

SPRING | SUMMER 2019

# UCalgary

Alumni magazine

## Spectacular Spaces

and the alumni behind them



Dressing Royalty | Mad for Murals



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## How Do We Protect the Most Vulnerable?



# 36

Willing to take on challenging urban issues, UCalgary is assisting those who live on the margins. In this 12-page feature, you will also meet people who are experts in hiding — whose stories are achingly open to the vulnerability that comes with broken systems and broken lives.

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## The Future of Architecture

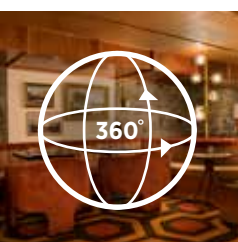
Inspired by the cosmos, the prairies, a Chinook arch — discover what's behind some of Calgary's new signature spaces, as well as the alumni who helped design them.



# 22

## Dropping In: Mural Madness

Ethereal, whimsical and mysterious are often-used adjectives to describe the murals around town painted by Calgary-based artist Katie Green, BFA'14.



### TAKE A PEEK

See more details of the stunning locations featured in "The Future of Architecture" article with these 360° views.

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/spaces](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/spaces)

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[alumni.ucalgary.ca/buyframes](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/buyframes)

**Alumni**

Get 10% off your Convocation frame if you order it between Apr. 15 - May 24. Must pick up at Convocation, June 3-7.

## UCalgary

Alumni magazine

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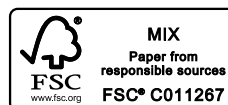
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# Redefining Calgary

**I**n the words of the late American architect Robert Venturi, we believe the spectacular spaces that are featured in this issue allow you to “see familiar things in an unfamiliar way.”

Whether it’s a peek inside the new Central Library, a house in Winston Heights-Mountview, the Wednesday Room restaurant or the massive Shane Homes YMCA in Rocky Ridge, you’ll see how lively public spaces can become bold architectural statements of genuine civic value (see page 26). The idea of “architecture of place” is about creating design that ennobles people — that leaves them empowered, important and excited to be in the places they inhabit in their daily lives. In other words, this feature doesn’t just toast Calgary’s newest buildings and their architectural merit; we examine how certain aspects of buildings actually impact our innate sense of place — which is precisely the point, say the UCalgary alumni who are behind these landmark place-makers.

Venturi’s words also apply to the critical conversations we explore in “How Do We Protect the Most Vulnerable?” (page 36). This 12-page feature looks at the juncture where some of Calgary’s most vulnerable populations meet the frontline workers who are connected to UCalgary in myriad ways. The needs of those who are economically and socially marginalized are vast and complex, and the solutions are never straightforward. We know that. But, just as the alumni, faculty and researchers we interviewed for the article struggle to find answers, we have to ask ourselves: what kind of society are we trying to build here?

That very quest continues in a first-person account by playwright and professor Clem Martini, BFA’82, of his desperate struggle to help care for his mother when she developed dementia (page 17). And, in POV (page 20), you’ll meet our new chancellor, journalist Deborah Yedlin, who explores the kind of society we want to live in by exposing what UCalgary is doing to amplify entrepreneurial thinking and innovation. Also in this issue is a column from our new president, Dr. Ed McCauley (page 12), who, like Venturi the architect, is looking at our familiar campus through a fresh lens as he begins to outline how UCalgary can continue to extend the frontier of knowledge and solve real-world problems while preparing our students to think broadly, ethically and critically about how they want to contribute to the world.

In her own whimsical way, Katie Green, BFA’14, also tries to answer that Venturi question on page 22. Here you’ll find a slew of cryptic messages and hidden surprises that are artfully painted into the crevices of this alumna’s mural works. Not to be outdone, you’ll find other fun facts and clues jammed into our back-page contest, “Where Are We?”

This spring, wherever your paths take you, we hope you’ll cross boundaries in order to see familiar things in an unfamiliar way.

— Deb Cummings, MEd’17, Editor **U**

# Connect with Alumni this Spring and Summer

Presented in-person and online, our programming and events throughout the year are timely and relevant for Wherever Life Takes You. Stay in the loop by following [@ucalgaryalumni](#) on social media, watching your inbox and visiting [alumni.ucalgary.ca](#) for dates and to register.



**DIG IN!**

## CALGARY

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/dig-in](#)

Rise, shine and dig in to the most important meal of the day with an expert-led discussion on current trends, innovation, technology and more. Breakfast and coffee (courtesy of Phil & Sebastian) are included.

May 9, 2019



**FIELD TRIPS**

## EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

[alumni.ucalgary.ca](#)

Get behind-the-scenes access to curious spaces and places in and around Calgary with this brand-new program. From tours of private museums to new alumni businesses, UCalgary Alumni will help open doors for you!

April 28, 2019

May 25, 2019



**ALUMNIGHT 2019**

## WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD

[alumni.ucalgary.ca](#)

Welcome UCalgary's newest alumni — the Class of 2019 — at this swanky celebration hosted by the Recent Graduate Committee.

June 13, 2019



**GROW YOUR CAREER**

## WEBINARS

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/grow-your-career](#)

Brush up your professional skills from wherever you are. Grow your career with tips and tricks from experts across the UCalgary Alumni community.

Join ongoing webinars or access the recordings anytime.

## CAREER COACHING

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/grow-your-career](#)

Meet with career coaches either in-person or online to discuss your work journey, no matter if you're looking for new opportunities or aiming to progress in your current career. Each session is tailored to your unique needs and questions.

Ongoing appointments available.

## MENTORSHIP

### UCALGARY MENTOR LINK

This spring, the new UCalgary Mentor Link program will pair mentors with recent graduates and alumni in career transition. If you are an established professional, consider sharing your time and expertise digitally with recent graduates and alumni in career transition. All UCalgary alumni are welcome to join as mentees. Mentors are alumni who are established professionals and leaders who are prepared to share their knowledge and passion. Alumni mentors should have earned their undergraduate degrees five or more years ago.

*Stay tuned for alumni-to-student mentorship opportunities in the fall of 2019!*



#### LINKS AND DRINKS

### ATYPICAL MIXER

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/links-drinks](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/links-drinks)

Graduates of the last decade — this one is for you! Make important connections and learn career and life hacks at this atypical alumni mixer.

May 23, 2019

### ALUMNI PARTNERSHIPS

UCalgary Alumni co-sponsors some of the best programming and events on campus and in the community. Don't miss these upcoming opportunities:

#### OPEN DOORS, OPEN DIALOGUES PANEL

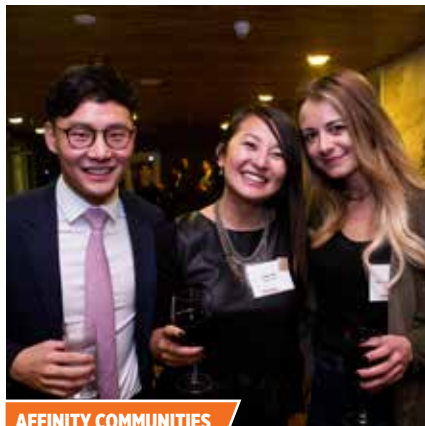
#MeToo: What happens when men take action for change? Hosted by the Werklund School of Education.

April 11, 2019

#### DESIGN MATTERS

Hosted by the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the new Central Calgary Public Library.

April 18, 2019



#### AFFINITY COMMUNITIES

### STRONG CONNECTIONS

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/communities](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/communities)

UCalgary Alumni is making stops in these cities in the coming months to build new Affinity Communities. Watch your inbox for further details and join us. It's also a terrific opportunity to catch up with fellow graduates!

New York – May 9, 2019

Vancouver – May 30, 2019

San Francisco – Summer 2019



#### IDEA EXCHANGE

### CALGARY & NORTH AMERICA

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/idea-exchange](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/idea-exchange)

Join us in Calgary and across North America and discover how UCalgary researchers' groundbreaking ideas are transforming how we live, work and play.

#### UPCOMING CALGARY EVENTS:

April 17, 2019

May 28, 2019

#### UPCOMING NORTH AMERICA EVENTS:

Toronto – May 7, 2019

Ottawa – May 8, 2019

Edmonton – June 18, 2019

San Francisco – October 8, 2019

Vancouver – October 9, 2019 **U**

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# Food for Thought

Gone are the days when campus food resembled mushy gruel or deep-fried . . . well, everything

by Deb Cummings

**I**n a world where fast, fresh food (that’s multicoloured, textured and, dare we say, spicy?) is the new norm, universities across the continent have upped their menus to feed growing minds and appetites.

What was once called UCalgary’s Dining Centre — now referred to as The Landing — is no exception to this culinary trend. Still housed in the Dining Centre building, last summer’s \$3.3-million facelift now boasts 12 food stations, no packaged takeaways and double the seats, from 285 to 425.

In 2014, when Aramark was awarded the UCalgary contract as its food service partner, it was deemed a healthy dose of market research was in order. A small team of students and staff set off for eastern campuses to test out the fare at recommended food-forward universities such as Carleton and Wilfred Laurier.

“We wanted students to drive this initiative,” explains Jill Blackie, associate director of food and conference services at UCalgary. “Our survey results were telling us that students weren’t (a) happy with the quality of food, (b) the variety of the offerings and (c) the price.”

If the proof lies in the pudding, the expansion (a wall was knocked out where the old Blue Room was to make space for a more market-style setting) has been a resounding success. Yes, the price of the top (unlimited)



Photo: Angus McKenzie

Besides 12 new food stations, The Landing offers a 15-item salad bar where five items change weekly. A bulletin board, dubbed Napkin Talk, is another new touch that allows feedback, menu requests and staff suggestions.



Photo: Thomas Magee

meal plan increased from about \$4,600 to \$4,999 a year, but the number of students on meal plans has shot up from 850 (2017) to 1,350 (2018).

With four plans to choose from, the top two provide unlimited options that apply to either five or seven days a week — in other words, you can come and go however often you’d like. The next is a five-day plan and the other is your choice of a “swipe” plan (with options to purchase a 250- or a 120-meal pass). The most popular, says Blackie, is the seven-day plan that includes a flexi-fund for any on-campus dining that accepts the Unicaard. “If you look at the value of each

meal over the course of a week, it works out to be about \$20 a day,” says Blackie, “and that includes unlimited food.”

Surely, so many irresistible options on an all-you-can-eat meal plan translates into the dreaded Frosh 15 weight gain?

“I don’t think so,” says Blackie. “Look at what’s on students’ trays and you’ll see healthier options, with far more fruits and veggies than before.”

## DISHING: THE LANDING SIZZLES

With a choice of black bean quesadillas, vegetable curry wraps, a massive salad bar, rosemary roasted turkey and dozens of other choices, it’s no wonder some 150 staff and faculty are now choosing to nosh alongside students. Besides operating on a four-week rotational schedule, numerous themes — from following the life cycle of a salmon and special holiday buffets to cooking battles and open mic nights — are constantly being designed.

As are its new sustainability programs. No longer will you find packaged goods, bottled beverages, takeaway meals and disposable cutlery at The

Landing. What you will find are “more students hanging around meal time for longer, and in groups, instead of grabbing some fast food and taking it to their rooms.

“Food is so important,” says Blackie. “Meal times are about sharing and community. They are about downtime, mental nourishment and expanding one’s palate. I am thrilled when I hear someone say, ‘That looks weird, but I love it.’” **U**

# Moving Beyond Bathroom Talk

The artist, musician, professor and author has had a red-letter year, snagging spots in *Avenue* magazine's Top 40 Under 40 and the *Calgary Herald's* annual roundup of Compelling Calgarians

by Deb Cummings

**I**t may be clutchpurse-size, but UCalgary Prof. Vivek Shraya's book, *I'm Afraid of Men*, punches far above its brief 85-page count.

From the frontlines of a life as a queer artist and trans woman of colour, Shraya's non-fiction book of vignettes sparks a series of questions — likely why Tegan and Sara Quin have endorsed the book, saying it is “essential reading for everyone.”

With no tidy conclusion, the book is really a conversation-starter. We asked the English professor to conjure a dinner party where we might chat about a non-binary world and “the myth of a good man” — some of the hot topics covered in her book that's really about masculinity in crisis.

**Who would you invite to such a dinner?**

Some of my heroes — Tori Amos, Beyoncé, Michael Stipe and my mom.

**Why your mom?** She's been my No. 1 behind-the-scenes person for me for my entire life. I think it's important to remember the people behind the stage who allow people like me to do the job they love to do. Plus, whenever I wanted to borrow one of her jackets, she never said, “No, that's for girls.”

**Speaking of dinners and food, what is your kryptonite?** I love making my own chips: a melange of Doritos, popcorn and Miss Vickie's salt and vinegar variety.

**If the conversation veered away from your book to others, which would you discuss?**

Three books have recently given me pause: *The Gentrification of the Mind* by Sarah Schulman (a memoir of the AIDS years). Another by the same author that I really enjoyed is called *Conflict is Not Abuse*.

And I've just finished Andrea Warner's biography on Buffy Sainte-Marie, which is so well-written.

**And, if you talked about movies, where would you start?** I have so many loves . . . the *Harry Potter* movies, a Netflix documentary on Nina Simone [*What Happened, Miss Simone?*], *A Simple Plan* and I am prepared to love *The Female Persuasion*, which hasn't come out yet, but the book [by Meg Wolitzer] was excellent.

**If the dinner conversation turned to children and age-appropriate gender-identification, what would you say?** Why is it that we can make career changes but, when it comes to gender, you are the gender you



Photo: Zachary Ayotte

Vivek Shraya

were assigned at birth and that's it? The definitions are very narrow. And, really, what's the hurry?

