Presidential Perspectives
Fresh angles on how a city and campus can thrive together

2019 Arch Award Recipients

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Get a quote now.

23

A Campus and City in Focus

Who better to take you on a tour of the university than Dr. Ed McCauley? From classrooms to research labs — you’ll find yourself in places most of us never get to explore.

32

2019 Arch Award Recipients

Meet six outstanding alumni — innovators, global entrepreneurs, business leaders and scientists. Discover why their inspiring stories are changing our planet.

37

Who Will Help Mom?

We are facing a multifaceted economic, social and health-care crisis as our elder population grows. What are our priorities and what is UCalgary doing about the splintered system that exists today?
If you’re one of 59 million Canadians who are caring for an elder, try to remember the last time a physician asked how you were doing. Actually, when was the last time you saw a physician for yourself? Or ate a proper meal? Or slept enough? Or didn’t make lists in the middle of the night? And when was the last time you had any fun?

The subject of caregiver burnout and how many of those millions are “invisible patients” is an area we all need to be concerned about. Given that Canada’s seniors’ population is expected to grow by 68 percent over the next 20 years, we need to fix the long-term care system we have now.

“Byzantine,” “splintered,” “confusing” and “broken” are how many family caregivers are describing today’s system — and they are worried. By 2030, seniors will make up 23 percent of all Canadians.

Time for an intervention?

We think so and trust you’ll see why in our eye-opening feature titled “Who Will Help Mom?” (pg. 37). As you flip the pages of this issue, you’ll find other features — including profiles of our six inspiring 2019 Arch Awards recipients (pg. 25) and an insightful tour of your alma mater with new President and Vice-Chancellor Ed McCauley (pg. 32).

I suppose that, if these features share any DNA, it’s the power of the collective. In identifying our personal strengths, this issue is anchored in the knowledge that we are even stronger together. This spirit of inclusivity is showcased in Chris Carlson’s column in POV (pg. 18); in Barbara Balfour’s crackling piece about photographer Leya Russell, an alumna who almost died in a plane crash while travelling in Southeast Asia (Mind & Body, pg. 15); and in Helen Sunderland’s first column as the new president of UCalgary’s Alumni Association (pg. 24).

And to you, the reader, I hope you see yourself in this issue because you, too, are part of this collective. Do you have a story of your own to share? Email me at d.cummings@ucalgary.ca. And be sure to follow us @ucalgaryalumni on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. — Deb Cummings, MEd’17, Editor
Connect with Alumni This Fall and Winter

Programming, events and services from UCalgary Alumni are ready for Wherever Life Takes You. Stay in the loop with the latest by following @UCalgaryAlumni on social media, and watch your inbox for Alumni News and Alumni Connection.

DIG IN!

GROW YOUR CAREER

ALUMNI-EXCLUSIVE FIELD TRIPS

IN AND AROUND CALGARY

A HOLIDAY TRADITION

UCALGARY ALUMNI SKATE WITH SANTA

GROW YOUR CAREER

CAREER COACHING

alumni.ucalgary.ca/grow-your-career

Career coaches are available in-person at our Downtown Campus and online to discuss your work journey. Each conversation is tailored to your unique needs and questions.

WEBINARS

alumni.ucalgary.ca/grow-your-career

Grow your career skills from wherever you are with the Career Success Webinar Series, presented by career-development experts from the UCalgary and alumni community. Join live or access the recordings anytime.

CONFERENCE

alumni.ucalgary.ca/grow-your-career

This annual day-long conference in Calgary will connect you with career development experts and the latest trends, topics and tools to help grow your career.

February 1, 2020

UCALGARY MENTOR LINK

alumni.ucalgary.ca/mentorship

The new UCalgary Mentor Link program has a simple mission: to connect our alumni and students from across the world for mentorship, networking and professional-development opportunities. Whether you are looking to get advice, give advice or are open to both, UCalgary Mentor Link will get you started.

WEBINARS

October 2019 – March 2020

• Indigenous Knowledge Public Lecture Series
  Presented by the School of Social Work.
  September 19 – March 20

• Current Affairs: Event Series
  A luncheon series of policy discussions from The School of Public Policy.
  September 19 – May 2020

• Positive Disruption Series
  Hosted by the Faculty of Social Work.
  Thrives in the lively series dives into pressing topics and presents knowledge in alternate formats.
  September 19 – April 2020

• Design Matters
  Hosted by the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the City Building Design Lab.
  September 19 – January 15, 2020

• Sustainability Speaker Series
  Thought-provoking presentations focus on building a more sustainable future.
  October 19 – March 2020

IDEA EXCHANGE

CALGARY & NORTH AMERICA

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 EVENTS:

November 20, 2019
March 31, 2020

UPCOMING NORTH AMERICA EVENTS:

New York City — March 18, 2020
Washington, D.C. — March 19, 2020
Toronto — April 20, 2020
Ottawa — April 21, 2020

CURRENT EVENTS

alumni.ucalgary.ca

Current events and perfect pairings — join us for an evening out and a culinary experience that is sure to delight.

February 27, 2020

ALUMNI PARTNERSHIPS

UCalgary Alumni supports some of the best programming and events on campus and in the community. Join us . . .

• Indigenous Knowledge Public Lecture Series
  Presented by the School of Social Work.

• Current Affairs: Event Series
  A luncheon series of policy discussions from The School of Public Policy.

• Positive Disruption Series
  Hosted by the Faculty of Social Work.

• Design Matters
  Hosted by the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the City Building Design Lab.

• Sustainability Speaker Series
  Thought-provoking presentations focus on building a more sustainable future.

November 6, 2019; January 15, 2020

RECENT GRADUATES

ATYPICAL MIXER FOR RECENT GRADUATES

alumni.ucalgary.ca/links-drinks

If you’ve graduated in the past 10 years, this one is for you! Join us in downtown Calgary to mix, mingle and learn career and life hacks.

