survey (which didn't focus on racial or ethnic groups), Matthews structured her study to include respondents from across the US in three categories: people ages 18 to 22; the general adult population aged 23 and up; and educators from the pre-K to college levels.

So far, many participants have struggled to list even a few Native Americans or Pacific Islanders, and those they name often come from the 19th century or earlier, she says. The listed Black, Latino, and Hispanic figures were associated with civil rights and immigration or modern entertainment, sports, and politics. In the Asian category, participants knew no one, or they named celebrities, martial artists, politicians, or activists.

"Only white individuals named came from a range of business, science, exploration, arts, leadership, and other areas," Matthews says about her study, funded by SESP's Venture Research Fund, which helps jump-start timely faculty projects. "This is a problem because Black people and other racial groups have made major contributions to the US in all areas." And since teachers' responses were similar to those of most other participants, that lack of knowledge affects what students learn about diverse representation.

White inventors make the list, for example, but why isn't Frederick McKinley Jones, the Black man who invented the portable refrigeration technology that helped the US carry food and blood during World War II, a household name? Has anyone heard of Marie Van Brittan Brown, the Black woman who came up with the first home security system and closed-circuit television?

"My work highlights the ways that thinking about racial and ethnic groups remains narrow and rather stereotyped," Matthews says. "When groups of people are only thought of in particular contexts, it denies them the chance to be fully multi-dimensional and really, fully human."

Some survey participants were surprised by the gaps in their own knowledge. "People commented on how little they were taught about different groups in school," Matthews says. "One person wrote, 'I'm embarrassed that I don't know more and that it didn't occur to me that I didn't know.'"

Still, some signs are literally pointing to change. In 2019, Congress Parkway was renamed Ida B. Wells Drive, giving Chicago its first major street named for a Black woman. And in 2021, the city's Lake Shore Drive was renamed for Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable, an immigrant and trader from Haiti and the area's first non-Indigenous permanent settler.

"Once you're aware of the way the past is represented through textbooks, fiction, pop culture, and other vehicles," she says, "and how it's shaping what you know and don't know, you can make active changes and say, 'Maybe I need to push myself to engage and read and think beyond what I thought was 'diverse.'"

"Maybe pick one thing every day and just ask, 'Why do I know what I know or believe what I believe?' If we challenge ourselves to pick one thing to question, then self-reflect, it will push all of us forward."

# They Built a Pioneering Program

## Here's their legacy

SESP celebrates and says farewell to three outstanding faculty members who helped build the Human Development and Social Policy doctoral program into one of the nation's best. Professors **P. LINDSAY CHASE-LANSDALE**, **DAN A. LEWIS**, and **REGINA (GINA) LOGAN** conducted groundbreaking research, fiercely advocated for students, and touched hundreds of lives. The following tributes from colleagues and alumni offer a small window into the professors' impact.





## LINDSAY CHASE-LANSDALE

### Builder, Connector, Mentor

Lindsay Chase-Lansdale profoundly shaped the field of developmental psychology and built a generation of scholars by connecting numerous disciplines and studying programs and policies for children, youth, and families. The Frances Willard Professor Emerita of Human Development and Social Policy, she has been particularly interested in mentoring students of color and first-generation and lower-income students, and fostering the careers of Northwestern faculty, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds.



**What she studied:** A specialist on societal issues that affect families and children, Chase-Lansdale has published widely on family studies; child and

adolescent development; two-generation education programs and policy; poverty and social inequality; mothers' employment; immigration; and the resilience of children and parents facing economic hardship.

**How she got here:** Chase-Lansdale came to Northwestern in 1999 from the University of Chicago, where she was a tenured associate professor at the Harris School of Public Policy.