I do think children as young as eight often know and that children change their minds and that they should be allowed to. I think the bigger issue is not giving children the room to be uncertain . . . to be confused. When it comes to gender, there's so much pressure to be decisive. Take your time.

Talk to the people you love. I didn't come out publicly until I was 35, but I started to have slow conversations with people I cared about one or two years prior. Give yourself the freedom to be whoever you are. **U**

## Gatecrashing the Art Gallery World

**T**he practice of buying art is changing. Just as e-commerce has revolutionized the world of retail, the impact of online sales is finally being felt by a sector that's been resistant to change.

In Calgary, one of the disrupters behind this change is Vandy Midha, BFA'12, the artist behind a website called ArtMatch.

Acting as a form of match-maker, Midha's website showcases more than 700 pieces of art from 32 local artists — all available to be browsed at will, by anybody. Search by artist, style, price and size — it's up to you.

“People are often intimidated by real art,” explains Midha, who considers her business a social enterprise. “Galleries tend to be very formal, quiet places that can make people feel like they have to know the right questions to ask. This new system changes that.” — Deb Cummings **U**

Discover how affordable art is; visit: [alumni.ucalgary.ca/artmatch](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/artmatch)



Photo: Thomas Magee

Vandy Midha

# What's in a Name?

When it relates to Indigenous peoples, it turns out a lot

by Deb Cummings

**S**ometimes, I fear that important conversations are being stifled due to the fear of using the “wrong” word. Especially when it relates to Indigenous peoples — or is it people? Or should I say aboriginal or native? And do I capitalize those terms?

Language and terminology are far more than just words and so navigating them, especially when we factor in power dynamics and colonial histories, is tricky and complex — precisely why we popped in to UCalgary’s Native Centre to chat with aboriginal student advisor Keeta Gladue. **This might be a good place to start. I thought “native” and “aboriginal” were outdated and offensive terms, not to be used?** Terms and titles like these show a system in flux. But the title of the Native Centre is a good example of how we don’t make snap decisions about altering titles and names.

Here at the university, changing titles at an institutional level is thoroughly examined for cultural protocols and conversations are had with traditional knowledge keepers before changes are made. Although we are in discussions now,

we are also respectful of its history — the Native Centre has been on campus for 40 years where we have supported, and continue to support, a lot of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

**But what is the right terminology we should currently use?** Be as specific as possible. If you know a person is Cree, say Cree; if they are Métis, say that. And don’t be afraid to ask how they self-identify. If you don’t know, the globally accepted term is Indigenous, meaning people of the land. “Native” is a general term that refers to native of the land, but does not denote a specific ethnicity. “Aboriginal” was a government-imposed term, but can be confused with the Indigenous people of Australia.

**How important is language in communication?** Very, as language creates a foundation, but it doesn’t start with a dictionary or glossary of terms. It begins with a story. And that story can lead to relationship-building . . . we can’t forget that.

**If someone wanted to read a book about Canada’s history and complex relationships with Indigenous people, what would you recommend?** Start with *The Inconvenient*

*Indian* by Thomas King, or *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline.

**Some people seem to struggle with the practice of land acknowledgements that recognizes the traditional territory of the Indigenous people. What is its purpose?**

It’s a reminder as to where we are and that there is a history here. And, secondly, if it makes someone a little uncomfortable, just a little . . . well, I think that’s OK.

It is in that space of discomfort where learning occurs. I guarantee that every day in Canada, Indigenous people wake up and live in a world they did not create for themselves and they are deeply uncomfortable. Being a little uncomfortable gives us a space to learn.

**Does UCalgary offer any programs that would help if you were working with Indigenous peoples?**

People can enrol in the Indigenous Relations Training Program, offered by the Native Centre. Similar to a block week, there are eight three-hour modules that are spread out over four days. Topics range from a historical overview to current Indigenous issues in Canada that span environmental and economic matters across Canada. The next one will run May 7-10, 2019. There are all sorts of other ways to bridge cultural gaps, from attending a powwow to checking out our events that we post at [ucalgary.ca/nativecentre](http://ucalgary.ca/nativecentre). **U**

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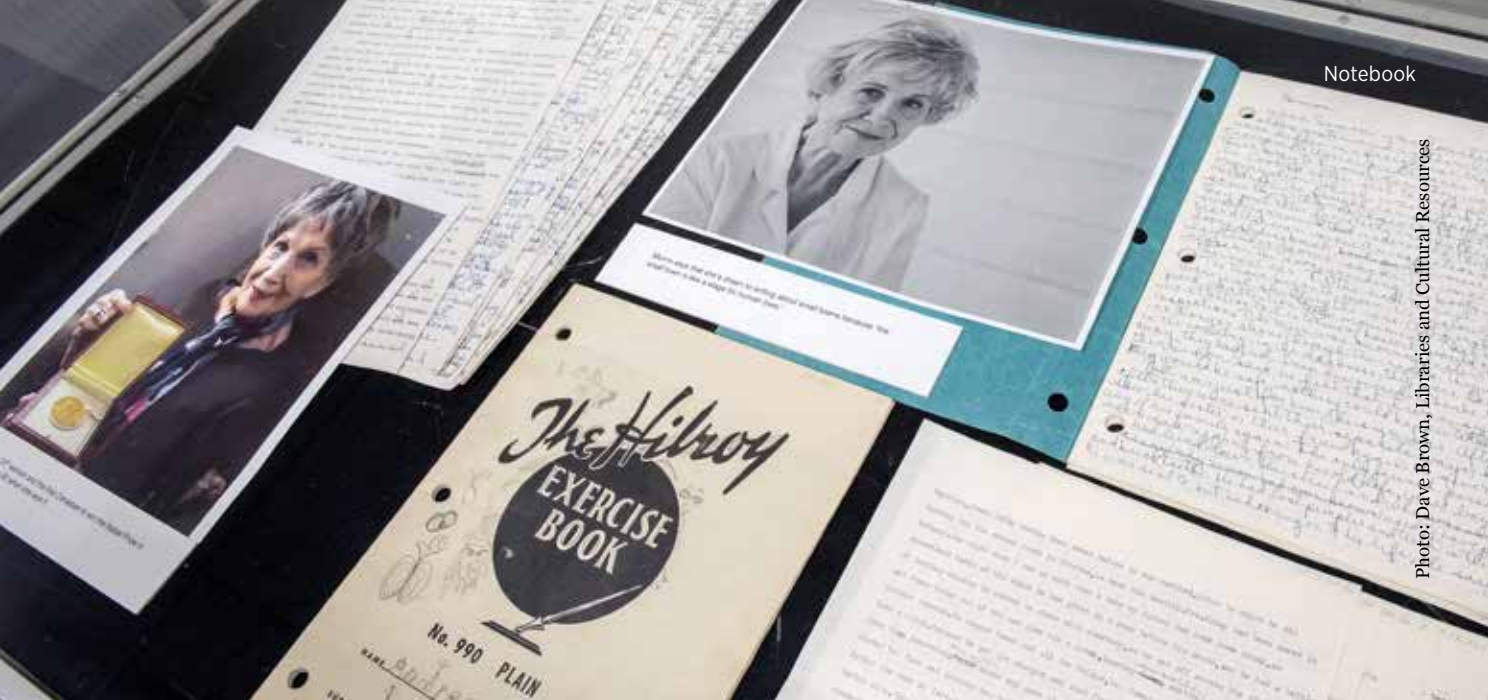


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## Inside the Mind of a Literary Icon

**I**t's not often you can get inside the head of a famous writer, but, thanks to a collection of one-of-a-kind notebooks and letters at UCalgary, researchers can do just that with iconic Canadian author Alice Munro.

It's little surprise this collection is one of associate university librarian Annie Murray's favourite acquisitions in Archives and Special Collections.

"I love her notebooks," Murray says. "They're just humble coil notebooks, like we'd find at a drug store. There are traces of her everyday life in the notebooks. Her kids were around her playing, and sometimes


they'd draw in the notebooks, too. They're a real cross-section of the writer's life."

Just as fascinating for Murray was seeing how the Nobel Prize-winning writer, either by hand or by typewriter, would jot down notes, story ideas and potential character names. The archive also includes correspondence between Munro and fellow writers, publishers and the *New Yorker*, which printed many of her stories.

A new project, Visualizing a Canadian Author Archive, recently launched involving researchers from English, Classics and Religion, and Computer Science.

"Alice Munro is one of the most highly

consulted archives we have," says Murray, noting that the library first approached Munro, who is now in her late 80s, about obtaining her archive back in the 1970s, when the university saw an opportunity to collect the archives of Canadian writers, composers, historians and architects.

*For information about donating items to the archives, call Annie Murray at 403.210.9521, or email [amurr@ucalgary.ca](mailto:amurr@ucalgary.ca). For information about donating financially to Libraries and Cultural Resources through Energize: The Campaign for Eyes High, visit [ucalgary.ca/campaign](http://ucalgary.ca/campaign). — Alex Frazer-Harrison *

## GET YOUR GEAR HERE!

Don't save your alumni gear for game day. Show your red-and-gold style with our first-ever line of Alumni merchandise — all year round. From golf shirts and hoodies to Swell water bottles, shop online at [calgarybookstore.ca](http://calgarybookstore.ca) or drop by the bookstore.

Alumni



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
Alumni

# Building a Better Future

**T**his past January, I had the distinct honour of becoming the ninth president of the University of Calgary. Having spent more than 30 years working at the university in a variety of roles — most recently as vice-president (research) — I have witnessed remarkable growth in the research excellence and landmark discoveries made by our students, post-doctoral scholars, faculty, academic leaders and, of course, our alumni.

While UCalgary is in a position of strength, we also face heightened levels of uncertainty and anxiety in the community as global forces influence our future and the future well-being of our society.

We may each find comfort in knowing that great research universities reduce or dispel this uncertainty and influence the type of future we will experience.

We do this by creating new knowledge and improving our understanding of the world around us. We do this by inspiring students and fostering environments in which they can discover, create and innovate. We do this by promoting belonging, embracing the benefits of diversity and equity, and by genuinely recognizing and respecting ideas drawn from a diversity of experiences and backgrounds. And we do this by equipping our alumni to become agents of change in the communities where they live and work.

In life, there are a handful of decisions we make that will alter our destiny. Choosing a university is one of them. As president, I am aware of the responsibility we have to every one of our students to provide them with an exceptional learning environment that is enriched by research, hands-on learning and entrepreneurial thinking.

That responsibility also extends to our 181,000-plus alumni worldwide. Whether one receives a bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate or all three from UCalgary, there is an inextricable link that ties our graduates to this university — for life. Just as their individual successes and accomplishments are a testament to the education they received, similarly, our institutional successes and accomplishments impact the value of their degrees.

The strong support we have received for *Energize: The Campaign for Eyes High* tells us the greater community recognizes the role this university plays in creating a better Calgary and a better Canada. Our path forward is clear, set by *Eyes High* and bolstered by superb academic and research plans.

With our students as inspiration — and our alumni as advocates — there is no doubt we will solidify our position as one of Canada's great research universities. **U**



**Dr. Ed McCauley, PhD,**  
president and vice-chancellor,  
University of Calgary



Vern Kimball, BA'81, MBA'90,  
president,  
UCalgary Alumni Association

## New Programs Raising the Bar for Alumni Engagement

**A**s I wind up my term at the helm of the UCalgary Alumni Association (UCAA), I am proud of what we have accomplished and am optimistic about the UCAA's trajectory. Last September, we introduced **Wherever Life Takes You**, a renewed and refocused approach to engaging UCalgary alumni. In addition to having full backing from the Alumni Association Board of Directors, the plan has been enthusiastically embraced by President and Vice-Chancellor Ed McCauley.

In less than a year, Wherever Life Takes You has planted seeds for meaningful and long-term improvements to the way alumni engage with each other and the university. Since the launch of Wherever Life Takes You, three programs have raised the profile of

the UCAA through timely and relevant engagement opportunities:

- **The Recent Graduate Program** addresses the unique needs and interests of those alumni who have graduated in the last 10 years. Led by the Recent Graduate Committee, events like Links and Drinks tap into resources at the university, in the community and of the greater alumni to give our newest grads a boost as they work to establish themselves and their careers.
- **The Future Alumni Network** aims to build pride, spirit and tradition amongst current students by connecting them to inspirational alumni, providing personal and career-development programs, and building peer networks that will extend post-convocation. This fledgling organization recently recruited its first cohort of students and they are busy planning activities for Alumni Weekend 2019.
- **Affinity Communities** are volunteer-led groups that gather alumni around shared interests and experience. Eight groups have so far been designated as Affinity Communities and more than a dozen more are being reviewed. Current groups range from the Dinos Women's Hockey Alumni Group, to the Hong Kong Alumni Association and former UCalgary Senators. Designated Affinity Communities have access to resources and swag through the Office of Alumni Engagement and can apply to the UCAA's Affinity Communities Assistance Program for seed funding for qualified initiatives and programs.

More information about each of these programs can be found at [alumni.ucalgary.ca](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca).

I am grateful to all the alumni and students who have jumped right in to lead, participate, advise and promote our initial Wherever Life Takes You offerings. Over the next few years, working closely with President McCauley and Chancellor Deborah Yedlin, we will roll out even more ways for you to engage with the university. I encourage you to join us for the next Annual General Meeting of the UCAA at Alumni Weekend (Sept. 5–7, 2019), where we will present our Annual Alumni Engagement Report.