November 6, 2019

AFFINITY COMMUNITIES

alumni.ucalgary.ca/communities

Affinity Communities are volunteer-led groups that provide unique opportunities to build relationships and new traditions with fellow alumni around a common interest or experience. To date, we have nine recognized Affinity Communities:

• Dinos Women’s Hockey Alumni Group
• Medicine Alumni Advisory Council
• Faculty of Arts Alumni Advisory Council
• Arts & Culture Alumni Council
• UCalgary Alumni Association, Hong Kong
• UCalgary Senate Alumni Network
• Dinos Women’s Wrestling Alumni Group
• UCalgary Education Alumni Network – Beyond the Classroom
• Scholars Academy UCalgary Alumni Network

For more information, email: alumnivolunteers@ucalgary.ca
Looking at High School Sports from the Sidelines

Could this be the next big outta-nowhere hit to be released by year’s end?

by Deb Cummings

Storytelling is a word that gets a lot of play these days — whether it’s in print, at an indie folk festival — or at a Calgary high school.

This past summer, in the gym at Queen Elizabeth High School (a.k.a. Queen E), we found a posse of UCalgary alumni doing just that — telling stories — in the soon-to-be-released film that bears one of the longest, most literal titles ever penned: Events Transpiring Before, During and After a High School Basketball Game.

On a bench, under a banner that transforms Queen E into fictional Middleview High School, sits superstar Andrew Phung, BA’06, of Loose Moose fame and most recently the award-winning CBC series, Kim’s Convenience, looking glum as he watches a ragtag team of local high school kids try to play basketball. Directing Phung and the players is another alumnus, Ted Stenson, BA’09, MFA’14, who also wrote the 600-page script based on his time at this school. Alumni Nicola Waugh, BA’06, and Kevin Dong, BA’06, are the film’s producers.

“I played a lot of sports in this very gym,” explains Stenson, who graduated from Queen E in 2002. “Sure, we won one city championship in volleyball, but what I most remember isn’t the winning shot or the action of the game. It’s the stuff on the sidelines, in the bleachers . . . and, oddly, what the drama students were doing at the time. The absence of actual basketball action in this film was very intentional.”

What Stenson strove to avoid while penning this script were the classic tropes behind so many sports movies, such as the underdog who comes out of nowhere to win the final match, or the star player who gets corrupted by outside authority figures. No ham-fisted, heartstring-tugging sappy stereotypes here, says Stenson.

Phung, who just wrapped his fourth season as Kimchee on Kim’s Convenience, says, “it was the uniquely Calgary voice of the film” that brought him back to his hometown. “Not a cowboy voice, but a Calgary voice . . . one that sounds like every-day, grounded people. Plus, I was a teenager myself in the late ’90s, so I felt like I was reading myself when I first saw the script.”

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Rococo Punk

Here’s the backstory to the stunning photo that is now hanging in UCalgary’s Reeve Theatre Lobby:

At Alumni Weekend 2018, alumni came together with faculty, staff and students from the School of Creative and Performing Arts to create this piece of work known as The Rococo Punk Project. This massive undertaking included numerous individual and small-group shots that have been artfully arranged into a large-scale photograph that evokes the grandeur of a Renaissance painting.

From the top of the staircase to the violinist (L-R): Allison Lynch, BMus’11; Marisa Roggeveen, BComm’19, BFA’19; Tim Nguyen, BFA’06; Natasha Strickey, BA’06; Connor Pritchard, BFA’17; Sadaf Ganji; Cayley Wreggit, BFA’15, Brittny Bryan; Jason Mehmel, BFA’04; Mark Bellamy, BFA’06; Emily Losier; Dr. PH Hansen, PhD; Michele Moss, BEd’84; MA’07; Donovan Seidle, BMus’99.

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It seems, you have few legal rights or muscular considerations. Without a label or classification, they would not go on to receive federal protection. Freedoms, though it left out trans people; the Court challenge. This wrote sexual orients’ employment protection for gay, lesbian and bisexual people was granted in April 1998 through Delwin Vriend’s Supreme Court victory. And so, in 2008, when he began his transition, Demers wasn’t surprised that no only letters were being used to identify sexual and gender groups: L, G, B and T. It’s a complex system, but it’s also a common language allowed LGBTQ2S+ to begin to agitate for equal protection. A common language allowed LGBTQ2S+ to begin to agitate for equal protection. And that’s just a start — on Facebook, no longer just a mathematical symbol, but meant to cover anyone who’s not included in the gender and sexuality spectrum. It’s no longer just a mathematical symbol, but meant to cover anyone who’s not included in the gender and sexuality spectrum. It’s not what we’re asking for. I use ‘he’ and ‘him,’ and I’m fairly particular because I went through a lot to get here. I think numerous pronouns can exist in our culture with respect to each of those places on the spectrum. Pronouns are relevant tallisians to most people. ‘Tripping over labels and pronouns can be avoided, suggests Demers, by introducing yourself and your own pronouns in initial conversations. For Demers, his favourite queer expression is not. “What’s the T?” (i.e. “What’s the story?”) or “kiki” (a gathering of friends), or anything else from RuPaul’s Drag Race, but something so safe, something that so many of us just assume . . . chosen family.” Demers defines it as the “sweet spot between community and isolation where you collect people around you who have had similar experiences and those you can call on. Chosen family is the foundation of community development.” In fact, Demers had put out a plea that this continent’s top newspapers. “This car took over four years to design and build due to several setbacks that delayed our completion, and, as a result, the team had not raced in over six years,” said an ecstatic Sarah Lam, business manager and co-chair for the team, from the podium at this year’s Formula Sun Grand Prix in Austin, Texas.

The Path to the Pulitzer

Despite the fear that nobody reads newspapers anymore, a sold-out audience attended a September luncheon at Alumni Weekend. The headliner was Susanne Craig, BA’91, Hon. LLD’19, the Pulitzer-prize winning investigative journalist at The New York Times who dug her way on to the mastheads of some of this continent’s top newspapers.