**Supporting families:** When Chase-Lansdale began Northwestern's Two-Generation Research Initiative, she was one of the first researchers to define and

### WHY WE LOVE HER

*"Lindsay made it clear that she valued our ideas. As a mentor, she was generous and collaborative, supporting those who came behind her and encouraging us to dream big. She also saw us as people; she celebrated our weddings and the birth of our children, and on multiple occasions she opened her home to us. This generous spirit has tremendously shaped the way I mentor my own students."*

**NATALIA PALACIOS** (PhD09), associate professor at the University of Virginia, who met Chase-Lansdale in 2003 while applying to graduate school

*"She taught me how to take big ideas at the intersection of policy and development and put them into action with rigor. Then she'd go really into the weeds: how do you carry it out? She taught so many of us how to do rigorous science without compromising the highest standards."*

**LAUREN WAKSCHLAG**, Chase-Lansdale's first PhD student at the University of Chicago, now vice chair for scientific and faculty development for medical social sciences at Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine

YEARS ON  
THE FACULTY  
22

study education programs targeting both parents and children in low-income families. "Beginning in the 1980s, she launched innovative research programs on how mothers' education and economic opportunities are linked to family systems and human development," says Sandy Waxman, Northwestern's Louis W. Menk Professor of Psychology. "At the time, there were chasms among the education, economics, and psychology disciplines, but Lindsay had the vision to bring them together."

**Advocating for faculty:** Chase-Lansdale became associate provost for faculty in 2013 and later Northwestern's first vice provost for academics. In those roles, she focused on faculty development, leadership, and well-being in addition to faculty diversity and inclusion, multidisciplinary research initiatives, and the success of students from all backgrounds. The P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale Undergraduate Summer Research Grant in Social Policy for Children and Families was established by the provost in her honor in 2020.

*"She fiercely rallied for inclusiveness in the National Institute of Mental Health Family Research Consortium and for bringing in more postdoctoral students of color. She was always professional, but she didn't mince words when it came to focusing on integration of the consortium. It was a game changer for scientists of color at the time."*

**LINDA BURTON**, dean of the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley, and longtime research collaborator

## DAN LEWIS

### Rebel with a Cause

Professor emeritus Dan Lewis spent his career getting students out of the classroom and into the community. Those hands-on lessons, now a staple of a SESP education, remained with his students long after they left the Evanston campus. "Learning how to make a difference—that should be part of the students' education," he says.



**The early years:** Before coming to Northwestern, Lewis was director of the Stanford Workshops on Political and Social Issues. When he arrived here in

1980, he played a formative role in SESP's transition to a school that combined education with social policy. Lewis held nearly every SESP leadership position, including director of undergraduate education and chair of the graduate program on human development and social policy.

**What he studied:** Criminal justice and mental health issues. His efforts led to crime-prevention strategies, the deinstitutionalization of state mental-health patients, and school reforms that gave parents more power over their children's education. He also studied welfare reform and homelessness.

### WHY WE LOVE HIM

*"Dr. Lewis was my favorite professor at Northwestern. I did several independent studies with him after taking his course, because I loved working with him. He always pushed his students to improve, think more critically, challenge themselves and their own ideas, and remain active and engaged. His guidance on detailed field notes has helped me as a writer to this day. Honestly, I always wanted to impress Dr. Lewis. I was never sure if I was successful, but I know he made me a better writer and observer and helped deepen my understanding of many subjects."*

**DAN PERLMAN** (BS12), comedian and executive producer, cocreator, writer, and star of Showtime's *Flatbush Misdeemeanors*

*"Dan was not one for faint praise. I recall him commenting on a student's paper that he wouldn't wrap his fish in this. So when you received an A with the comment 'to the top of the class—a beautiful paper' (yes, I still have that paper), you knew it meant something. I would not have completed a PhD in 1995 (back when we had to mail dissertation chapters) as a new mother living and working 2,000 miles away in Seattle if not for Dan Lewis. For that I will be forever appreciative."*

**CHERYL MILLOY** (PhD95), one of the first HDSP students, who met Lewis in 1983

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**What he's known for:** Being a tireless advocate for the underdog, Lewis could own a room and often played the role of contrarian, says SESP interim dean Dan McAdams, a colleague for more than 20 years. Lewis and Rob Donahue, director of the Center for Civic Engagement, designed the SESP Certificate in Civic Engagement in 2000, laying the groundwork for the CCE, where Lewis served as director for more than a decade.

**What makes him proud:** He helped psychologist Bernice Neugarten create SESP's groundbreaking interdisciplinary Human Development and Social Policy program in 1981 and revolutionized the practicum, making it more intellectually rigorous. At his final faculty meeting, Lewis said he was humbled to have played a part in making SESP one of the top schools in the US. "Keep this a great place for strays, misfits, and troublemakers," he added. "SESP is a great home for them."