I hope to see you there. **U**



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
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# Alumni *Weekend*

Sept. 5 – 7, 2019 | Main Campus

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# SAVE THE DATE

## For the Love of the Land

**A**s a yellow school bus drives up to an expanse of rolling ranch land one chilly January afternoon, a herd of beef cattle turns their curious eyes to watch. What they see: a group of first-year students from the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) disembarking for their first look at their new 19,000-acre classroom.

“Honestly, I’m speechless,” UCVM student Emma Jackson, BSc’18, says. “I don’t really know what to think — it’s so grand.”

Jackson, who grew up on a cattle ranch in northern Alberta, is struck by the beauty and the size of W.A. Ranches at the

University of Calgary — a working cow-calf operation near Cochrane donated to UCalgary last year by J.C. (Jack) Anderson and his daughter, Wynne Chisholm, BA’79. “I’m really excited to see what’s going to happen in the future, how my classmates and I will play a role here.”

Jackson and her fellow students have the distinction of being the first Vet Med class to visit the ranch for teaching purposes since the \$44-million, 1,000-head operation became part of the university. And they’re the first of what will be many more students using the new facility to learn about beef cattle production and to

conduct cattle health and welfare research.

“It’s quite an occasion having our very first class of students here to learn about beef cattle,” says Dr. Ed Pajor, PhD, Anderson-Chisholm Chair in Animal Care and Welfare and the inaugural director of the ranch in charge of academic and research programming.

“The more opportunities our students have to be involved with a working ranch operation, the better they’ll develop an understanding of the importance of the cattle industry and get a sense of potential roles for them as large-animal veterinarians.” — *UToday* **U**

## Intensive Serial Killer Database Garners Media Buzz

**E**ach day, when Sasha Reid sits at her desk at UCalgary, she looks at chilling mugshots of some of the most notorious serial killers of our times.

Among the most ghoulish on her wall, there is “The Killer Clown,” John Wayne Gacy, and “The Milwaukee Cannibal,” Jeffrey Dahmer. Ted Bundy, linked to the murders of at least 30 women, executed in 1989, and Ed Kemper, currently serving eight life sentences for his crimes, also stare back at her.

Reid doesn’t flinch. The recently recruited sessional instructor in UCalgary’s Sociology and Psychology departments is fascinated with such men and she’s dedicated her academic career to finding out what made them tick. What moulded them and led them down their monstrous paths? What can we learn from them?

Most serial killer databases rely on static traits with very basic questions. Was the subject abused as a child? Were they

married? Did they have a criminal past? “This contributes to research that is simplistic and invalidly reductionistic,” Reid explains.

“My database goes far beyond this because I approach it as a developmental psychologist, so chronological age is important to me. I will ask, ‘Was there child abuse, yes or no?’ but then take it much further. At what age did the abuse begin? When did it end? What kind of abuse was it? Who was the abuser?”

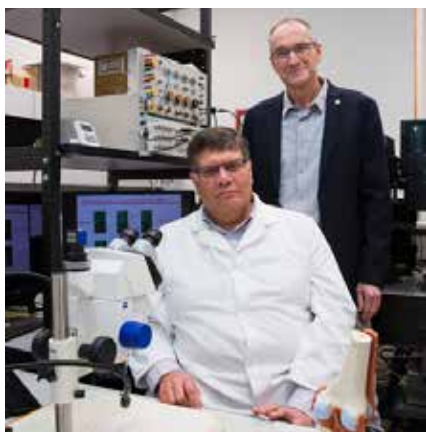
The 645 variables in her database span from the killers’ pre-conception to death, says Reid, and, when she says she’s looking at every microscopic piece of data she can get her hands on, she’s not kidding. “What was going on in the parents’ background prior to conception?” she asks. “Were they in a house with lead-based paint? Was the father an alcoholic? Was mom drinking during the pregnancy? Then we look at the childhood. Were they born with any abnormalities? Were there birthing complications?”



Sasha Reid.

Reid’s database also includes “qualitative information” derived from diaries, home videos and interviews with the killers. This has been invaluable, she says, because it has provided insight into the way they interpreted their respective environments and life experiences.

*Reid has been featured in the Toronto Star, Vanity Fair, CTV News and Vice.com. She’s also set to appear soon in a Netflix documentary series on “The Unabomber,” Ted Kaczynski.* — *UToday* **U**



Dr. Ziad Abusara and Dr. Walter Herzog.

## How Osteoarthritis May Begin

**F**or hockey great Bobby Orr, a torn knee ligament ended his career at age 30. Orr had more than 17 knee operations, at one point having his meniscus removed — the cartilaginous tissue that helps stabilize and lubricate the knee joint. Now scientists can see in real time just how important the meniscus is.

“Four decades ago, it was accepted that the meniscus didn’t play a significant role

in the knee joint. When someone damaged their meniscus, surgeons usually removed all or part of it — as they did with Bobby Orr,” says Dr. Ziad Abusara, PhD, who won an award from the Orthopaedic Research Society in 2017 for his study findings.

“Only later, it was discovered that most patients who had their meniscus removed developed knee osteoarthritis.”

Using a powerful, customized microscope, UCalgary researchers were able to watch what the cells were doing in real time as the activity was happening.

“It was surprising how quickly the cells died when the meniscus was removed. Half of the cells which make and maintain the components of the knee cartilage were dead within four hours,” says Abusara, noting it was the first time using this very powerful microscope to do this type of research.

The next step is to see what happens between the time the cells die and knee osteoarthritis develops.

“Not everyone who has their meniscus removed develops knee osteoarthritis,” says Abusara. “Now we want to understand why some people develop it and some don’t, so we can find solutions for this costly and debilitating disease.” — *UToday* **U**



Nicole Orsi Barioni, PhD student, oversees the heart-lung bypass station.

## New Target for Asthma Research

**I**t’s the nervous system — and not the lung airways — that are the most recent focus of new asthma therapies being tested by scientists with the Alberta Children’s Hospital Research Institute and the Hotchkiss Brain Institute. Drs. Richard Wilson, PhD, and Nick Jendzjowsky, PhD, and their research team discovered that carotid bodies — tiny collections of neurons on each side of the neck — counterintuitively act to narrow airways during an allergen-induced asthma attack. Their research in animal models demonstrated that blocking certain chemical receptors in those carotid bodies eliminated the asthma attack. — *UToday* **U**



Geographic information scientist Dr. Rizwan Shahid and geography professor Dr. Stefania Bertazzon.

## Seasonal Surprises

**I**t’s not news that northeast Calgary sees the highest localized concentration of bad air during the summer. But in the winter? Well, it might come as a surprise that south Calgary sees some of the highest levels of air pollution between November and March. Drs. Stefania Bertazzon, PhD’98, and Rizwan Shahid, MGIS’05, PhD’14, of the O’Brien Institute for Public Health, conducted an analysis

of air pollution in Calgary and found these surprising seasonal variations are due to wind patterns, topography and other factors.

The team has shared their findings with the Calgary Region Airshed Zone and Alberta Health Services, and hopes to connect with Calgary’s school boards to help them understand the data and press for enforcement of idle-free strategies. — *UToday* **U**



## Benefits of Caffeine on Premies

**C**anada-wide research led by Dr. Abhay Lodha, MD, shows early caffeine treatment of premature babies has no long-term negative effects on brain development. The study found caffeine is associated with better cognitive scores and reduced odds of cerebral palsy and hearing impairment. — *UToday* **U**



Don Molyneux Photography

(L-R): Sonia Martins, Abdullah Sarhan, Mariam Keshavjee and Julia St. Amand.

## How Do You Get a Medical Innovation to Market?

**O**vercrowded emergency departments create a significant and complex health challenge as hospitals in Canada and around the world often have to cope with more patients than they can treat within a reasonable timeframe.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the national average for seeing a doctor after showing up at an emergency room is 3.1 hours. The situation in Calgary is only slightly better than average. Recently, a group of student-researchers at the Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) entered a competition to create a new approach for responding to the problem. It turns out, they've got a winner.

Julia St. Amand, Sonia Martins, Mariam Keshavjee, BA'17, and Abdullah Sarhan, MSc'16, didn't know each other before participating in Innovation 4 Health's student-run Health Hack competition. The six-week competition, with

\$20,000 in awards at stake, concluded with a 72-hour hardware hackathon on campus and one-minute product pitch and demo event. The four students were brought together by a desire to answer a simple question: "Can you design a new tool to help improve emergency department access block?"

They worked with health-care professionals and technical experts, including Dr. Eddy Lang, MD, head of the Department of Emergency Medicine at CSM, who initially presented the challenge to the team.

The group came up with software that works on a phone, tablet and other devices to track clinical and operational data in real time. It's designed to help emergency department managers focus resources and help reduce emergency room wait times. They went up against 19 teams during the Health Hack competition, each solving a different health-care challenge. UCalgary's

entry, the innovative software dashboard, was named the overall winner.

"They said our name and we all looked at each other and said, 'Wait, did we just win?'" St. Amand says with a laugh. "This competition has been an immense learning experience. We're uncovering the entrepreneurial spirit of Calgary and meeting many amazing people along the way."

CSM innovators have year-round access to world-class experts, entrepreneurs and programs through the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking. Creators of the most-sophisticated and scalable ventures can apply to join Creative Destruction Lab Rockies. It offers startup companies (in many business areas, not just medicine and health) access to mentors who help them meet a set of rigorous objectives. Teams are connected to experienced entrepreneurs with large networks. At the end of the program, successful companies compete nationally in a "super session" with access to a pool of potential investors.

Elisa Park, Health Innovation Manager at CSM and the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking, says UCalgary is building a health-innovation pipeline through a network of programs, training workshops, competitions and other learning opportunities. These include the Health Innovation Program (HIP), an informal network of programs focused on growing a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking for faculties conducting health research and education — *UToday* **U**

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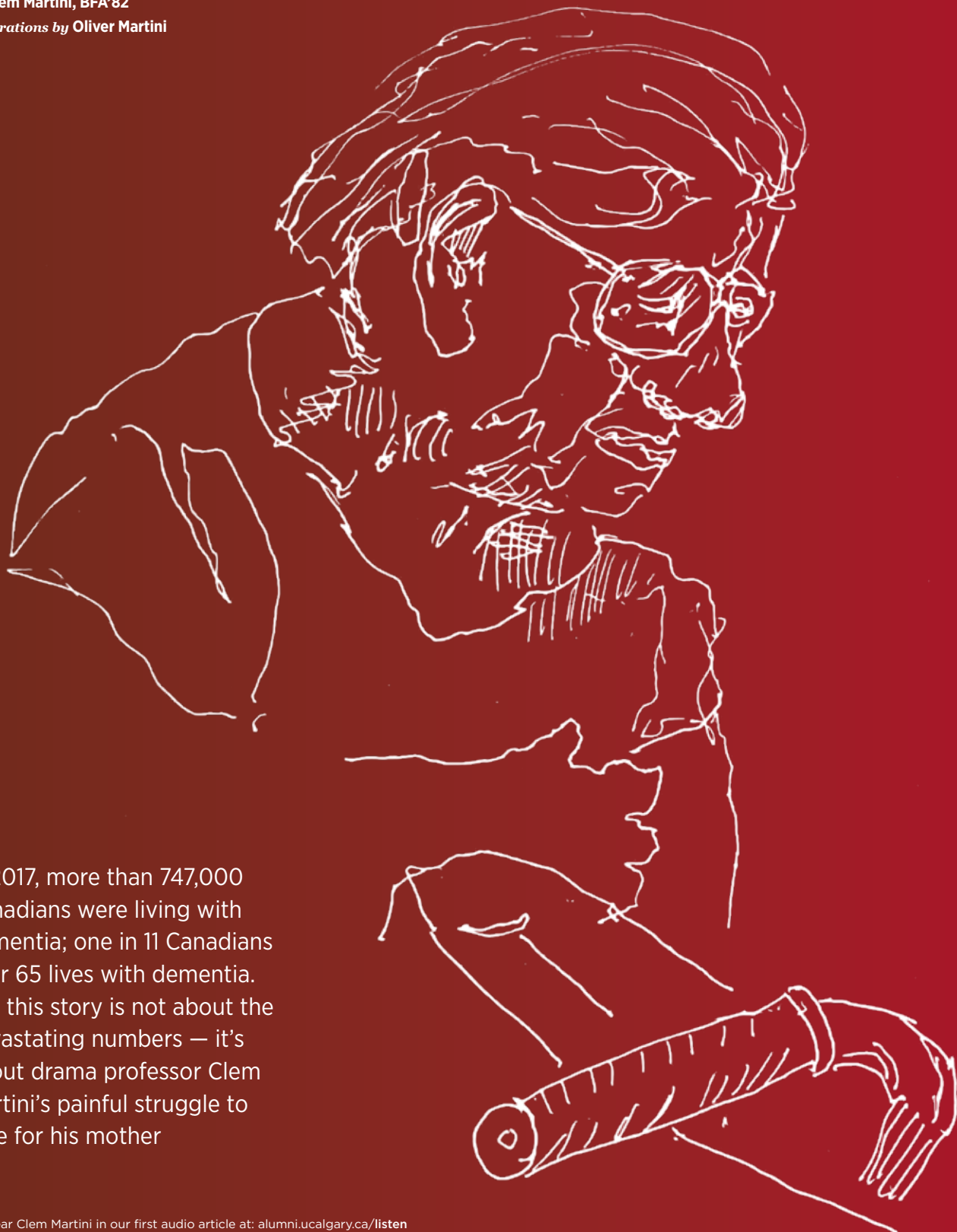
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# The Things That Worked

by Clem Martini, BFA'82

Illustrations by Oliver Martini



In 2017, more than 747,000 Canadians were living with dementia; one in 11 Canadians over 65 lives with dementia. But this story is not about the devastating numbers — it's about drama professor Clem Martini's painful struggle to care for his mother

🔊 Hear Clem Martini in our first audio article at: [alumni.ucalgary.ca/listen](https://alumni.ucalgary.ca/listen)

**A**s my mother's memory collapsed, we initiated something my mother and I called our "conversation book."

The book held notes and drawings and was intended as a way for us to exchange stories back and forth. We had mixed success. By "mixed success," I mean it didn't work. By "didn't work," I mean, in comparison to other solutions, it was immensely successful.