In a candid conversation — from Craig’s first writing gigs to the 18-month investigation into President Trump’s financial dealings — we learned never to underestimate the power of a face-to-face gathering that tackle big, burning questions that are relevant, intellectual and provocative. Listen to Susanne Craig and Chancellor Deborah Yedlin at alumni.ucalgary.ca/pulitzer

Susanne Craig poses with communications and journalism students from UCalgary, Mount Royal University and SAIT at Alumni Weekend.

BIG NEWS FOR THE SMALLER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY.

NORTHWEST OF NORMAL

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Photo by Louie Villanueva
Who’s the Captain?

When it comes to aging, why is our health-care system a fractured, byzantine network that fewer and fewer people can navigate? And what role could universities play?

Chris Carlson, MBA’10
Chief Information Officer, Brightsquid Secure Communications and member of UCalgary Alumni Board of Directors

illustration by Kevin Xu

Here’s the good news: we’re getting older. The bad news is this has created a wicked problem for Canada’s health-care system.

A few years ago, Canada reached a sobering milestone: seniors now outnumber children under 14 years old. By 2031, one in four of us will be older than 65.

Here’s the kicker: per-person spending on health care is more than four times higher for seniors than for those aged 15-64. In Alberta alone, we already spend somewhere in the neighborhood of $22 billion annually ($60 million daily) on health care, out of a $56-billion annual budget. Pair this with revenues from fossil fuels losing their public shimmer — and squandered opportunities for collaborative innovation.

In other words, our system was not built to last.

Strategy experts would call our health-care challenge a wicked problem, described by strategic management scholar Dr. John Camillus, Ph.D., as an unprecedented challenge of unknowable root causes involving myriad stakeholders, values and priorities, and a problem that continuously morphs with each attempt to address it. All of a sudden, “Leviathan” becomes “Hydra.”

Yet, this epic challenge is a defining opportunity for UCalgary and our alumni.

Innovative solutions to wicked problems are best solved through collaborative research paired with entrepreneuship-driven hypotheses and experimentation. UCalgary, a research and entrepreneur-driven university, is uniquely suited for this work. It is teaming with experts in public policy, law, business and organizational strategy, health and wellness, technology and more; and it has a mandate that embraces both analytical research and entrepreneurial action.

We could start to address this challenge by establishing a coalition of collaborative, action-oriented, cross-sector stakeholders that value solutions that strengthen sustainable universal care. Stakeholders such as public organizations like Alberta Health Services (AHS) and our Primary Care Networks (PCN); large private health information technology vendors like TELUS Health, Epic and DynaLIFEdx; new-entrant social entrepreneurs, supported through organizations such as the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Haskayne School of Business, Platform Calgary and more; and patient-advocacy groups like Greg’s Wings and Imagine Citizens.

Then, we could continue this work by creating room for real-world, hypothesis-driven health-care solutions experimenting with real people and, over time, replacing the culture of institutionalized risk-avoidance. These efforts, however, are for naught if we neglect the need to commercialize and scale solutions to our largest procurer — the public health-care budget, supported by better innovation-procurement processes, will significantly impact health-care service productivity and patient outcomes. We need to make this happen.

Wicked problems shape-shift and are rarely solved indefinitely because each new solution changes the relationship of constraints, resources and stakeholders. A continuous system of self-rejuvenation is consequently essential for sustainable universal health care. Wielding the “Leviathan” into a sustainable state requires Herculean stamina. Nonetheless, the importance, urgency and consequent benefits of success are compelling: an inspirational mission that unifies UCalgary’s 185,000-strong alumni while attracting the globe’s best researchers and research funding; an economy diversified by a health-care business ecosystem that attracts the best social entrepreneurs and investment capital; and the opportunity to significantly reduce health-care spending and heal our universal health-care system while taming an otherwise-overshadowing demographic tsunami.
The Lifelong Journey
How an autoimmune disease in youth led one CSM

The journey toward a remarkable scientific discovery is often long and winding. It can be a hard road, without a compass, that’s sure to reveal character. Discovery doesn’t arise magically. Clues are unearthen gradually for the explorer who is clear-sighted and determined to see them, having the experience to recognize where they lead.

Dr. Pere Santamaria, MD, PhD, describes his journey.

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Switching Lenses

The relationship between artist and subject is always complex — but what happens when the photographer becomes the subject due to an unforeseen disaster?

Barbara Ballfour, BA’03, BComm’04

Calgary alumna Leya Russell, BA’08, BFA’11, made international headlines earlier this year when she survived a harrowing plane crash in southeast Asia. The crash left her having to learn how to walk again — but it wasn’t her first brush with death.

The first was when she was only 21, backpacking solo across the northern tip of India on a journey of self-discovery. Waiting on the platform for the overnight train to Calcutta, she saw an emaciated man lying on the ground. Thinking he was probably starving, she bent down to offer him some cookies from her backpack, but realized he was dead.

“That bothered me much, much more.”

Barbara Balfour, BA’03, BComm’04

The now-35-year-old UCalgary grad whose degrees are in religious studies and fine arts, has since become an award-winning visual artist who has travelled the world, having had her photos published in National Geographic.

It was while taking a break after a three-week assignment in Bangladesh for Photographers Without Borders this past May that Russell had her second brush with death, surviving a plane crash that left her with a broken back and a concussion so severe, she had to learn how to walk, dress and feed herself all over again.

In Bangladesh, Russell had been documenting the stories of individuals who had received support from the Centre for Disability in Development. What was supposed to be a three-day vacation in Myanmar afterwards, before heading home to Calgary, turned into one of the most terrifying experiences of her life.

Her flight from Dhaka to Yangon on Biman Bangladesh Airlines was supposed to be only one hour long, but it turned into three as the plane repeatedly tried to land before finally missing the runway and crashing in a nearby field.

Russell was knocked unconscious, only coming to because of the cries of her 35 fellow passengers who were covered in blood, including a flight attendant whose spinal cord had been severed.

With two fractured vertebrae and a serious concussion, she had to walk one kilometre across a field in lashing rain to get to a bus that brought the injured passengers to the arrivals gate. There they lay on the airport floor, waiting for help for 40 minutes.