*"The sheer quantity of hours he spent working with me was staggering—we literally met several times a week, every week. More importantly, of course, was the quality of that mentoring. We would spend hours talking ideas, doing deep dives into readings that he'd sent. He taught me how to think—certainly how to think like a social scientist. He saw mentoring as the central aspect of his job in ways that I try, but fail, to recreate with my own students. He is the last of a dying breed in that sense, and I got extremely lucky to have him as a supervisor and a friend."*

**SHADD MARUNA** (PhD98), professor of criminology at Queen's University Belfast

## REGINA LOGAN

## Bringing Generations Together

Regina Logan (MA84, PhD93) always wanted a career helping others. An assistant professor of instruction, she was greatly influenced by Bernice Neugarten and professor Dan McAdams, now SESP's interim dean, who became her adviser. With shared interests in life stories and complementary skills, Logan and McAdams created the Foley Center for the Study of Lives interdisciplinary research group. She was director of the Foley Longitudinal Study of Adulthood, won SESP's Outstanding Professor Award, and was named to the Associated Student Government Honor Roll.

YEARS  
AT SESP  
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Students learn about the major developmental issues of adulthood, from age 18 through the end of life. The class includes expert guest lecturers and a panel of parents for the parenthood unit. The final project is a case study of an older person, preferably a family member.

**Annual intergenerational exchange**

**field trip:** For at least a decade, Logan took students to Evanston's Mather senior living community, where, over tea and cookies, they interviewed residents. "It's a great way to look at research on adulthood and apply it," Logan says. "It also can change the students' attitudes about what it means to be an older adult. They realize everyone has a story to tell."

**What makes her happy:** "I'm thrilled when students see themselves, their parents, and their grandparents in the course materials," Logan says. "I want them to see that we never stop developing and growing and that most adults continue to contribute to their communities, families, and friends well into old age."

to interview adults over age 70—an assignment Neugarten had once given her.

**Persistence pays off:** After studying French at the University of Michigan and getting her master's in that subject at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Logan came to Northwestern in 1982, where she discovered the field of human development and social policy. The mother of three children, all born when Logan was a graduate student, she earned her PhD in 1993.

**Signature class:** Adulthood and Aging, which teaches that development continues throughout life and is affected by race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

*"Dr. Logan held high expectations for all because she believed everyone could reach them. She was warm and strict and always made sure to adapt her teaching to the times. One of my favorite memories was, while serving as research assistants on her team, another student and I went to her house and made holiday cookies. It was such a nice time to connect with her on a human level as a mentor."*

**FANNIE KOLTUN** (BS10), third-grade teacher at Equitas Academy Charter Schools in Los Angeles

*"I am a better writer, researcher, and person because of Professor Logan and her mentorship. What really stuck with me is how she centered diversity and inclusion in every aspect of her work, constantly pushing students to rethink their biases and expand their perspectives. The attention she gave each individual student as a learner was unmatched."*

**JOANNA SHERMAN** (BS21), a Springboard Innovation fellow at Cornell Hillel

**Logan's legacy:** Logan, who will retire in June, was known for creating community by bringing voices of the young together with those of their elders. In her Adulthood and Aging class, she asked students

**WHY WE LOVE HER**

*"She was the heart and soul of the Foley Center for the Study of Lives. Gina has tremendous social capital and wisdom. If you have a problem with a spouse, job, or health, she'll know how to help. She is also quite the scholar in adult development and aging. She has always been aware of how stages and interests change, and she's very, very good at understanding things from the other point of view. She was always an advocate for the students."*

**DAN MCADAMS**, chair of Logan's dissertation committee and longtime collaborator

## "TRUST IS BELIEF IN ACTION"

College wasn't all smooth sailing for Ro Curtis, who delivered a convocation speech to the most recent class of SESP Leadership Institute graduates

After four years of "caffeine, tears, emotional support, and contempt for the pace of the quarter system," Ro Curtis (BS22) turned in their final papers and earned a Northwestern University diploma.

Curtis, who uses they/them pronouns, wanted to say it was a breeze—that their time as a member of the SESP Leadership Institute gave them all the support they needed to navigate a challenging new world. But like many college students, Curtis had ups and downs. And to cope with an especially hard period, they took several months off from school.