I had hoped my mother would draw comfort from it between visits, that it would provide her with something to do. Mostly, she forgot about it until I arrived to remind her, then she would labour to draw together a few thoughts, and hastily put it aside. It proved to be more a chore than a comfort, and nothing was ever a replacement for my actual presence, which she never recalled, even when it was recorded in the book — even if it was only minutes ago.

The challenges associated with offering support and care for a parent suffering from dementia emerge slowly at first, then rush at you all at once, shaking their fists.

She couldn't take care of herself, neglected her hygiene, was increasingly at risk of falling — but she was bitterly opposed to Homecare and, at the same time, adamant that she remain at home. She wanted my brothers and I there at all times, but was by no means interested in receiving our advice. She was forgetful, fretful and, in the latter stages, paranoid and delusional. Random people — the plumber, the condominium manager, any government representative — were, she was certain, stealing from her, conspiring against her, staging bizarre events. The plumber stole her dentures. The condominium manager was in covert communication with Canada Pension. My elder brother hosted drunken revelries in the living room.

To cope with the chaos, I enrolled in courses and consumed magazine articles.

The courses had titles like, "How to Deal with Delusional Behaviour," and "Recognizing and Managing Four Different Kinds of Dementia." The articles advised me that there were "Simple Ways to Help a Person Living with Dementia."



Catherine Martini, 1925 - 2016.

The advice, intended to inspire and uplift, instead depressed me. It always felt the writers and instructors were talking about someone else's very different experience. I tried agreeing with my mother's delusions, as several suggested, which only led her to adopt additional, more challenging delusions. I attempted to put limits on her demands, but found the limits folded like tissue paper when confronted by the relentless reality of the consequences associated with not dealing with them. I often left our interactions feeling I had failed.

I discovered that, to survive, I had to unlearn the advice. When I did, a secret

revealed itself — there is no one truth about dementia. There are indeed scientific discoveries being made about dementia, every day, every moment, somewhere. New molecular research seems likely at some point in the future to provide better and more precise predictions about the type of dementia a person may develop. There are remarkable advances being made in the care of those suffering from dementia; unique villages devoted to the care of those with dementia, smaller care units with a higher patient-to-staff ratio and a relaxed supervision model. All true.

But the parallel truth is that, as the average age of mortality rises, the incidents of dementia increase, and the health-care system is presently unprepared for it and is actually and genuinely overwhelmed. The additional, uncomfortable truth is that, if you feel troubled in your walk with dementia, it is because dementia is actually and authentically "trouble."

It is a heartbreaking disorder that selects a human being you love and painstakingly disassembles them to their most essential elements, and currently there is no power or proficiency that can resist that disassembling. My mother was a sophisticated, caring individual and, by the time dementia had finished its dance, she could no longer speak, move or feed herself.

The truest, most meaningful advice I ever received appeared on the University of California's San Francisco Health Education website. It read: "If strategies such as notes or reminders are no longer working, don't use them. A successful intervention at one stage may become a frustration and disaster at another. In providing care, I believe you must stay nimble and seek help wherever you find it. You must be prepared to make mistakes, missteps and experience disappointment — and then carry on." That, for me at least, proved true.



*"If strategies such as notes or reminders are no longer working, don't use them."*



## Dementia Research Offers Hope

I remember taking my mother for an afternoon picnic. It was a complicated procedure given that she didn't like crowds, couldn't move quickly, couldn't go far, insisted on using her walker, didn't want help getting in and out of the apartment or in and out of the car, and was always at risk of falling. Help had to be provided surreptitiously, as though I was a bodyguard watching incognito over a celebrity.

I discovered a park near her apartment. We snail-walked to my car, I drove her to that park, and we crept/walked to a bench where, exhausted, we collapsed, panting like puppies from the exertion. The location was nothing extraordinary, but she was ecstatic. We huddled together beneath a tree limb on a wooden bench, consumed our chicken sandwiches and observed the river languidly flowing. The wind swept my mother's hair back, and, surprisingly, even that made her happy.

Later, after it had become necessary to move my mother to a long-term care facility and picnics were no longer an option, I remember trimming my mother's nails. As with showering, she resisted having her nails trimmed with all her considerable might and, consequently, they grew long, thick and jagged. She rebuffed the manicurist and would scream bloody murder if he approached. But, one day, as she and I sat in the courtyard, I asked if I could try. She was anxious, but I proceeded cautiously. I took her right hand, the skin soft as silk and dry as paper. Once the nails were cropped to a reasonable length, I filed them gently. She relaxed into it, and soon was humming to herself. One of the other aged residents sat staring unabashedly at us — I believe staring is the favourite sport at long-term care facilities. Eventually, the woman called to my mother, "You're very lucky!"

"What?" my mother replied. (This was the recurring pattern for nearly every conversation. Someone would say something to her, she would call, "What?" and instantly turn to me for a translation.)

"She says you're very lucky," I repeated.

"I know I'm lucky," she murmured, after a moment, and smiled.

That day, and in that instance, I believe we both were. **U**

From cell biologists to community-health scientists, researchers in the Cumming School of Medicine's Hotchkiss Brain Institute are advancing our understanding of dementia — and how to prevent it, treat it and think about it.

### Take a Seat

"Sometimes, an older adult with ADHD might seem like they have dementia," says Dr. Brandy Callahan, PhD. An assistant professor of clinical psychology, Callahan holds the newly granted Canada Research Chair in adult clinical neuropsychology. The position allows her and her team to dig deeper into critical research around dementia's potential link to ADHD; they look at how an individual's history of complex psychiatric illness might put them at risk for dementia. "Some of the behaviours might be similar, but it may not be dementia," Callahan says. Among other goals, she is striving to understand a link between ADHD and the onset of dementia, which has the potential to transform diagnostic approaches, interpretation of results and courses of treatment.

### Picture This

Unhelpful and often damaging misconceptions about older adults abound in our culture — particularly around people with dementia and those living in long-term care facilities, says the Faculty of Nursing's Chair in Gerontology, Dr. Lorraine Venturato, PhD. Venturato's research focuses on service and workforce development for the delivery of care to older people. One of her current projects is designed to bust common stereotypes, including that older adults are physically frail and asexual and/or disconnected from meaningful relationships; she and her students recently engaged individuals in care facilities via photography.

"We gave residents cameras to take pictures of people who matter to them, and also had a photographer take photos of them doing tai chi or, in one man's case, riding a bicycle," says Venturato. "The cameras, as well as old photos, served to stimulate conversation and highlight what is meaningful to people and what it means to live well."

### That's the Plan

"Everyone is or will be affected by dementia — a family member, friend or ourselves — and we need to be able support each other," says Dr. David Hogan, MD, a professor at the Cumming School of Medicine specializing in geriatric medicine (he also held the Brenda Strafford Foundation Chair in Geriatric Medicine for 25 years). Hogan is currently working to further develop a comprehensive national strategy for dementia. "It's important that we align research, services and planning to deal with an increase in the number of people with dementia," he says. Ultimately, a national strategy will ensure funding for research, care and prevention of the disease.

### Working it Out

"We found that, over the six-month study, the people who participated in regular aerobic activity in the form of walking or jogging reported increased vigour and a significant decline in anger, confusion, depression, fatigue and tension," says Dr. Marc Poulin, PhD. A professor in the Cumming School of Medicine (departments of Physiology and Pharmacology and Clinical Neurosciences) and the Faculty of Kinesiology, Poulin's ongoing Brain in Motion study (now in its second phase) is designed to broaden our knowledge of the connection between exercise, the brain and mental health. The Brain in Motion II study is a randomized controlled trial focused on expanding the knowledge gained in Phase 1 to understand how it applies to those at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or other forms of age-related dementias. The study also aims to recognize and then break down the barriers that prevent older people from being more physically active. "Our hope is that this trial will provide evidence needed to make clinical recommendations for exercise programs to help prevent, delay, reduce and manage these diseases."

— **Jacquie Moore U**

# UCalgary Nurtures Startup Founders of the Future

by Deborah Yedlin, Chancellor, University of Calgary

illustrated by Kelly Sutherland

**U**niversities are known more for their bureaucratic structures than for their entrepreneurial mindsets — but UCalgary is working hard to break that mould.

Back in December, former Governor General David Johnston was in Calgary to discuss his latest book, *Trust*.

Having received a copy as a gift, I brought it to the new Central Library and lined up to have it signed. When I got to the front, I introduced myself as chancellor of the University of Calgary and Johnston's eyes lit up.

He told me UCalgary was setting a very high bar for other universities to follow because we were daring to push the limits and do things differently. The UCalgary campus of today is very different than it was when Elizabeth Cannon became president and vice-chancellor in 2010.

There has been a deliberate shift — through the *Eyes High* strategy Cannon initiated in 2011 — to move UCalgary in a direction that shakes the ossified foundations characterizing many university campuses and aims to educate students differently, empowering them to move within and beyond their respective faculties and gain exposure to other disciplines.

UCalgary's bold direction is entirely in step with the entrepreneurial nature of the City of Calgary.

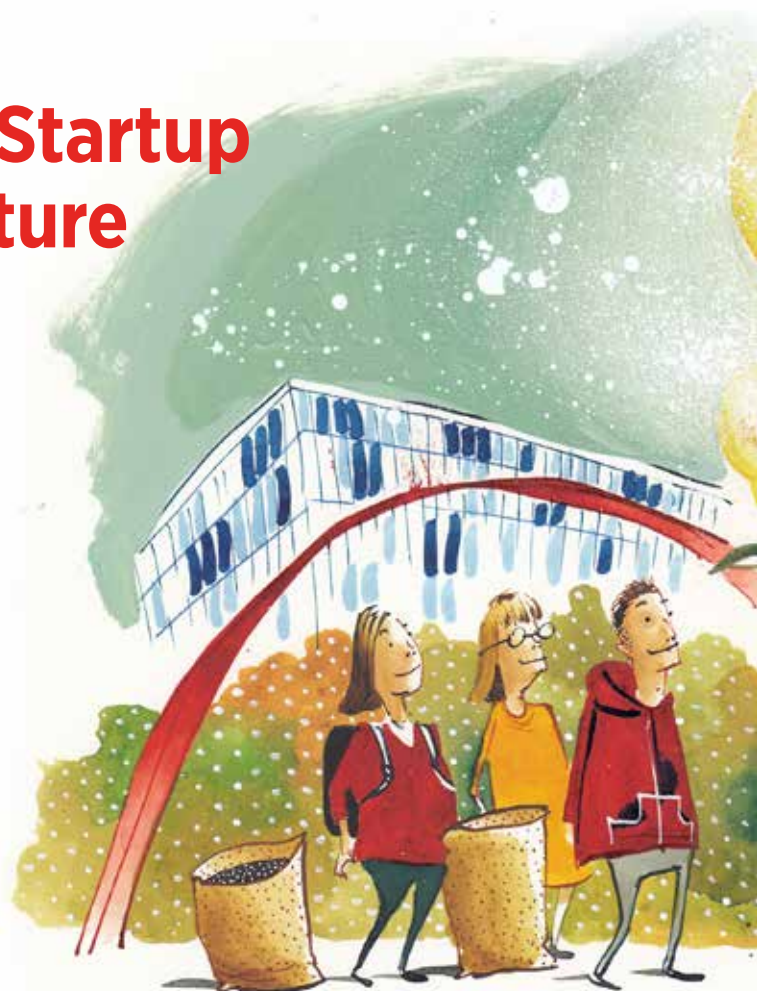
Pivotal to this metamorphosis has been three factors: the establishment of the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking; the support by Calgary business leaders to establish the Creative Destruction Lab Rockies; and, more recently, the addition of the University Research Park (URP).

While still in his position as vice-president (research), our new president and vice-chancellor, Dr. Ed McCauley, played a key role in the plan that saw UCalgary acquire the Shell Technology Centre and the transfer of 76 acres of land and three other buildings from the Government of Alberta to the university, creating the URP.

An important step in activating the URP was securing \$8.5 million in funding from the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund, which was announced in early February. The funding, says McCauley, is critical to establishing a Life Sciences Innovation Hub at the URP — a place where researchers, students and investors will be able to collaborate and where life sciences-related research can be proven, scaled and commercialized.

Throughout his career, McCauley has worked at the intersection of academic research, industry, community and government, seeking to create long-term collaborative partnerships for the benefit of all stakeholders.

In his new role as president, the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial



Thinking will play an important role as McCauley works to further shape the entrepreneurial transformation underway at UCalgary.

Its establishment is a logical extension of the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Haskayne School of Business, which was established in 2013 as a result of the enthusiastic response to an undergraduate course in entrepreneurship and innovation.