“They put me on a stretcher in a caravan with no seatbelts. It hurt so much to be sliding around on this stretcher, whipped around in a vehicle going as fast as it can. I yelled at the paramedic to hold my hips, but she didn’t speak English,” Russell recalls.

That bothered me much, much more.”

That bothered me much, much more.”
She was sent to three different hospitals, where the staff weren’t equipped to deal with her injuries and the language barrier only made things worse.

After two weeks in a Bangkok hospital, five days of which were spent in the ICU, Russell struggled with the after-effects of her injuries back home in Calgary, relying on her 16-year-old daughter, in a complete role-reversal, to shower, dress and feed her.

While she did not need surgery — despite losing a full inch in height and developing scoliosis — Russell was fit with a restrictive upper-body brace she had to wear for four months, which she could not put on by herself.

There were also pragmatic concerns weighing on her mind: her injuries prevented her from being able to photograph the summer weddings that supply the bulk of her income as a single mother.

While she did not need surgery — despite losing a full inch in height and developing scoliosis — Russell was fit with a restrictive upper-body brace she had to wear for four months, which she could not put on by herself.

“Once I’m able to work again, I will be on the road. We’re all going to die, but I won’t let that stop me from living my life. I don’t want my daughter to see me not follow my dreams because of fear.”

Russell has been dreaming — and beating the odds — for a long time. She grew up poring over the pages of National Geographic while whiling away the time in remedial classes alongside children with autism and Down syndrome; her own dyslexia and ADHD were not accurately diagnosed until she was 30.

“I always felt like an outcast, being segregat ed from the other kids, and it made me want to find a sense of belonging,” she says.

As a teen, Russell was so rebellious she dropped out of high school, ultimately becoming a single mother at 18. For a while, she was homeless, living at a youth shelter while working full-time throughout her pregnancy as a prep cook at the Good Earth Café, stopping only two days before her daughter was born.

The following September, Russell went back to school, upgrading her high school credits and eventually earning a Bachelor of Arts in 2008, majoring in Eastern religions, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2011, during which she began nurturing her future career in photography.

“The U of C really pushed me to be curious. I felt so supported by all the faculty during my BFA degree, and even my Hinduism professor encouraged me to go to India when I was doing my BA,” she says.

“People were seeing me for the first time and pushing me to grow. I learned to take criticism and keep on trying. Not every institution will support fearless curiosity or encourage you to connect to something bigger than yourself.”

Those lessons on resilience have helped Russell enormously since the accident. Not only physically, but also spiritually.

“You only get one life,” Russell says. “All of us are dying, and all of us have a short time here on earth. We all have to help each other. It’s just an accident of birth that I was not born a Rohingya or anywhere else in the world. I’m so lucky to have had all these privileges and advantages in my life.”
How did you swing from acting to running a voice-over company? After graduating, I did land a couple of roles with Alberta Theatre Projects and Lunchbox Theatre, but I realized I didn’t like the lifestyle. Working late, going out for a meal and drinks late, sleeping in late. I am an early bird. What was your first big break? After trading my voice (to record ads) for concert tickets, T-shirts and albums at CJAY 92, I landed a gig with Safeway. I went back and did another gig for the same client. After that, I landed a gig for the line of Surface ads that ran across the country. I was working as a voice actor for a month, and我发现我非常喜欢。Where did you work? I worked in the United States and Canada. My career has been in both voice-over and acting. What is one of your most satisfying spots? As a voice actor, being involved in a project that involves giving voice to a character that is loved by many. What is your motto? “Talk low. Talk slow. Don’t say too much.” OK, OK, I may have borrowed that from my crush on Lisa LaFlamme on CTV News. I am a fan of her gravelly voice really intriguing and I admit to having a news-girl crush on Lisa LaFlamme. How often do you travel in a year? Depending on location and facilities, I usually travel about three times a year. How do you spend your free time? I love to cook, garden and walk my dog. Oh, yes, and I knit 15 pairs of socks per month. Who are your favorite people? Thomas, who has read the copy for the Academy Awards for years. A.T. Still: From the Dry Bone to the Living Man by Laura Hillenbrand. The Wizard of Oz. Every time I see the moment when the house lands and the Technicolor time I see the moment when the house lands and the Technicolor. What is your guilty pleasure? I love Housewives of New York City. I am honestly fascinated by affluent Housewives of New York City. I am honestly fascinated by affluent. What can you do in your free time? I go to yoga three times a week, zumba twice a week, and love to cook, garden and walk my dog. Oh, yes, and I knit 15 pairs of socks per month. I also love to read. What is your favorite movie? The Wizard of Oz. What is our favourite movie? The Wizard of Oz. What are the niches you give someone more than four options. What are the niches in voice-over work? There can be award shows — think of Randy Thomas, who has read the copy for the Academy Awards for years. What do you give someone more than four options. What are the niches in voice-over work? There can be award shows — think of Randy Thomas, who has read the copy for the Academy Awards for years. Telephone systems are my niche, but I have colleagues who do everything from reading the copy for the Academy Awards to LTSA. Every once in a while, I may have to read the copy for the Academy Awards to LTSA. Telephone systems are my niche, but I have colleagues who do

John Wayne. — Deb Cummings

Unconventional Paths

Ever wonder who’s the voice behind Victoria’s Secret or Samsung or, for that matter, Amazon’s Alexa (the recent upgrade)? It’s likely a UCalgary drama grad who’s one of Canada’s top voice talent and whose friendly, almost sultry, tones you’ve likely heard say, “Please enter your PIN number, followed by the pound key,” and, “I’m sorry, I didn’t quite get that.”

You may recognize Deb Cummings, a former UCalgary student, as Maria Sharapova, Sidney Crosby and alumna Hayley Wickenheiser. Best-in-class? We think so.