Curtis returned to graduate and deliver an honest and moving convocation speech to the most recent class of SLI graduates. Below is an excerpt.

When I was a student, I didn't need to believe in myself; I just needed to meet the next deadline and produce the assignment. Once I didn't have deadlines dictating my time, I was left with the anxiety, pressure, and stress that led to my self-doubt, burnout, and internal havoc.

Now I'm trying to define what it means to be free from this environment. My friend Daniela [Hernandez] said, "It's one thing to believe in yourself, and it's another thing to trust yourself." I agree. Trust is belief in action.

To trust myself, I had to learn that I could believe in myself. First, I had to take advantage of my time off and prove that I could make the decisions that were best for me by scheduling things like appointments, meals, and rest.



Next, I took an honest look at how I was doing and where I was, so I could know where I wanted to go. Therapy, journaling, movement, art, and music were my most powerful self-reflection tools.

Finally, I had to rely on my loved ones and connections to ground me. Spending all day, every day in my own mind revealed so much to me about myself, but I couldn't be honest about my growth without those closest to me witnessing and congratulating it.

I have come to trust my own innate wisdom and expertise because I know that I became a Northwestern graduate through and with so many others invested in my uprightness. I take deep comfort in that I am not here alone.

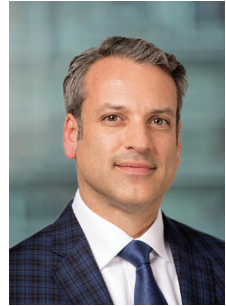
Octavia Butler once said, "There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns." Just like the sun, which took its time becoming the brightness that it is,

we can create and become suns over time—and in our own time.

This journey you've been on, navigating the intense pressure of being a Northwestern student, has birthed those moments of brightness and foundations of who you are today. Who you are now is not who you've always been. And it's not who you always will be. But it is the foundation for you to become who you're meant to be.

I don't know where you'll all go or be in this life, but I hope that it will be in a new direction, actively moving toward a wider, larger, more expansive space where it's never a question as to whether someone belongs.

That process of becoming is not an easy one, but I encourage you to trust yourself.



Ian Vásquez



Darkhan Bilyalov



Christian Reyes



Akie Kadota



Amy Liu



Bill Healy



Alisha Gomez-Shah



Frances Poe



Ruby Mendenhall



Erin Dickerson Davis



Samira Asseh



Ruby Scanlon

## 80s

**Elaine Grant-Bryan** (BS80), Jamaica's honorary consul in Atlanta, received the US Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award for her thousands of hours of service to the Jamaican diaspora, the Caribbean, and the US. She is president and CEO of Global Education Consultants, chair of the Elaine Bryan Foundation, and a real estate broker.

## 90s

**Ian Vásquez** (BS90) is vice president for international studies at the Cato Institute and director of its Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity. He is coauthor of the *Human Freedom Index*, editor of *Global Fortune: The*

*Stumble and Rise of World Capitalism*, and coeditor of *Perpetuating Poverty: The World Bank, the IMF, and the Developing World*. He has testified numerous times before Congress on economic development issues.

**Amy Liu** (BS93) was appointed interim president of the Brookings Institution. She was previously vice president and director of Brookings Metro (which she founded in 1996) and held the institution's chair in urban and metropolitan policy.

**Jennifer Aloe Kahler** (BS97) is a licensed clinical psychologist and director of counseling and psychological services at George Mason University.

**Carlee Alm-LaBar** (BS98) was appointed executive director of the William C. Schumacher Family Foundation.

**Marti (Mittman) McGuirk** (MSED99) is assistant principal of Mountain View (California) High School, where she oversees student services and student and staff health and wellness. She was previously an English teacher, school counselor, department coordinator, and new-teacher mentor.

## 00s

**Monica Rani** (BS01), a board-certified dermatologist and former Fulbright Scholar, is the founder of Advanced Dermatology & Aesthetic Medicine.

**Ruby Mendenhall** (PhD04), a professor of sociology and African American studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is associate dean for diversity and democratization of health innovation at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. Her research examines how living in racially segregated neighborhoods with high levels of violence affects Black mothers' mental and physical health.