The intent behind the Hunter Centre was to connect students with the Calgary business community — providing learners with the opportunity to work with established entrepreneurs on their startup concepts in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. The Hunter Hub takes it one step further because it is open to everyone across the UCalgary campus, in any class or faculty.

Call it a pan-faculty model — or describe it as the catalyst that brings students together to test their ideas and potentially create their own businesses, no matter their discipline — but it's also about exposing students to opportunities outside their degree program.

Derrick Hunter, whose family has made gifts of more than \$45 million to establish the Hunter Centre and Hunter Hub, says developing that entrepreneurial mindset and associated skills is just as important for the aspiring business student as it is for someone studying fine arts.

"Artists need to be entrepreneurs because they have to be their own business people — but they don't seem to see to themselves that way," Hunter says.



There is no hiding Calgary has been hard hit by the downturn in the energy sector that has been exacerbated by the pipeline quagmire; the worry in the downtown office towers is that the young graduates will leave to seek new opportunities.

Hunter points out that, if Calgary has a shot at building a modern economy, “it is important to keep the students with the ideas in Calgary.”

Hunter sees the Hub as being in a position to leverage the entrepreneurial spirit that is resident in this city and was responsible for building an energy sector that now accounts for 10 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product.

“This is not a government town . . . the DNA of Calgary helps the entrepreneurial mindset develop at UCalgary. It’s the competitive advantage of Calgary,” says Hunter.

That entrepreneurial mindset was also in evidence when CDL-Rockies was established in a much shorter time frame compared with Vancouver — even with that city’s well-established tech and venture capital ecosystem.

The purpose of CDL-Rockies is to connect fledgling companies with business leaders in the local community who can both mentor and help raise funds in order for the companies to grow. The end-game is to ensure they stay in Canada.

It might be a time-worn cliché, but the combination of the Hunter Hub, CDL-Rockies and the URP is the equivalent of a three-legged stool: an interconnected, supportive and strong

innovation ecosystem leveraging off the talent, research and energy at UCalgary and playing a critical role in the evolution of Calgary’s next economic chapter.

As McCauley says, the university is leading the way in diversifying Calgary’s economy, driving innovation and advancing the emerging life sciences sector — in addition to other established sectors and disciplines — through discoveries that benefit this city, Alberta and beyond.

In many respects, it is easy to see how much influence the character of Calgary’s business community has had on UCalgary. The energy sector has grown through a combination of entrepreneurs taking big risks and making big bets, unconstrained by convention. The mindset has been one of “why not?” which has also been felt at UCalgary in the context of programs and community interaction over its half-century of history.

Today’s UCalgary is an integral component to the economic future of Calgary — its importance lies in ensuring students and graduates acquire the skills needed to contribute to the economy of tomorrow through the embedding of entrepreneurial thinking into curricula across campus.

These are all bold, forward-looking initiatives intended to differentiate UCalgary as an institution that isn’t afraid to disrupt the status quo, ensure its graduates are leaders in the modern economy and cement its position as the country’s most entrepreneurial university in Canada’s most enterprising city. **U**

# The New Face of Street Art

Rather than power-wash a dreary cinder-block wall, more organizations are hiring mural painters to add pizzazz to a space that can double as a conversation-starter

by **Deb Cummings**

**T**hat's the thing about artist Katie Green, BFA'14 — when she's up against the wall, why . . . she can paint it.

Behind the elegant tangles of human limbs sprouting out of animal heads — seen in Calgary's Beltline Urban Mural Project (BUMP), the stairwell at cSPACE or the entrance to UCalgary's Art department — the subject matter behind this recent graduate's murals reflects her fascination with our primal/animal selves. And the intricate details Green brings to all her work is directly connected to the access she had to a biology lab while studying fine arts at UCalgary.

"I was able to get into a biology lab three times a week, where I could draw still lifes from the different specimens that were there," she explains.

That interdisciplinary nexus led Green to explore the "unconscious archetypes and patterns that repeat themselves in our dreams," that, in turn, collided with her desire to take her practice out of the privacy of her home studio and into a more public space.

Having just returned from Santa Fe, Green's work (in collaboration with other artists, but mostly with fellow alumnus daniel j kirk, BFA'07) can also be viewed in downtown Nelson, B.C., in front of the SPCA; in Santa Fe, N.M., in a water tank at Meow Wolf, an interactive arts museum; and further afield in Taiwan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Germany.

Like so many good murals, Green's work at BUMP, which took a week to paint, fostered on-the-street engagement making the bystander part of a live show. Last August's spectacle of painters hanging from a wall at 10th Avenue and 12th Street S.W. became as much of the product as the mural itself — precisely why Green and the other artists behind this work created a time-lapse video (watch it via the online article: [alumni.ucalgary.ca/streetart](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/streetart)).

If you look closely at the main photo on this page, you'll spot a little pigeon nest in a small pipe in the wall. Green used the pigeon as a major part of the colossal mural.

"From there," she says, "I just kind of played with different images, the space and the ways characters might relate.



"That particular mural was a great opportunity for me to really express my style and perhaps create a piece that challenged some Calgarians," says the multitasking artist who is now working as the primary builder at Old Trout Puppet Workshop's upcoming production of *Ghost Opera*. "It's hard for me to see that sometimes, but I suppose the imagery that I choose can be 'alarming,' but I like that. I want people to question our humanity and how it relates to the spirit of the natural world." **U**

## What's in a Wall? Find out with Katie Green

**1 + 2** Part of Calgary's 2018 Beltline Urban Mural Project (BUMP), this mural at 10th Avenue and 12th Street S.W. was painted on the wall of a warehouse and took Green and a team a week to complete.

*Photography By Ailsa Dyson*

**3 + 5** Look up at the ceiling of the Imaginarium at cSPACE and you'll see an installation that appears to drip down a four-storey stairwell. This was a collaborative project led by Green and alumnus daniel j kirk, BFA'07.

*Photography By Elyse Bouvier*

**4 + 6** Green returned to her alma mater in 2016 to create this mural in UCalgary's Art department. "I walked this stairwell many times during my undergrad," recalls Green.

*Photography By Katie Green*



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5

## NINA KHAREY (NEE RAHAL) BSC (ENG)'07



Photo: Jason Eng

Now that's what you call a pivotal moment. Last July, UCalgary computer engineering alumna-cum-fashion designer Nina Kharey discovered that the future Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, wore one of her pieces — a peach-toned trench dress — at a royal engagement party with Prince Harry. And nothing, *nothing*, has been quite the same since for the House of Nonie founder and designer.

**Why?** I wanted to tell the audience who I am and how I believe that my clothes are not just clothes. People are wearing my thoughts. My designs are an extension of me. You can't do that in a big group.

### How does an engineer become a fashion designer?

As immigrants from the Punjab, both my parents worked in the textile industry while I was growing up, so I have been around fabrics and designs my entire life. But two incidents — the birth of my daughter and the death of my older brother — caused me to start sketching again. That led to my designs appearing in some small local fashion shows. And then, one day, I just called Barbara Atkin, former vice-president of fashion at Holt Renfrew in Toronto, who asked me to fly out.

**What did she say?** If you are ready for a long and dark and winding road, by all means pursue fashion design. I do remember thinking, "It may be bumpy for some people, but not for me." But let me tell you that it's been most definitely a long and dark and bumpy road.

**Do you use your engineering degree in this job?** All the time. I construct every jacket like a project. Plus, engineering teaches you about stress-management and problem-solving. It also teaches you how to be technical and rational and you get very good at mitigating risks.

**What's your biggest challenge?** Designing a new product line [about 40 pieces] every six months.

**Would you like to see your pieces sold in a department store?** Once upon a time, I would have said yes, but I have discovered that many stores have very harsh terms. If you don't sell everything, for example, you have to buy it back. That could bankrupt a new designer. So, right now, my clothes are sold at a little boutique in Calgary called Sheer Luxury and here in my studio at cSPACE King Edward. My clothes are made to order, so they take about four to six weeks. I need to be more well-known before I would sell in a department store.

**Any favourite restaurants?** My guilty pleasure is Five Guys [Heritage Meadows], as well as the Nash and Anju's brussels sprouts and chicken wings.

**What's your perfect day?** Seeing my two kids eat. And watching them play together. We have lots of family in Calgary, so I love it when my house is full of them.

**How real are the cutthroat antics we saw in *The Devil Wears Prada*?** I don't think it's that intense, but, on my last visit to New York, I did bump into Anna Wintour, feared editor-in-chief of *Vogue* magazine. I must admit, I was shaking when I saw her. She looked perfect. Impeccable. And her style was right on. Her office occupies an entire side of the building. — *Deb Cummings* **U**

**How has your life changed since you woke up on July 17, 2018, to your phone buzzing with the royal news?** The orders for that dress began pouring in that very day. At that point, I had eight Calgary-based seamstresses working for me. We now have a little factory in Vancouver with a production manager ... it's a full-on factory.

**How did you meet Meghan?** I never did. I had been connecting with people on social media for quite a while and one of those people was Jessica Mulroney [Canadian fashion stylist and Prime Minister Brian's daughter-in-law], who introduced my collection to Meghan when she was still on *Suits*. But I never knew when or if she'd wear a piece of mine.

**Showing your work at the New York Fashion Week is a big deal, which you have now done twice. What was that like?** After Meghan wore my dress, there was a lot of curiosity, so, when I showed my collection last fall, we had a full house of editors, writers, bloggers and buyers [about 300 people]. I wanted to keep February [2019's] event to about 70 people.

## CRAIG KOLOCHUK BCOMM'99

**What drives a successful Calgary oil-and-gas entrepreneur to pull a U-turn and pivot into the cannabis sector?**

Opportunity and fulfilling a passion to build something new are just a few of the reasons that UCalgary alumnus Craig Kolochuk, BComm'99, cites in his new role as CEO at SugarBud Craft Growers Corp.



Photo: Todd Korol

### What song describes your career path?

*Life is a Highway* by Tom Cochrane. Live your life every day, like it is your last.

### Were you entrepreneurial at university?

Well, I was proactive in investing early. I started investing in the market when I was 18. And, in my early 20s, I was buying homes and flipping them.

**Why did you switch from oil and gas to the cannabis sector?** The main reason was the current lack of opportunity and capital in the oil and gas sector. I'd been investing in the cannabis sector for the previous 12 months and then I had a serendipitous conversation with some guys on the business side of cannabis. They raised \$8 million in four hours — but they didn't have a team to execute a plan. I said I'll put a team together. Now, I'm passionate about the plant and where the industry is going.

### Which words or phrases do you overuse?

Instead of saying oil and gas, now I say, "oil and grass." The last little while, I say "execute" a lot to get things done. I tell my staff there is no blueprint for success, we're trail-blazing.

**What is your motto?** It never gets easier. You just get better.

**Can you apply the skills you developed in oil and gas to the cannabis sector?** Yes, you need hands-on experience, you need to be taking risks and meeting people and

asking questions and putting yourself in uncomfortable situations. It builds character, it exposes you to people's emotions. I did a lot of First Nations work in B.C. for surface land, and it taught me how to negotiate with people for whom the principle of the matter was more meaningful than the money.

**What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?** I would say giving up and thinking you can't do something when you haven't tried.

**How did UCalgary change you?** It exposed me to oil and gas through courses and it helped set me on a path. If I'd not gone to UCalgary, I would never have been a land man in the oil and gas industry. There is a decent chance I would never have worked downtown, keeping me close to my family and friends. I recently spoke at a UCalgary alumni event for grads about my crossover to cannabis. I'm a very strong supporter of Calgary. I love our city and everything that it has to offer.

### What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A challenging job that satisfies me both financially and emotionally, so I feel like I'm making a difference. Health and a harmonic home life with a loving, supporting partner and good family dynamics. The perfect balance between work and family life.

**What are your passions?** I'm passionate about family and friends. I have five beautiful kids at home and I'm active with them. I play tennis, golf, ski and hunt. And I love doing deals and making money.

**What is your most treasured possession?** My cabin in the woods at Sundre.

### Since leaving UCalgary, what's one thing you've done that you'll never forget?

I think it is the travelling. When I graduated, I toured Australia and Thailand and I have travelled a lot since.

**What do you want to be remembered for?** Being a risk-taker who accepted a challenge and overcame adversity and created something special and rewarding — a man who values integrity and reputation.

### You've got three wishes to be granted by the end of 2019. What are they and why?

I want SugarBud to get its cultivation and sales licence in 2019. I want us to be one of the biggest cannabis growers in Alberta. I want a healthy stock price. — Mike Fisher **U**

UCalgary's newly renamed **School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape** is redefining itself for the 21st century — and beyond

# THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE

by Christina Reynolds

photos by Roth and Ramberg, except as noted

**IF YOU WANT TO GLIMPSE THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE**, look no further than downtown Calgary and the University of Calgary campus.

Right in the heart of downtown, UCalgary's newly renamed School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL) — formerly the Faculty of Environmental Design — recently opened a 29,000-square-foot satellite campus, the City Building Design Lab (CBDL). This research hub, complete with a teaching lab, an event venue and an exhibit gallery, is located in the Castell Building, the space formerly occupied by the old Central Library. The CBDL is only a block from Calgary's new Central Library, a next-generation glass-and-wood public space that is already earning international accolades.

Both buildings are surrounded by a variety of re-

vitalized public spaces — multi-use plazas, lit pathways, art-clad underpasses and public artworks that dot the downtown core and East Village community. Together, the East Village transformation and the new library landed Calgary the No. 20 spot on the *New York Times*' list of 52 Places to Go in 2019.