In the micro-universe occupied by the world’s elite athletes, this former national team speedskater is a legend. Not for his moves on the ice — but, rather, for his hands. The strength and conditioning coach and massage therapist has worked with some of the top athletes in the NHL, NFL and WTA with A-listers such as Maria Sharapova, Sidney Crosby and alumna Hayley Wickenheiser. Best-in-class? We think so.
The Power of our Alumni Network
A message from the new UCAA leader

Helen Sunderland, BMus’87, MBA’92
President and Chair
UCalgary Alumni Association

Growing up on a farm in Balzac, Alta., just a couple of kilometres northeast of today’s CrossIron Mills shopping mall, I always knew that attending university was in my future. My parents were clear that post-secondary education was not optional; it was mandatory.

Thus began my relationship with the University of Calgary. Two degrees later, followed by a somewhat unusual career trajectory, I find myself returning to serve you as the new president of the University of Calgary Alumni Association (UCAA) and chair of its board of directors.

I don’t take this role lightly; with more than 185,000 alumni worldwide, it is no small task to represent the varied interests of our alumni. Add stepping into the shoes of Vern Kimball, (UCAA) and chair of its board of directors, president of the University of Calgary Alumni Association (UCAA) and chair of its board of directors.

I am looking forward to serving as your president.

Editor’s Note: If, like Helen, you’re feeling the tug to get involved with the University of Calgary Alumni Association (UCAA), learn how you can do just that at alumni.ucalgary.ca.

3. AND THE UCALGARY ALUMNI ARCH AWARDS GO TO . . .

AWARD CATEGORIES

- INTERNATIONAL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: Recognizes those whose international career accomplishments have brought distinction to themselves, their alma mater and their communities.
- CAREER COMMITMENT AWARD: Honours those whose careers have made outstanding and powerful contributions to their communities through professional or volunteer service.
- ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD: Celebrates professional accomplishments or creative leadership in any field by a recent graduate who is 30 years of age or younger.
- ACHIEVEMENT: FOR LIFETIME DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD: Recognizes professional accomplishments by a recent graduate who is 30 years of age or younger.

Although this year’s outstanding recipients walked the red carpet in September at the 2019 Arch Awards, their stories bear a replay.

Meet six remarkable alumni who are blazing trails across our skies, creating sparks for us to marvel at, championing legal rights for Indigenous people, leading colossal coalitions of people, innovating new tech platforms, and helping build bridges across global organizations.

Not only is the 2019 cohort of Arch Award recipients a hopeful beacon of what UCalgary has become since its alma mater grew. Through my incidental connections back to UCalgary, I learned that I had ideas to offer that could help make the alumni connection to the university stronger — even a long way from home.

Before I never strayed farther than the United States (and I know many of you live abroad). I gained a clear perspective: I have nothing but gratitude for what I achieved so far in life, and my education at UCalgary played no small part in reaching those achievements. This continues to give me the inspiration to give back to the UCAA.

I believe that, as alumni, we can be the voice to promote our world-class school: after all, we did earn our bragging rights!

And I believe in the importance of community. How UCalgary can continue to positively impact our city, province, country and planet remains yet to be seen. With one strong alumni voice, I am optimistic that we can continue to support the building of this vibrant, ever-changing institution and promote our alma mater in our many communities.

I am looking forward to serving as your president.

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2019 Arch Awards
DR. DAVID KENDALL
MSc’72, PhD’79

Once upon a time, the pinnacle of a career in space was essentially becoming an astronaut with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) or NASA. But that tug to actual spaceflight was never what propelled Dr. David Kendall to stare into the inky void and wonder, what was out there. Instead, what fascinated him was the area of research that has sustained Kendall in his stellar career.

“Early on, I saw the significant drawback of being an astronaut which is that one often sacrificed their career for a few days in space (today, the missions are a lot longer) and I was enjoying my career path at the time too much to do that,” he writes.

Space University where Kendall directed nine-week programs to more than 100 graduate-level students from more than 30 nations.

Although he may have retired from the CSA and UN COPUOS, Kendall today remains active in several space-related programs, as well as being the co-supervisor of a PhD student in space policy. His loyalty to his alma mater has never wavered, for UCalgary was where Kendall says he learned “and never forgot” about “teamwork, transparency, responsibility and consensus.”

“For me, these are the hallmarks of a leader,” explains Kendall, who cites Elon Musk, Barack Obama and teenaged climate activist Greta Thunberg as people he admires.

He thanks back to his student days, “where the university was developing new programs, often in ‘risky’ areas — one of them being space research. Couple the fact that Canada had only recently become a space-faring nation with the excitement and energy directed towards developing a space program that was unique in the world within UCalgary’s Physics Department — well, it was extremely invigorating.”

But Kendall stresses the critical role that remarkable mentors have played in Kendall’s extraordinary career, the two people who have influenced him most have been his wives — Toni and Betty.

“These two exceptionally talented people are who gave me my grounding, tolerated...
Rare is the person whose career is described as “sacred” or “deeply personal” or “a calling,” but Grace Auger, like her profession, is anything but typical.

As a staff lawyer for Legal Aid Alberta on the Siksika Nation, Auger knows all too well what it’s like to be the “other.” Not only was Auger the only Indigenous law student in her cohort at UCalgary and the only student raising three kids under the age of eight, but she was also the only one with a childhood marred by extreme poverty and substance abuse.

The load was colossal but, frankly, nothing new for Auger, whose life has been spent breaking barriers and fighting extraordinary obstacles. One of her earliest memories, in fact, was that of being a six-year-old fleeing Saskatchewan with her mother and brother, bound for Edmonton where they could escape her alcoholic father. “We were so poor,” Auger recalls, and her voice catches. “Our first rental place had a shared bathroom down the hall and I remember seeing my mother wrap all our food — salt, sugar, flour, anything with a hole in it — in Saran Wrap to keep the cockroaches out.”

After her father sobered up, her family moved to another place in the capital where Auger found solace in school. “It was my safe place,” Auger recalls. In fact, it was the pursuit of education that kept Auger motivated to create a better life for her children.