**Mike Stieff** (PhD04) was named vice provost for faculty affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is a tenured professor of chemistry and codirector of the Learning Sciences Research Institute.

**Darkhan Bilyalov** (MSHE07) is president of Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Kazakhstan's oldest university.

**Bill Healy** (MSED08) has produced a new narrative podcast called *Belonging*, which explores the idea of inclusivity in school spaces through the eyes of a Black teacher, her family, and former colleagues. Like Healy's previous podcast *Somebody*, which was a finalist for the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in audio, *Belonging* fosters conversations about social justice issues and can be used as a professional development tool. Healy, who freelances with the Invisible Institute, previously taught fifth grade on the South Side of Chicago and worked at a high school in Pilsen before transitioning to journalism. He teaches documentary radio at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism and recently taught a class on oral history and podcasting at the University of Chicago.

**Erin Dickerson Davis** (BS09) was named head women's basketball coach at the College of William & Mary. She was previously associate head coach at Wake Forest University, where she helped lead the team to the program's first NCAA tournament appearance in 30 seasons. At Northwestern, she was team captain all four years.

**Ray Mitic** (MSHE09) is assistant professor of higher education at the University of North Dakota. He received a seed grant from the Inclusive Graduate Education Network to study the development of science identity and the career pathways of space-science students from racially diverse backgrounds.

## 10s

**Halle Anne Bauer** (BS10) married Stephanie Schuler in New York City. Bauer teaches history at the Dwight School in New York.

**Katherine Mallon** (BS10) joined the complex commercial disputes group at the Nixon Peabody LLP law firm. She was previously an associate at another firm and a judicial law clerk for the US district courts for southern New York and Connecticut as well as for the New York State Supreme Court.

**Alex Sims-Jones** (BS10), president of APS and Associates, was appointed to the Greater Chicago Food Depository's board of directors.

**Fatima Varner** (PhD11) received a College Teaching Excellence Award from the University of Texas at Austin. She is assistant professor of human development and family sciences at its College of Natural Sciences.

**Mary Gardner Burrelle** (MSLOC12), senior director, head of legal operations, and chief of staff at McDonald's, received the annual Women of Achievement Award from the Anti-Defamation League Midwest. Burrelle is a faculty member for SESP's Executive Learning and Organizational Change program.

**Alyssa Lloyd** (BS13) is coordinator of the overdose prevention program at Allegheny County Health Department in Pittsburgh. She works with 20 partner organizations across the county to reduce stigma around

opioid use disorder, promote harm reduction strategies, and increase connections to treatment.

**Johnny Buse** (MSED17) teaches English and coaches the chess team at Chicago's Mather High School. In July he and his wife welcomed their second child, Evangeline, sister to Ruby.

**Godwin Igwebiuke** (BS17) recently produced a minidocumentary that uses film, animation, commentary, and his original music to chronicle his experience in the National Football League. Though still in the NFL, he hopes to pursue music, film, and writing.

**Mason Rocca** (MSED17), a math teacher and basketball coach, is interim head of school at Baker Demonstration School in Wilmette, Illinois. Having previously played professional basketball in Italy, he now gets his competitive fix through cycling and has won master's races and the Illinois Masters Criterium State Championship. He is also the 2022 USA Cycling Esports (indoor cycling) national champion.

**Foram Sheth** (MSLOC17), cofounder and chief coaching officer of Ama La Vida, gave the talk "Take Off Your Blinders and Forge Your Own Path" at TEDx Wilmette.

**Cesar Almeida** (BS18) is program coordinator at Faith in Place, which brings diverse faiths together to advance environmental and racial justice initiatives. He is a member of the Chicago Botanic Garden's first Community Advisory Board

**Imani Wilson** (BS18) is a social worker at Evanston Township High School. She received her master's from the University of Chicago's social work and policy school in 2020.

**Abbey Kutlas-Prickett** (BS19, MSED19) teaches 9th-grade dual-language US history and 11th-grade world history at Omaha South High School. She previously worked with middle schoolers at the Bloomington Project School in Indiana.