UCalgary alumni and professors have had a big influence in the ongoing reinvention of downtown Calgary and the East Village. For example, they lead the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC), the City of Calgary subsidiary tasked with redeveloping the East Village, the new library and the bigger Rivers District; CMLC is also a partner in the CBDL space. Alumni and faculty also lead Calgary's Marc Boutin Architectural Collaborative Inc. (MBAC), which envisioned the angled memorial sculptures and pathways along Memorial Drive and the curved wooden benches and public art of C-Square Plaza, as well as other public spaces throughout downtown and the East Village.

UCalgary is also making an impact with its main campus, where the future of architecture can be seen in the new double façade of steel and glass that's being retrofitted to the 15-storey, 1960s-era concrete MacKimmie Tower.



MAIN: SAPL dean Dr. John L. Brown discusses UCalgary's new downtown City Building Design Lab; the first public exhibit opens on April 23.

1: A light-filled stairwell in a Bioi Design + Build home in northeast Calgary.

2: The geometric windows of the already iconic Calgary Central Library.

3: The undulating copper-tiled roof at the Shane Homes YMCA at Rocky Ridge was conceived by GEC Architecture.

4: McKinley Burkart gave the 1960s a modern update at The Wednesday Room, a cocktail lounge and restaurant on Stephen Avenue.



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"Five to 10 years ago, the status quo would have been to implode such a building and start from scratch," says Dr. John L. Brown, PhD, dean of the SAPL. Instead, new thinking and technologies are giving this old tower renewed life as a state-of-the-art, net-zero-carbon building. And researchers at the university are using the development as a way to explore how to reuse and design-out waste in the construction industry.

## THE FUTURE OF A SOCIETY

Since the SAPL was founded as the Faculty of Environmental Design in 1971, the multidisciplinary school has connected new knowledge about cities, regions, landscapes and ecosystems to empower students with practical ways to be impactful in the real world.

"We're working to answer the question: 'What are we going to do about the future of a society?' This was the essence of the original idea of our faculty, and that has not changed," says Brown. "Now we are refining our goals; we've turned to 21st-century problems that are even more critical and more urgent."

The school name has been updated to be more precise (the degrees offered remain the same), and the opening of the new CBDL is helping create a deeper partnership with the community. It's all part of a \$12-million UCalgary investment to disrupt the status quo for social good and further embrace entrepreneurial thinking, smart-city technologies and inventive planning in the built environment.

"Cities are the nexus of change, and great cities have great schools of architecture," says Brown. "A stronger connection to downtown is vital to be engaged in economic development. It's where we need to be to create a more equitable and resilient future."

**Meet seven alumni who are redefining Calgary with eye-popping spaces.**





1: Many of the library's windows feature fritted glass (a pattern of tiny white dots, similar to a car windshield) to maximize light and energy efficiency.

MAIN: CMLC's Brown and Thompson in the Central Library's main atrium, which is lit by a massive skylight.

## THE CHAMPIONS OF PUBLIC SPACE

**ON THE FOURTH FLOOR OF CALGARY'S NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY**, there is a hallway that curves around the main reading room. Cut into the light-wood wall that faces geometric windows are a couple of semi-circular seating nooks: It's the perfect out-of-the-way spot for a quiet conversation, or maybe even a sunlit catnap. This is Kate Thompson's favourite spot in the library.

"It's an in-between space and it embodies the architectural concept on a small personal scale," says Thompson who, as vice-president, development, at the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC), has managed the library's project management team since 2013. Her team oversaw architects, hired contractors — and completed the project early and under budget. She also leads the development of master plans for the East Village and the Rivers District.

# CENTRAL LIBRARY

Michael Brown, BA'98 | Kate Thompson, MArch'02





2

2: Movable bookcases make the library's spaces easily adaptable.

3: Seating nooks are tucked into this stroller-friendly hallway on the fourth floor.

4: The "book wall" on level 3 features nearly 11,000 books, arranged to look like a mosaic of a fish.

3



4

Originally from Winnipeg, Thompson was drawn to the city for her Master of Architecture; she has been a UCalgary sessional instructor since 2004 and is a member of the Dean's Circle at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape. When she graduated in 2002, she couldn't have imagined this career that she describes as a "project champion" — in fact, such a role didn't exist at the time. The City of Calgary created the CMLC in 2007; it was one of the first organizations of its kind in Canada. "The impact and influence on the urban landscape that I can have through this job is bigger than I thought it could be," Thompson says. "It shows the richness of potential in this profession."

Michael Brown, a born-and-raised Calgarian who studied political science at UCalgary, has been president and CEO of the CMLC since 2011. He is thrilled to be leading what he calls a "place-making company" that creates inclusive, functional, adaptable, affordable community spaces. His job is to look at the bigger picture — and to the future.

"Projects aren't as successful if they are designed in isolation," he says. "It's about connecting the larger community. There can't be too much focus on just the buildings; it has to be about using whatever we have." As an example, Brown cites the redevelopment of St. Patrick's Island in the Bow River with its 31 acres of parklands, playgrounds, picnic groves, plazas and pathways. "These are places where we can all come together," he says of the library and the nearby island park — as well as the other public spaces that connect them all together.

The CMLC's partnership with UCalgary's new downtown City Building Design Lab is another big part of enhancing the city's connections. "I love that we will bring more professors into public spaces, and right into the core of the city," Brown says.



# THE WEDNESDAY ROOM

Mark Burkart, MArch'98  
Walker McKinley, BA'90, MArch'96



1: McKinley Burkart believes every detail — like these old-school typewriters at The Wednesday Room — contribute to the atmosphere of a space.

2: A neon sign grabs your attention as you walk by on Stephen Avenue Mall.

MAIN: Mark Burkart, left, and Walker McKinley channelled the atmosphere of Stanley Kubrick's classic film *The Shining* in their design of The Wednesday Room, right down to the carpeting that was custom-made based on stills from the movie.

## THE MOOD-MAKERS

**IF IT FEELS LIKE YOU'VE STEPPED INTO A STANLEY KUBRICK MOVIE** when you enter The Wednesday Room on Stephen Avenue, then McKinley Burkart did its job. The room oozes a lounge-y 1960s vibe inspired by the director's famous films, most notably *The Shining*.

"Since the first time I watched *The Shining*, I've always been haunted by that unsettling scene where Jack Nicholson talks to the bartender," says Mark Burkart, founding partner of the Calgary- and Vancouver-based architecture, interior-design and brand-strategy firm. "We wanted to channel the atmosphere of ... the films of Stanley Kubrick in general; a kind of uncanny tension and oddness."

The orange, beige and brown colour palette — updated with warm mahogany panelling and a wall of earthy sandstone — mixes together like the flavours of a classic cocktail. The restaurant is one of many in this city where McKinley Burkart has made its mark; in fact, the company is often credited with raising the bar for restaurant-design culture in Calgary. "We've had a little to do with that," founding partner Walker McKinley admits, modestly.

McKinley and Burkart started their business in 1997 when Burkart was an architecture student and McKinley was a recent grad. McKinley overheard that Burkart was travelling to Cuba and asked him to bring back some cigars. Not long after, they bonded over cigars, rum — and a common view of architecture.

Fast-forward 22 years and they now have more than 100 diverse projects on the go. To list just a few: there is ongoing work as global architects for Budweiser; department store designs for Simons; retail storefronts for three



3: More retro details set the tone at The Wednesday Room.

4: The doughnut-shaped windows at Hoopla Donuts in downtown Calgary.



cannabis brands; and artificial intelligence lab designs for Microsoft — where the Redmond, Wash.-based AI experts favour decidedly low-tech chalkboards and whiteboards. “We are way more digital,” says McKinley, with a laugh, about his firm’s own design process.

One of McKinley Burkart’s recently completed projects is Hoopla Donuts, a tiny storefront in Calgary Place’s office-tower mall. Here, the vibe is frenetic, sweet, bold and stimulating — in part generated by an almost constant queue. It’s a little bit retro, this time ’80s, but (yet again) infused with a 21st-century freshness. One of the challenges here, says Burkart, was not just a tight space, but a tight budget. Yet this doesn’t show in the clean lines of two half-circle (i.e. doughnut) windows, or in the smooth edges of the budget-friendly birch-plywood tables and chairs (custom-designed by McKinley Burkart).

“Calgary’s public spaces are mostly private. We gather within commercial settings, and it’s become that way everywhere ... the lines are breaking down in these spaces and on the streets, and that’s healthy,” says Burkart.

Whether it’s channelling the esthetic of classic movies in The Wednesday Room (its very name comes from one of the “chapters” in *The Shining*), or arranging Hoopla’s lease to allow furniture to be placed in the Plus-15 space beyond its official footprint, McKinley Burkart is dedicated to ensuring we continue to look at private-public spaces in whole new ways.



# ON THE HOME FRONT

Raya Trefz, BSc'06, MArch'11  
Jordan Allen, MArch'11



MAIN: Bioi Design + Build's Trefz, left, and Allen in the kitchen-dining space of a Winston Heights-Mountview home they recently completed.



## THE AVANT-GARDE HOMEBUILDERS

**IN 2012, RAYA TREFZ AND JORDAN ALLEN TOOK AN UNUSUAL APPROACH** to attracting customers to Bioi Design + Build: they opened a storefront along 9th Avenue S.E. in Inglewood.

The retail space lets passersby peer through the window at photos of the minimalist houses and commercial spaces Bioi has developed. Just as a glimpse of a stylish coat can draw you into a store, so too, it seems, can a custom home.

"It's how almost all our clients have found us," says Allen, who met Trefz while they were both in UCalgary's four-year Master of Architecture program.

Trefz, who also studied astrophysics at UCalgary, was drawn to architecture via a lifelong love of the practical and aesthetic nature of designing, build-

ing and tearing things (like motorcycles) apart. Allen, who grew up in Edmonton, knew from the age of seven that he wanted to study architecture; he learned how to draft in junior high and later studied industrial design.

Trefz and Allen both want to make architecture more accessible to the public, while maintaining an avant-garde approach. They chose the name Bioi because it's "a word that means nothing, but it sounds like it could," says Allen, who describes it as abstract and biomorphic.

"Our job is to keep pushing and evolving the conversation," adds Trefz.

Take, for example, a recent project on a double-wide lot in Mount Pleasant. Bioi built a 3,000-square-foot home, plus a 750-square-foot laneway house above a garage. "We wanted to break the ubiquitous infill formula of street frontage-halved lots and their resultant 'shotgun-styled' plans," says Trefz, who acknowledges that the skinny homes do have a place, but, contextually, not on this lot. (The homeowners agreed.)

For one of their latest projects, a grey-brick house in Winston Heights-Mountview, the focus was maximizing natural light and privacy. Behind the solid, north-facing façade is an open-plan space lit by strategically placed windows and a lightwell that reaches the basement.

"Our clients were also interested in a higher degree of permanence; they want to live in the house for the foreseeable future and so they were willing to take small risks in how the space was organized," says Trefz. For example, there is a 22-foot kitchen-dining island — and no dining room table. (By comparison, the Mount Pleasant house has a large dining table — and no kitchen island.)

Bioi's projects strive for "timelessness."

"It's a reaction to the stucco world," says Allen. "Timelessness is about ensuring not only a design-based relevance for the future, but also one that incorporates a sustainable approach so that as technology evolves, the design intent today still remains strong.

"It's essentially a way to future-proof a home," says Trefz.





1. One of the 284,000-square-foot facility's three swimming pools.

2. Copper/zinc panels clad the exterior and reflect the prairie light.

MAIN: GEC Architecture's David Edmunds on the elevated track at the Shane Homes YMCA at Rocky Ridge.



## THE COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

**THE TWO BIGGEST YMCAS IN THE WORLD** recently opened in Calgary. "That says something about how we value community space in Canada," says David Edmunds, a partner at Calgary's GEC Architecture.

Together with fellow partner Andrew Tankard and their staff of 60 architects, interior designers and technologists, Edmunds is responsible for designing the city's now-second-largest YMCA, the 284,000-square-foot Shane Homes YMCA at Rocky Ridge, which opened in 2018. In addition to three pools, two rinks and an elevated track, there's a

# SHANE HOMES YMCA

David Edmunds, MEdes'80



theatre, inclusive universal dressing rooms with private changing areas, and the city's first self-service public library branch.

"There is a strong understanding in Alberta, and in Calgary especially, that communities need to build space for recreation facilities in a cost-effective manner that provides value," says Edmunds. He attributes some of this to the 1988 Winter Olympics, which gave Calgary a legacy of world-class sports venues that are still in use today, including the Olympic Oval at UCalgary.

In fact, it was the opportunity to do some of the design work for the Oval in 1985 that gave Edmunds, then a young project architect, his entry into the large-scale work that he does today. "It was pretty complex for its time," he says of the Oval's famous arched roof. "Computer-aided design was in its infancy and the complex geometry had to be worked out on the drawing board with hand-held calculators." Edmunds notes that, at that time, local firms had the opportunity to undertake major commissions. This provided essential experience to the Calgary architectural community that still benefits the city.

When the Saskatchewan-born Edmunds started as an architecture student at UCalgary in the late 1970s, it was a "craft" of drawing by hand. The Rocky Ridge YMCA is emblematic of this huge technological shift in architecture.



3. From the lower-level weight-training space, you can see all the way up to the curved roof, which is the largest of its kind in North America.

4. The facility's two busy skating rinks help meet growing demand for ice time in northwest Calgary.



The curved glulam-beam roof of the YMCA, the largest of its kind in North America, would not have been possible without today's technology. That includes the ability to work closely — and quickly — with the Pentticon-based manufacturer that pre-fabricated the beams and assembled the building.