Marriage to artist Dale Auger, a baby and the loss of a second child prompted a move to Calgary where they wanted a fresh start — a start that involved Auger beginning post-secondary studies. That’s when she majored in women’s studies, that, in a circuitous fashion, led her to UCalgary Law.

Calling her current work “enhanced duty counsel,” Auger, a Cree woman who has lived most of her life throughout Treaty 6, 7 and 8 lands, has a unique perspective on Canada’s criminal justice system and the overrepresentation of Indigenous offenders in custody. Depending on the case, she may recommend a client seek Aiskapimohkiiks — a Siksika cultural traditional mediation program that may involve a team of addiction counsellors, elders, psychologists and anger-management experts. The program is designed to help heal the person so they don’t repeat the offence and, instead, may grow from it. After her clients successfully finish the program, they report back to court, where their original charges are reassessed.

“My role is to give people some consistency, trust and respect,” Auger says. “Helping them break that cycle.”

When asked about Beakerhead highlights, Moser defaults to that life lesson on the roller coaster platform: “As the motor behind Beakerhead, I didn’t really take any of it in . . . I was constantly assessing risk, analyzing what we needed to do better, being on full alert.” Trying to not jump.

But there was one moment — during a show called The Tremendous and Curious World of Beakerhead — that still, years later, embodies the magic behind science. Meant to “act as a gateway drug for people who didn’t know how to ingest this thing that was happening across the city,” Moser lured Col. Chris Hadfield, who had just come off the International Space Station, to sing Space Oddity at the Jack Singer Concert Hall.

“The whole place just rose to their feet in a standing ovation,” recalls Moser, breathlessly. “We had robotic things whizzing through the air and giant white continued on page 47”
ROB ALLEN
BCOMM’82

There’s a story Rob Allen likes to tell. He was studying business at UCalgary (after a couple of false starts in science and poli-sci) when Dean Mike Maher requested a private meeting.

“I thought I might get turfed,” confesses the former GM for BM’s Oil and Gas Division in Canada. “At the time, I was this redheaded kid playing in a band, writing for the Gauntlet, working as a producer for CJRW . . . some saw me as unfocused.”

The dean’s advice to Allen? “Pick one — music or business. But get something done,” Maher said. “And, by the way, faculty-student elections are coming up in the spring and I think you should throw your hat in the ring.”

And that was exactly why Allen found himself back in Maker’s office, a few months later, representing business students — he had taken the dean’s advice and put aside his guitar.

“I think that student-rep experience was when I realized that I had some skills in getting people to rally around a cause and effectively communicate, whatever the story was, to the management faculty and academics,” says the affable Allen, who, decades later, continues to represent business students.

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“On the day of the election, I knew I had people to rally for me. And that was exactly why Allen found himself back in Maker’s office, a few months later, representing business students — he had taken the dean’s advice and put aside his guitar.

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“You’re always engaging with people who are thought leaders, who like to think outside the box. . . .”

Allen also suggests that people don’t map out their careers in a linear track and that the key to success is the ability to pivot, whether that means working as a producer for CJSW . . . some saw me as unfocused.

“No, you come back and see what a firecracker she is on stage. And it is fascinating to watch her play the oboe or trumpet in various symphonic bands. . . .”

Hicks has self-identified as a “bit of an introvert,” but give her a stage and this young alumna will crush whatever role she takes on. In fact, it was her theatre background that landed her a spot on UCalgary’s iGEM team back in 2009, and it was this experience that convinced her that she didn’t want to be a physician but, rather, to pursue biomedical sciences and anything to do with iGEM, which stands for the International Genetically Engineered Machine competition.

“I used to say that iGEM is what I remember about my undergrad degree — and school was the thing that I did in the middle,” Hicks confesses, grinning.

Meet FRED — the Field Ready Electrochemical Detector. FRED combines biology and engineering to detect chemicals in water. Housed in a 6,500-sq.-ft. lab in north-east Calgary, FREDsense involves a team of 14 who test, design, build and assemble portable field kits full of easy-to-use sensors that can detect chemicals such as arsenic, lead, manganese or acidity in water by using genetically modified bacteria.

What differentiates FREDsense from similar technology is its speed, ease and mobility, explains Hicks. “There are other systems out there, but you can wait two or three weeks for the data. With FRED, you can have the data in a little over an hour, maximum,” explains Hicks. “With FRED, you can have the data in a little over an hour, maximum, explaining Hicks. “There are other systems out there, but you can wait two or three weeks for the data. With FRED, you can have the data in a little over an hour, maximum.”

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“Without the typical prerequisites on her CV, such as a first-year chemistry course, Hicks didn’t think she could do it,” Hicks confesses, grinning.

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Turns out that not only has amateur theatre helped Hicks get to where she is today but so has all the original research and grant proposals that she did during her Bachelor of Health Sciences. Until a few months ago, FREDsense relied exclusively on that she, Dr. Robert Mayall, BHSc’13, PhD’19; Lisa Oberding BSc’12, MSc’16; and David Lloyd, MSc’13, had honed across three iGEM competitions that finally evolved into FREDsense.

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On any given day, members of the University of Calgary community can be found far beyond campus. Our students are in every corner of the province, in classrooms and emergency rooms, law offices and businesses, on performance stages, and in the natural environment. Their professors can be found there, too — gathering research, conducting educational outreach and sharing their expertise on a vast range of subjects.

“Our main campuses may be physically located in Calgary and the surrounding area, but the impact of our work is so much broader than that,” explains UCalgary President Ed McCauley. “We apply our research expertise and share knowledge with communities all over Alberta. Whether it’s through formal programs or informal learning agreements, student practicum placements or research projects, our relationships with community partners are strong. These Alberta connections help us to identify opportunities for initiatives and programs that allow our province to flourish.”

In this issue’s Dropping In, we highlight a few of the important connections that UCalgary has forged across Alberta.