**Christian Reyes** (BS19) is an analytics and data integrity contractor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

## 20s

**Alisha Gomez-Shah** (WCAS17, MSHE20) is director of operations for Northwestern's fencing program. Gomez-Shah was an All-American saber fencer at Northwestern from 2013 to 2017 and a three-time NCAA competitor.

**Tommy Vaughan** (BS20) is social media manager for LUDEX, a sports and trading-card scanning app.

**Anna Bethune** (PhD21) is chief strategy officer for EduFocal Limited.

**Samira Asseh** (BS22) received a 2022-23 Project Horseshoe Farm Fellowship, a rigorous and intensive year of volunteer service and learning in the community health field. Asseh is working with the community health service team in Pomona, California.

**Akie Kadota** (BS22) is a music teacher for kindergarten through eighth grade at Distinctive Schools in Chicago.

**Frances Poe** (MSLOC22) received the 2022 Association of Change Management Professionals Independent Research Award.

**Ruby Scanlon** (BS22) is an antitrust specialist with the US Department of Justice. Last summer, she was one of 16 undergraduates selected to participate in the Trial by Combat mock-trial national championship.



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## Why Billy McKinney Moved Home

*Leaving basketball for a new calling*

**Billy McKinney** (BS77) said there were two things he'd never do: return to his hometown of Zion, Illinois, and enter politics.

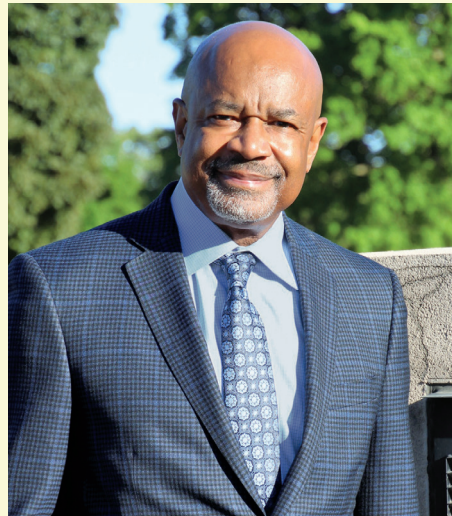
He's done both, naturally, because McKinney, a former Northwestern basketball phenom and NBA executive, has a knack for going where he's needed.

In addition to serving as mayor of Zion, where he lives in his modest childhood home, McKinney is chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, a group of more than 175 US and Canadian cities and their mayors. The organization addresses a range of water equity issues, including urban flooding, access to clean and affordable drinking water, and community resilience to climate change in cities along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin.

"My time at Northwestern developed my game," McKinney says, "but also developed me as a person with purpose." With a degree in education, he imagined a future in business while also helping the community. But the NBA came calling, and he spent the next four decades as a player and then in executive positions for four league teams and another in the WNBA.

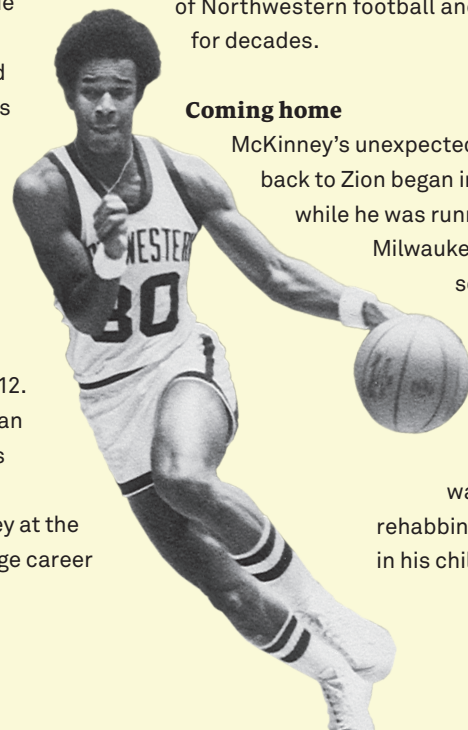
As a Wildcat, McKinney started 98 straight games, was the team's MVP for three seasons, and scored double digits in every game of his senior season, when he was named All-Big Ten. His 1,900 career points stood as a school record for 35 years until another SESP student, John Shurna (BS12), surpassed it in 2012. McKinney was also the first African American to start on the Wildcats baseball team.