The building's roof undulates nicely around a hillside that is the highest natural point in the city. The roof's curves let the ever-changing prairie light illuminate the patina of the building's copper/zinc wall panels; they also highlight the contrast between the indoor climate and the outdoor landscape. A pathway through surrounding wetlands leads to the top of the hill where, "on a clear day, you can see many miles across the city," says Edmunds. It's a view that might just inspire even more new perspectives on Calgary's architecture. **U**



# How Do We Protect the Most Vulnerable?

*With a willingness to take on entrenched and challenging urban issues, UCalgary alumni, students, faculty and researchers are assisting those who live on the margins*

by **Mike Fisher** illustrations by **Jasu Hu**



**F**or Dr. Ibrahim AlMasri, the long road from Damascus, Syria, to Calgary began on April 17, 2012, when a Land Cruiser rolled up as he walked on a crowded city street.

A working physician in his fourth year of residency as a pulmonology specialist at Damascus University, he was enjoying a bright spring day.

The passenger window eased down and a bulky man with a shaved head and dark sunglasses motioned to him. "Can I help you?" asked AlMasri, figuring the four men in the car needed directions.

Help? No.

They jumped out of the car, pulled AlMasri's hands behind his back, ratcheted plastic ties around his wrists, pulled his shirt up to cover his eyes and pushed him into the vehicle, then sped off.

"I couldn't catch my breath," AlMasri says, recalling the scene from almost seven years ago. "They were Syrian air force intelligence, dressed in jeans and T-shirts, armed with Kalashnikovs. They didn't identify themselves. They just grabbed me and that was it."

Demonstrations were erupting in Damascus as civilians protested for their rights, and AlMasri found himself caught in the tectonic political shifts that would later erupt into war. "As a physician, I was beginning to see human rights issues," he says. "I believed then, as I do now, that everyone has the right to get medical treatment, regardless of their political views."

He swiftly found himself in jail along with other alleged dissidents. He spent four months there, enduring torture at times, before being suddenly released, without explanation.

Some of his friends had been killed, arrested or had fled the country. Finding himself fired from his residency program, AlMasri fled to Lebanon where he established a medical clinic to help refugees, which has become a celebrated Multi-Aid Program. Then he had to leave Lebanon for Canada because the Lebanese government cracked down on physicians who were not licensed; refugees were only allowed to work in construction or agriculture. He came to Calgary with his wife and one-year-old son in 2017 as a privately sponsored refugee. »



## Gaining perspective from high on the hill

Now a research assistant with UCalgary's O'Brien Institute for Public Health, AlMasri swivels in an office chair to take in the view of the Foothills Hospital and a jumble of low-slung office buildings that rise above the Bow River pulsing through the city.

Both the Foothills and main campuses sit high on a hill, overlooking the city where AlMasri and other researchers live and work amidst its daily thrum of triumphs and glitches. They're working to study, evaluate and find solutions to urgent problems in Calgary — issues that are common to many modern cities. Newcomers to Canada, homeless people, teens in crisis, the elderly — urban problems flaring

around the planet that require hands-on work that reaches beyond the halls of academia.

"Whether it's Calgary or Beirut or another big city, we see similar challenges," says AlMasri, who divides his time between working with seniors and refugees. "People being displaced as refugees often come directly from cities now, rather than from refugee camps — that's just one example, and it is one of many as we look to the future."

In the next year, AlMasri plans to work with Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) supervisors Dr. Gabriel Fabreau, BSc'04, MD'08, and Dr. Kerry McBrien, MD, on a proposed "health navigation for newcomers, by newcomers" project, to which he can bring his hard-won experience. He remembers how, when he arrived in Canada a few years ago,

"The world is facing the highest numbers of forcibly displaced people ever and the numbers continue to rise — it is a growing problem."

— Dr. Gabriel Fabreau

he was left bewildered at times by the Canadian health-care system. Many newcomers, while grateful to have access to health care in a new country, are unsure how to navigate it, especially if they don't speak English.

The CSM, other UCalgary faculties and community frontline groups serving those who are most vulnerable in Calgary, work together on finding solutions to diverse, thorny problems. UCalgary faculty, staff, students and alumni work with frontline agencies including Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS), the Calgary Drop-In Centre, the Alex Community Health Centre and Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic (MRHC), among others.

**"The main obstacle that Calgary faces, as do other cities, is distribution of resources."**

— Dr. Bonnie Larson

"The world is facing the highest numbers of forcibly displaced people ever and the numbers continue to rise — it is a growing problem," says Fabreau, who heads up Refugee Health YYC, a UCalgary program that is advancing research and innovation to improve health outcomes for refugees in Calgary and Canada. He also practises medicine as a clinician with the MRHC, which serves more than 1,800 clients annually, making it one of the largest of its kind in the country.

"The City of Calgary is a leader in refugee-resettlement and health care because there is a historical context of relationships within the community that stretches back to 2002, in response to displaced Sudanese from the war in Darfur," Fabreau says. "Partnerships, including the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, along with Alberta Health Services, are a strength." »

## An App to Fill a Critical Gap

By Barbara Balfour, BA'03, BComm'04



**During** a routine waxing session at her neighbourhood salon, Dr. Alina Turner's esthetician gently inquired about the nature of some bruises she spotted on her client's leg.

It was only from her playful six-year-old, Turner assured her.

But what if the bruises had been from her husband?

"They told me they actually see that scenario a lot at the spa and all they can do is listen," Turner says. "I thought to myself — what if they could actually refer clients to somewhere they could get help?"

What Turner, PhD'13, a fellow at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy and a former vice-president at the Calgary Homeless Foundation, had in mind was a one-stop directory of social services and programs.

It didn't exist when she could have used it the most as a teenage refugee from Romania, trying to survive a violent household and, later, homelessness along with a younger brother who was constantly in and out of jail.

She quickly discovered it still didn't.

"With all the technology at our fingertips, I could find the best Thai restaurant within 500 metres of me but, when it came to mental health and domestic violence support, I wouldn't have a clue where to go," Turner says.

So, early in 2018, she created *HelpSeeker* to fill the gap. The free, discreet, location-based app allows users across Canada to filter categories »

# Making a difference with community engagement

At UCalgary, medical school students who elect to do a concentration in global health equity can be linked to a Street CCRED (Street Community Capacity in: Research, Education, and Development) collaborative physician, gaining a local perspective they could apply elsewhere in the world.

“One of the key pillars of the [CSM] strategic plan is community engagement, which aligns with the University of Calgary vision to be accountable, responsive and engaged with the communities that we lead and serve,” says Dr. Jennifer Hatfield, PhD’01, professor in Community Health Sciences.

Dr. Bonnie Larson, BA’96, MA’99, MD, a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at CSM and director of the Global Health Enhanced Skills Program, has long dedicated herself to serving marginalized people and vulnerable populations. Last year, the Alberta Medical Association honoured her as a public health hero.

“The main obstacle that Calgary faces, as do other cities, is distribution of resources,” says Larson, who is a family physician at CUPS, a non-profit agency dedicated to helping individuals and families in Calgary overcome poverty through integrated health care, education and housing services. “Marginalized folks are chronically under-resourced. To remedy the problem, we need the right infrastructure and the political will.”

“If we involve the community to create solutions, we can generate a compassionate community response to suffering.”

— Dr. Bonnie Larson

She views collaboration as a key to solving urban problems. “Complex problems require complex solutions,” says Larson, who, among her many roles, has worked as a family physician with the Calgary

Refugee Health Program, attending to newly arrived refugees. “We need to work together on multiple levels to apply what we know in academia. If we involve the community to create solutions, we can generate a compassionate community response to suffering.”

At the centre of several major collaborations between the City and UCalgary, Larson is the lead and a founder of Street CCRED, a hub for community members, frontline workers, social agencies and scholars working to solve homelessness and other urban problems. Additionally, she co-founded Calgary’s Allied Mobile Palliative Program (CAMPP), which works to improve end-of-life care for the vulnerably housed.

Housing for vulnerable populations is a major challenge for cities, today and in the future, says Larson. “We need to pay very close attention to the issues arising from an aging population’s impact on our health-care system and housing, and it’s something that we need to watch globally,” she says. An estimated one in four Canadians will be over the age of 65 by 2030, accounting for 80 per cent of housing demand in Canada.



A team from UCalgary's newly renamed School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape isn't waiting until the 2030s; it's exploring housing solutions for the aging population now. With CSM's O'Brien Institute for Public Health and the City, it is designing aging-in-place laneway housing prototypes that are expected to be brought to market in the future. And Calgary is watching; in January 2019, city council was considering new plans for laneway homes.

## Community agencies collaborate on massive research project

Even as the university innovates with housing, there is much work to be done to eradicate homelessness in Calgary and elsewhere, says Dr. Katrina Milaney, BA'92, MEd'07, PhD'14, a CSM public health researcher. Born and raised in Calgary, she's seen wrenching changes in the city over the past 25 years, including homeless rates that worsened exactly as the city's traditionally boom-bust economy allowed many people to thrive. »

» for the services they need, map out routes to get there and — a first for an app of this type — leave feedback for the services they access.

Many of these services — from non-profits and charities to private organizations — are not easily accessed online, nor are they grouped together in ways that make sense, Turner says. "If you Googled 'domestic violence' and 'Alberta,' you might get some information, but you wouldn't be led to things you could benefit from other than just a temporary shelter — like housing assistance, addiction support, food bank vouchers or mental health services for your kids," she says.

"You don't even know these exist because, in that moment of trauma, you can only see what's in front of you."

So far, the app has helped promote hundreds of thousands of previously unknown or little-advertised services. Expanding rapidly across Canada, Turner expects at least 3.5 million interactions per month once the app is fully scaled.

In addition to being easy to navigate and integrating lists of services on a national scale — which comes in handy when a victim has to leave their community in a hurry — the app also harnesses the power of the kind of big data that governments, donors, non-profits and businesses will find crucial to decision-making.

"On the back end, as a researcher and a planner, I get the analytics in real time — we might see a spike in food bank interactions in one particular community, compare how we're doing in Calgary versus Toronto, or notice a gap in public safety programs in Ontario," says Turner.

"The vision is to see how we can correlate all this to other indicators and build a sustainable social enterprise that stands on its own."

While she was not surprised to receive major push-back from agencies on the ability to rate their services, she's an adamant believer in the important of transparency.

"In this industry, you always hear from the frontlines and the decision-makers, but not those with lived experience," Turner says. "What this app is about is putting power back in the hands of people using the service."

"Our plans are to expand into the U.S. and EU next — big dreams, but I'd love to see this in both my home country and birth country." U





After leading a wide-reaching collaborative research project with the Calgary Recovery Services Task Force that focused on 300 chronically homeless people in the city by examining their health and needs (a project involving 26 agencies, community groups and levels of government), Milaney is well aware that the one thing many Calgarians want — another boom — can also bring tough times for those less fortunate.

“Calgary is largely a very transient city, so we have a lot of people who come here for work when the economy is good, but it creates high rents and low vacancies,” she says.

That spike in homelessness appears to have stabilized now that the economy is tepid. A Calgary Point-in-Time count, released in July 2018, identified 2,911 people experiencing homelessness in the city, and it continues to see a downward trend, according to the Calgary Homeless Foundation. That’s almost a 19-per-cent decrease from its peak in 2008 when Calgary’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness was launched.

The collaborative research that Milaney steered has resulted in concrete benefits for vulnerable citizens, particularly an investment of \$750,000 in new funding from Alberta Health to push the recommendations ahead. Engaging organizations in the community was essential to the project’s success, she says.

“I was on the streets for four years. There was some freedom to it, sure, but the days blended into each other, months into years.”

— Randy Pages

“The university is building evidence around the issues,” says Milaney. “We can work toward fixing problems through collaborations with community-based organizations.”

Milaney’s current research sees her actively engaged with family shelters in the city, the »

## Discovering Traditional Indigenous Wellness Practices

By Mark Witten



**Dr. Karlee Fellner**, PhD, co-developed an innovative program called Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness as one of two new Indigenous interdisciplinary Master of Education programs being offered through the Werklund School of Education. *Poo'miikapii* is a Blackfoot phrase that means "collective harmony, unity and balance," while *Niitsitapii* is the traditional word for Blackfoot, meaning "a person of truth."

Fellner, who is Cree/Métis, says the program takes place mainly on the Kainai First Nation (Blood Tribe) reserve at Standoff, north of Cardston and southwest of Lethbridge.

"A big impetus for the program was my doctoral research, which focused on how health services need to be altered to better serve Indigenous people by further empowering traditional Indigenous approaches to wellness," says Fellner, an associate professor in Indigenous education counselling psychology, who collaborated with the Elders' Advisory Council at Red Crow Community College (RCCC) to establish this program. "This program offers professional development and educational training in Blackfoot approaches to wellness for educators, health-care professionals and other service providers and community members."

Grad students enrolled in this experiential four-course program participate in traditional Indigenous practices such as equine therapy, bison harvests, sweat lodges, smudge

ceremonies and plant harvests that promote emotional, physical, spiritual and mental wellness. The traditional Blackfoot ceremonies are collective efforts and students learn by actively contributing, as well as by observing and participating in rites and rituals.

"Students pick saskatoon berries used to make ceremonial food and pick sweetgrass, one of the important Blackfoot medicines. They help build the sweat lodge and put together the feast, and participate in the sweat ceremony," says Fellner, who also co-developed a second Indigenous MED program with Lauren Monroe Jr. of the Amskapi Piikani in Montana centred on Blackfoot ways of living in relation to language, history, politics, art and storytelling.