To learn more, visit alumni.calgary.ca/alberta

Abridged stories from UToday
Illustration by Christina Milloy

Dropping In

1) House Call
Last spring, people in Three Hills discussed mental-health issues and cannabis policies with UCalgary researchers and physicians. Dubbed House Call, this outreach program is aimed at smaller Alberta communities where students and doctors-in-training from the Cumming School of Medicine learn their skills. These events feature experts who raise awareness of the connection between research and advances in medicine and health care that’s available to rural Albertans.

2) Edmonton Valley Zoo
When was the last time you were able to interact — read “play” — with animals at a zoo? Redefining the term “immersive environment,” architect and UCalgary professor Marc Boutin, MA’03, and his firm recently redesigned the Children’s Precinct at the Edmonton Valley Zoo. Visitors can now interact, move and play in this boundary-less urban farm that was inspired by Maurice Sendak’s delightful book, Where the Wild Things Are.

3) Future Engineers
After three years of study, UCalgary engineering students can pursue a paid 12- to 16-month work experience. Of the 750 students who found internships last summer, many worked in rural communities such as Clearwater County, where Devin Drozdz found a job with a public works team. Keagan Graham was another engineering student who found employment at the CertainTeed insulation plant in Redcliff.

4) UCalgary Southern Alberta Region Campus
From the 1,000-mile death march from their home in South Sudan to Ethiopia, two “Lost Boys” escaped Africa and eventually made their way to Brooks, where they found work in a meat-packing plant. If that extraordinarily epic journey as 10-year-old boys wasn’t grim enough, their steely determination just got them through another journey — John Manjak and Samuel Mathon graduated this past spring with degrees in social work through UCalgary’s Lethbridge campus.

5) Archaeology Programs
UCalgary has run an archaeological field school at Cluyl Fortified Village for the past 15 years. Since its inception, other programs have launched such as the Program for Public Archaeology in 2014, and the Aboriginal Youth Engagement Program that included seven schools this year. UCalgary’s Indigenous Strategy reflects the belief that including traditional Indigenous knowledge and content into UCalgary’s programs will only add to the protection of these sacred sites.

6) A Future in Beef Cattle Medicine
Why launch a veterinary career in the town of Peace River? “Family, mentorship, and the incredible beauty of Peace Country,” is what convinced recent grad, Dr. Erik Burow, DVM’19. For his final practicum, Burow spent a month with “the cow vet of the north,” a.k.a. Dr. Kevin Breker, DVM, who showed him the ropes, having practised in Peace River for nearly 40 years.

7) Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)
Bringing education to everyone, everywhere, is the basic goal behind a MOOC. What Dr. Kathryn Schneider, BKin’96, PhD’13, an assistant professor and physiotherapist, didn’t anticipate was how popular a MOOC on sports-related concussions would be. Some 8,500 people registered for the course, including Jeanne Lawrence from the Peace Country. “Most people in Edmonton and Calgary don’t understand what it means to live in northern Alberta. Providing reputable distance education in a flexible manner is very important to those who live remotely,” says Lawrence.

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UCALGARY ALUMNI MAGAZINE FALL | WINTER 2019

Dropping In

Illustration by Christina Milloy

UCALGARY ACROSS Alberta

Abridged stories from UToday

UCALGARY ALUMNI MAGAZINE FALL | WINTER 2019

Dropping In

Legend
If you’re ever riding around in a black Volvo with Dr. Ed McCauley, PhD, and he asks you what Santa Barbara, Germany and the Loire Valley have in common, don’t say it’s because UCalgary’s new president and vice-chancellor has worked in those places (although he has). The right answer, he quips, is wine.

Like McCauley, the tour we’re taking of various UCalgary campuses and associated facilities is multifaceted and informative. He provides unexpected insights into his life, as he illuminates the path he’s carefully setting for the university.

McCauley delightfully connects dots, jumping from his insights into how universities operate in different jurisdictions and the vital role a university can play within a city, to the pleasures of wines that disclose as much about a region as they do of the person experiencing them. Like wine and the importance of the region’s terror, universities are rooted in specific environments. But they are comprised of people — each of whom has a particular perspective and contribution.

“...as a young university, we are so fortunate,” says McCauley. “We have extraordinary community support from people who want to make a difference, many of whom are global players who operate businesses around the world ... who already know what a great research university can do.”

It’s exactly this — deepening the university’s ties with Calgary, Canada and the world — that energizes McCauley. In Calgary, the main campus hosts 34,000-plus students, 5,000 faculty and staff. Since the late 1980s, our home on University Drive has grown to include three other campuses in the city: Foothills, Spy Hill and Downtown. And then there’s our campus half a world away in Qatar, where we are transforming the university’s ties with Calgary, Canada and the world — that energizes McCauley. In Calgary, the main campus hosts 34,000-plus students, 5,000 faculty and staff. Since the late 1980s, our home on University Drive has grown to include three other campuses in the city: Foothills, Spy Hill and Downtown.

How will McCauley, who has had a 30-year career at the university, serve these different jurisdictions? How will he elevate UCalgary on the global stage as it grows next to those established European institutions that he has seen operate? How will he juggle the needs of undergraduate and graduate education, Canadian-born and international students, and research and industry goals? How will he continue to grow UCalgary as a wellspring of intellect and innovation for our 85,000-plus alumni while positioning our current students for post-convocation success?

As McCauley took us on a tour of some strategic spots at UCalgary, we got a peek into our future, glimpsed the university’s strategic priorities and saw the cross-campus course McCauley is embarking on. Get ready for an exciting ride.

In the Classroom

At 8 a.m., Ed McCauley is in a familiar place. Not at his orderly desk in UCalgary’s Administration Building, but in Theatre 102 in the Earth Sciences Building. After all, it’s here — in these modest theatres and classrooms on the main campus — that the university’s new president has spent a huge chunk of his 30-year career here.

Teaching.

Back in 1985, a new program led by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) was launched, essentially to staunch the brain drain of scientists who were fleeing Canada for better job opportunities. At the time, McCauley held a position at the University of California in Santa Barbara, but he saw his future and pounced.