The Wildcats honored McKinney at the final basketball game of his college career



by establishing the Billy McKinney Award, which is given annually to a student athlete who exemplifies his traits of leadership, total effort, and positive attitude. In 2022, the Northwestern men's basketball program recognized McKinney as a hero. And now he's back at Northwestern as part of the Wildcats WGN radio broadcast team, alongside Medill alumnus Dave Eanet, WGN Radio's sports director and the voice of Northwestern football and basketball for decades.

### Coming home



McKinney's unexpected journey back to Zion began in 2012, while he was running the Milwaukee Bucks scouting department. After his mother died, he was soon rehabbing and living in his childhood home.

**"My time at Northwestern developed my game but also developed me as a person with purpose."**

By 2015, he had been appointed building commissioner of his hometown, which has had more than its share of property issues, including vacant buildings.

As commissioner, McKinney didn't just sign off on housing inspections—he'd ride his bike to check out projects in person. He regularly connected with local businesses, firefighters, and police officers, and in 2019, he ran for mayor, winning with more than 63 percent of the vote.

Now McKinney is trying to increase outside investment in a city that has traditionally tried to be self-sustaining. And he is working to turn home renters into buyers, since home ownership is a primary way to build wealth. He has secured the long-overdue \$15 million in annual payments as compensation for spent nuclear fuel rods that have sat on the Zion lakefront since a 257-acre power plant was shuttered in 1998.

Zion's mayor is accessible—he doesn't hide behind a velvet rope. McKinney credits the community with raising him when his family moved to the city in 1962. "The people of Zion directed me toward the path of proper education, respect for myself and others, and the road to success," he said after winning the mayoral election.

"They invested in me and shaped me into the man I am today," he says. "I still work in my yard, make the bed every day. I learned some important lessons here."

BY BRIAN CAZENEUVE

# Nancy Roterling

*Mayor of Highland Park, Illinois*

*Roterling, a SESP faculty member who teaches Women and American Political Leadership, was walking in Highland Park's Fourth of July parade when a gunman opened fire, killing 7 and wounding 48.*



**I grew up in Highland Park**, but my family has been here for about 85 years. A lot of people who were raised here left and came back to have kids and settle down. It's a place with many multigenerational families, and at the July 4 parade, we had grandparents, parents, teens, and young children standing multiple rows deep along the parade route.

**When the shooting started**, the adults looked like they didn't understand—like the reality of what was happening did not register. But the kids were screaming "Run! Hide!" because that is what we have trained them to do.

**Afterward, kids told me they expected a shooting** like this to happen at some point in their lives. But they thought it would happen at school. That is such a horrible reflection of our society, that we have raised a generation of children with that kind of expectation.

**I have been working on common-sense gun legislation** for more than a decade. When Illinois enacted its concealed carry law in 2013, the process included an option for local communities to introduce and pass local assault-weapon bans, but the window was only open for 10 days.

**Highland Park was one of the few cities** that did pass a ban, and we got sued by the National Rifle Association's Illinois arm. We prevailed at the US District Court and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. The Supreme Court did not take the case, so our law is still constitutional. It's still on the books. Since we passed the ban, I have been advocating for legislation that would allow any city, town, or county in Illinois to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, even though the 10-day window has long since passed.

**The pain, trauma, and death** that the mass shooting caused are immeasurable. That has reenergized my effort to do whatever I can to get assault weapons and high-capacity magazines off our streets and out of the hands of the public.

**I teach my students at SESP** that the path to success may not be clear at the outset, but that does not mean you stop and that does not mean you lose hope. It means you keep trying. If one door shuts, then you find another door. Staying nimble in your advocacy is critical.

**You can look at history** and see times when the challenges seemed impossible, and you can find inspiration in those who continued to look for ways to make progress.

**We need to pursue every avenue we can**, whether at the state or federal level or through lawsuits. I won't stop until we have success.

AS TOLD TO COLLEEN MCNAMERA

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## A NEW KIND OF PITCHING

**Dan Perlman** (BS12), a stand-up comedian, writer, and director, threw the ceremonial first pitch (a strike!) at a Brooklyn Cyclones game. His Showtime series *Flatbush Misdemeanors* was set in Brooklyn's Flatbush neighborhood.