The Poo'miikapii capstone course, lihpkim Mootspi, addresses "passing on the teachings one has received" through a service-learning project that has a direct and immediate benefit to the community. "Our students come from different disciplines and backgrounds, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. There are teachers, social workers, nurses, psychologists and counsellors," says Fellner. "The program empowers them with the knowledge to give back to their communities and each student is able to apply this in different ways in the capstone course."

Tisha Wadsworth, who completed the Poo'miikapii program last year, applied the teachings she received by working with Cara Black Water, a Kainai High School counsellor, to set up and run a support group for Blackfoot girls.

"With this project, we're trying to identity build in our young girls," says Wadsworth, now a community wellness co-ordinator with the Kainai Board of Education. "We're seeing in our community a lot of the dysfunction from residential schools, intergenerational trauma and loss of language and culture, which shows up in the opioid crisis, suicides, and alcohol and drug dependence. Our objective with the girls' support group is to instill self-pride in being a Blackfoot woman so they can go out in the world with confidence, overcome trauma through resiliency, and be guided by the traditions."

"It's been an amazing experience to go through the Blackfoot approaches to wellness programs and learn how we, as a community, need to move forward and heal the loss of language and culture. I want to be part of the solution and this program, supported by Blackfoot elders' guidance, gives us so many ideas about ways to heal and support our community." **U**

"We're looking at gaps they are facing to sustain housing in Calgary."

— Dr. Katrina Milaney

Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, Inn From the Cold, and Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, an emergency shelter for Indigenous families. She says one of the biggest issues facing Indigenous families is a deep and profound experience of racism and discrimination.

"We're looking at gaps they are facing to sustain housing in Calgary," she says. "We know that family homelessness is increasing, and family homelessness is child homelessness."

Just ask Randy Pages, who came to Calgary from another city, only to experience the best and the worst of times.

## From living on the street and in shelters to affordable housing

It was snowing so hard during a massive blizzard in Winnipeg that 10-year-old Pages, who was poised on the edge of his second-storey bedroom window, could barely see what was below. The falling snow that had barricaded the main door to the family house was still rising. He wriggled in his parka, scrunched his hands in his mitts and, and not sure where he'd land, leapt.

"Hey, clear the door so we can get out," yelled his uncle a few moments later, throwing a shovel down to the boy, whose heart was beating quickly, *thump thump thump* — part fear, part thrill, part: how am I going to get out of this?

Thirty years later in Calgary, Pages was curled up on a bench in downtown Calgary's James Short Park, trying to get some sleep before daylight. He'd come to the city to visit a cousin and find a job, but things didn't work out as planned and he'd become



homeless. That trajectory of his life, from carefree boyhood to being a guy on a bench with nowhere to go but up, seemed a blur. In some ways, things hadn't changed. On the streets, he still felt part fear, part thrill, part: how am I going to get out of this?

"I'd never really pictured me being that person, the guy sleeping in parkades or using the shelters, but, when the chips are down, you have no choice," says Pages, now 44, who has become a remarkable success story. "I was on the streets for four years. There was some freedom to it, sure, but the days blended into each other, months into years. You lose track of time. In survival mode, you're only thinking of getting through the day."

Pages spent years in Calgary's homeless shelters. A chance meeting with someone who worked with one of the agencies that helps people in the inner city get back on their feet led to another person at another agency who gave him a hand up. Soon, he was volunteering to help others, part



The City of Calgary is working in collaboration with its wholly owned subsidiary, Calgary Housing Company, along with non-profit agencies, federal and provincial governments, and private-sector developers, to address the housing issue. But, with one in five Calgary households struggling to pay for housing costs (according to the City's Office of Land Servicing and Housing), the need for affordable housing is growing.

After 15 years of working with vulnerable populations, Milaney sees barriers to progress for the homeless that are invisible to many. "Homelessness is a complex issue. Many are in this situation because of forces that were out of their control," she says. "There's the idea that, if you're struggling, you're not trying hard enough. But people can carry challenges such as childhood trauma into adulthood, and it's not something you can see."

Dr. Kerri Treherne, MD, medical lead at the Alex Community Health Centre, who did her residency at UCalgary, has attended to hundreds of people considered to be part of vulnerable populations, including teenagers in crisis, some of whom have dealt with early childhood trauma. She's a tireless advocate for building strong communities, which she believes leads to better health. The Alex provides a wide range of health services to vulnerable populations.

"Kerri really helped me when I was a teenager," says Carla, who asked to use an alias for this story. "I was going in and out of homelessness and in the throes of alcohol addiction. Kerri and the Alex connected me to counselling and other resources that really helped me get on track."

Carla, who is now in her early 30s, works at a social agency in the city, using her experience to help others who face misfortune. She'd gone to the Alex for help because her mother, who was bipolar, was a client there. »

of the intricate, sometimes haphazard chain of compassion that hoists lives upward.

"These people changed my life," Pages says. "They saw something in me at the time. It eventually got me into affordable housing, which is so important. If wasn't for affordable housing, I would still be homeless or even dead. Who knows?"

The affordable housing process in Calgary aims to provide access to safe and stable housing while creating inclusive communities. Nowadays, Pages uses his apartment in Bankview as a home base to do extensive volunteer work with the homeless community; he was named the Calgary Homeless Foundation's Volunteer of the Year in 2017.

"I couldn't catch my breath. They were Syrian air force intelligence, dressed in jeans and T-shirts, armed with Kalashnikovs."

— Dr. Ibrahim AlMasri

# New Cultural Mapping Tool Gives Voice to Those Unheard

By Barbara Balfour



**Most** newcomers to Canada are healthier than the average Canadian, but lose their immigrant advantage after 10 years. Researcher Dr. Suzanne Goopy, PhD, argues that part of the reason for this may be attributed to newcomers' isolation and difficulty finding work in their areas of expertise — often linked to "a lack of Canadian experience." Newcomer health outcomes are also affected by city planning that favours the car over the pedestrian: limited access to reliable public transit, clear walking paths, places to sit when out walking and suitable bus shelters in many areas.

To better illustrate the human implications of city-planning policies and how they can be improved, the visual anthropologist, registered nurse and associate professor in the Faculty of Nursing designed an interactive cultural mapping tool. By further exploring the immigrant experience, Goopy, herself originally from Australia, gives a voice to those most often overlooked, while providing a blueprint for what a healthier, sustainable city should look like.

## What is Emphatic Cultural Mapping (ECM) and what does it do?

ECM is a tool we designed that visually presents research findings from sources like Statistics Canada and the Calgary Police Service alongside the real-life stories of individuals who settled into Calgary. It gives you a much broader sense of where people are located and what is possible to achieve based on where they live. For instance, we have families in the far northeast who become quite isolated because it's such a journey to get to the resources they need. They might have to give up shift work because bus routes don't run late enough in their areas.

## What are the missing gaps in the city-planning process?

We don't tend to hear from the hard-to-reach people who don't have secure employment or housing. They face life pressures that make it impossible to attend activities like town halls or fill out online surveys about bus routes. Not everyone can afford the data download required to do a survey, or even understand it well enough to be able to complete it. There are certain assumptions being made that, albeit unintentionally, exclude certain groups and individuals.

## What role can cities play in keeping populations healthy?

The more we create a sedentary society, the more we will have long-term issues, so we need to create better walkability and more low-cost public transit options. And, if you want a city to be walkable, it also has to be sit-table, whether you're an older person or a young man with kids.

There are lots of malls where people go to walk, but we need to fill them with more of what we need, day-to-day, like greengrocers and butchers, rather than just the things we desire commercially.

## What are you working on now?

We're examining the emotional health and wellness of newcomers in four cities across three provinces: Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. This is part of a big project we're conducting with the Calgary Immigrant Educational Society (CIES), thanks to funding we received from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Over the next two years, we'll be using surveys, interviews and focus groups to drill down into harder-to-reach populations and find out what they need to integrate well into the community.

We're also exploring creative ways we can work with cities, NGOs and newcomers to introduce tools they're not currently using, to bring relationships that don't normally exist into being, and to start a new discussion around what is needed for success in these areas. **U**

Discover what UCalgary's Faculty of Law is doing to provide free or low-cost legal advice for vulnerable populations at:

[alumni.ucalgary.ca/legal-advice](https://alumni.ucalgary.ca/legal-advice)



“The Alex is a very forward-thinking organization, and the people there make it a very accepting place, which is so important. They do not judge,” Carla says. “I came to realize later that early childhood trauma may have been a part of the reason I responded to life the way I did.”

Dr. Keith Dobson, PhD, a professor of clinical psychology who leads UCalgary’s Research Depression Laboratory, is working on research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that has included data from the Primary Care Networks in Calgary. An open trial of an intervention program for adults with high ACE traits has shown

improvements in terms of anxiety and depression outcomes, he says.

A Syrian refugee, a once-homeless person now living in affordable housing, and a teenager who was helped by a frontline physician — UCalgary programs, initiatives and people have influenced each of them, and they, in turn, are giving back to the community.

Research may start in a campus office high on a hill, but the gains built with collaboration and compassion in the city are rooted in the grit of its citizens. **U**



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### 1. PRESIDENT CANNON'S FAREWELL

One of many speakers at President Dr. Elizabeth Cannon's farewell at the BMO Centre was Mayor Naheed Nenshi, BComm'93.

### 2. PRESIDENT'S FAREWELL

(L-R): Brenda Mackie; Elizabeth Cannon, BSc (Eng)'84, MSc'87, PhD'91; Jamie Mackie, BSc'75.

### 3. LINKS AND DRINKS - NETWORKING

Partap Rehill, BSc (Eng)'10, turned up to last October's event.

### 4. DIG IN! - DNA

(L-R): Dr. Marnie Fothergill, MD'84, and Tynan Wenarchuk, BSc'14.

### 5. THE WORLD UNCORKED

Dubbed "a culinary adventure around the world," more than 60 guests attended this unusual pairing of food, wine and "expert" chats — held at Donna Mac.

### 6. ALUMNI AGM/HOLIDAY SOCIAL

Alumni Board, committee members and Alumni volunteers packed the venue.

### 7. GROW YOUR CAREER CONFERENCE

Attending the February conference was Sui Hui, BSc (Eng)'07.

### 8. TORONTO SOCIAL

David Eisenstadt, BA'66, chats with Karen Haas, BA'91, at a Toronto Rock Lacrosse game in the Scotiabank Arena.

### 9. ALUMNI ABROAD

Lindsay Young, BA'o8, in her U.K. office with Durham Cathedral in the background (a mecca for *Harry Potter* fans!). Young is an Alumni Relations Officer at Durham University and visited UCalgary when she was back in November.

### 10. UCALGARY ALUMNI SKATE WITH SANTA

For the first time, UCalgary Alumni partnered with the Calgary Public Library to present this annual family-friendly event. Besides skating with Rex and Santa, families made festive crafts and enjoyed storytime. Food donations went to the Students' Union Campus Food Bank and other proceeds supported our Students' Greatest Needs Fund. **U**



6

# Out & About

Who says learning stops after convocation? UCalgary Alumni reconnect all over the world for various networking and educational events. Learn about upcoming events at [alumni.ucalgary.ca/events](http://alumni.ucalgary.ca/events)



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# Where Are We?

**Y**ou might say we're hiding in plain sight, my sisters and I. I'm the tallest, so people tend to focus on me. My sisters have their virtues, to be sure, but I'm the sibling who's perpetually stood out — and not just for my looks. After all, I've met and influenced many of UCalgary's Rhodes Scholars and other outstanding graduates, like astronaut Dr. Robert Thirsk, BSc'76, Hon. LLD'09, MD, and former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, BA'85, MA'91. What I once had to offer stunned people into silence.

Mind you, once my techy stepsister arrived, all bets were off. After that, some thought of me as half-empty, some half-full. Some even characterized me as slightly "unsafe" — I had to wear the ugliest protective hose for years. Now, however, I'm poised to regain my traction with alumni, staff and students. I may not be a provocative youngster any more, but I'm back, better than ever, and ready to knock your socks off starting in the autumn of 2019.

I should note that my sisters and I are close, but not in each other's pockets. Equally ambitious, each of them is undergoing a redo, virtuously recycling most of her bits and bobs to ensure that she isn't just stunning, but easy on the environment. They may give me a run for my money when they make their debuts in 2022, but, until then, I'm going to be the swan.

## SO, YOU THINK YOU KNOW ME. DO YOU?

Figure out my whereabouts and you could win a \$70 gift certificate from the University of Calgary bookstore.

Visit: [go.ucalgary.ca/alumni-where-are-we](https://go.ucalgary.ca/alumni-where-are-we)

What I'm performing is an interior burlesque. You might think of a burlesque as the taking off of things in a public way; mine is more of an inward blossoming. On the plus side, I've gained some height — most unexpected when you're 50-something. I've also harnessed the power of Calgary's splendid sunshine to reduce my heating needs by nine-tenths. Installing photovoltaics — that convert light into energy — on my scalp and sides and purchasing green power off the grid will make me carbon-neutral. Am I trying to win some kind of award here? Why, yes I am. I'm what the cool kids call a prototype.

Admittedly, my reinvention has caused some uproar. Some 600 people and countless birds have had to accommodate my needs. I've embraced their concerns, but have not let them get in my way. What's a little inconvenience when it lets my sisters and me nurture and sustain our admirers?

I think you'll find the new me warm and inviting, with a panoramic outlook. I look forward to our bold new relationship.

— Kate Zimmerman 

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