“I saw this as a tremendous opportunity to come to a young, bold and dynamic university where I could help build a very creative program in theoretical ecology,” recalls McCauley, using the same adjectives to describe all five of UCalgary’s campuses today. “At the time, UCalgary was a great little dot in the Portland-centre because they had started to develop some very good quantitative biology programs, which I wanted to be part of.”

In 1985, McCauley moved into a tenure-track position which then led to a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair and then progressed to his role as vice-president (research) two years later. Eight years until becoming UCalgary’s ninth president and vice-chancellor last January.

It was here, in these very lecture halls, that Professor McCauley taught thousands of students about the “dynamics of biological populations ... how populations wax and wane and what the mechanisms that trigger these fluctuations are ... and the importance of quantitative reasoning,” and why, always why, we should care.

And yes, the biological sciences professor misses this space.

“First of all,” he says, “I miss working with students who make the transition from simply acquiring knowledge to realizing they are part of the knowl-

edge creation-process. To work with students 12 hours a day, to experience the highs and lows of scientific discovery ... there’s something very, very special about that.”

The other piece McCauley misses is his “lab family ... a wonderful global network of collaborators.”

But what about the friction, the naturally competing aspects of teaching versus research?

“I never saw those as a dichotomy, but as incredibly complementary,” replies McCauley. “By designing a cutting-edge curriculum that reflected the global state of the world in ecology where I could use my research expertise seemed natural. Having students experience the highs and lows of scientific discovery ... there’s something very, very special about that.”

Perhaps you know Ed McCauley as a professor, researcher, board member or university president, but what does he do when he’s not on campus, say — on a weekend? We asked him what a perfect Saturday looks like:

• Wake up at 7 a.m., listen to classical music before heading to UCalgary’s Fitness Centre for a quick workout at 8 a.m. — on the bike and light weights.

• Return home, listen to pop or rock, and head out on Calgary’s trails, either biking or walking.

• Spend late afternoon reading a good mystery that takes me to another place — anything by Jo Nesbo, Ian Rankin, Fred Vargas.

• Relax and listen to some jazz before heading out with friends.

All photography by Roth and Ramberg, except as noted.
President Ed McCauley has worked at universities in eight countries: France, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, the U.S. and Canada. A dedicated population ecologist and Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, McCauley has spent much of his career probing the dynamics behind population fluctuations which can provide insight into a whole series of phenomena around the world — so, when he speaks about student experiences that may lead to solving global problems, people listen.

Here in the heart of the $40-million Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, McCauley has challenging questions: How will we reduce the impact of pollution on individuals around the globe? How, exactly, will we reduce the impact of supplies for citizens around the world? Or, how will we some day feed 9 billion people?

Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning

McCcauley has challenging questions: How will we provide safe, secure water supplies for citizens around the world? Or, how will we some day feed 9 billion people?

“What we try to do here at the Taylor Institute is bring together students from a variety of backgrounds and pose a challenge to them,” explains McCauley, stressing that this transformative space is more than just a striking piece of architecture (replete with skyfold walls, video cameras, massive TV-like touch screens, dozens of mobile carts, hanging study pods, etc.). “We then provide the students with tools to synthesize and analyze the information in order to come up with a conclusion. The Taylor Institute is another ambitious example of how the University of Calgary is creating new ecosystems,” says McCauley. “And it’s ecosystems like the ones being developed and nurtured in this space that will underpin all advanced education that involves experiential learning to set students up for success in the long term.”

Cumming School of Medicine

Learning over the railing, surveying his favourite place to have coffee at the foothills Campus, Ed McCauley pauses. He’s grateful. For the $100-million gift that Geoff Cumming, B’74, Hon. LL.D., gave to the Faculty of Medicine — a transformative gift to the Energize campaign that created the Cumming School of Medicine and now allows us to lead in many areas of research. It also provides students access to some of the world’s top researchers and professors.

“We want to ensure that the new knowledge that is created here benefits society and that we translate those advances as quickly as possible so that society gains from those discoveries,” says McCauley, thoughtfully, scanning the space where white lab coats are the dress code of many.

“Right? This unique, germ-free facility with dozens of mobile carts, skyfold walls, video cameras, massive TV-like touch screens is more than just a striking piece of architecture. From there we can have a transformative experience that will allow us to unlock some major black boxes of many different diseases,” says McCauley. “Those philanthropic gifts and government funding allowed us to build this centre and then, under the leadership of Dr. Paul Hruby, we were able to attract some of the world’s boldest scholars to come here and take microbiome research to a new level.

“Leadership, combined with support from the community, will make UCalgary a destination of choice for many health researchers, students, clinician scientists, grad students, postdocs . . . we want to continue to help create new knowledge and translate that into benefits for society and, by doing that, we will attract the world’s best.”
University Research Park

Just a short jog west of UCalgary’s main campus lies a cluster of buildings known as the University Research Park. Vecova, the LRT lot, ENMAX Park — they are all part of this collaborative space in which UCalgary is in the process of transferring seven of the park’s 12 buildings. The new Life Sciences Innovation Hub, alone, offers 30,000 sq. ft. of labs, including wet lab spaces that facilitate experiments and trials, as well as provide shared office space for research, high-potential student projects and maker-spaces. Close to 40 companies will soon occupy this business incubator, a retrofitted building where hundreds of people are conducting research into novel medical diagnostic tests, animal medicine and agricultural research, medical software, etc.

“The Life Sciences Innovation Hub is a great example of an innovative, collaborative approach to community-building, job creation and economic diversification for the city of Calgary and beyond,” explains McCauley. “Converting beautiful industrial-strength energy labs [left behind when the Shell Technology Innovation Centre moved out] into life-sciences labs was not only efficient, but it gave our scientists access to safe working environments and a space where they could improve their proof of concept and their proof-of-principle around their ideas.

“Beyond labs, the building also gives us space to bring in experts on commercialization. To help scholars, students, faculty, alumni and staff who are building these companies get the best possible advice on this journey for commercialization is integral.”

McCauley says that, for the research park, the new hub “completes an ecosystem where early stage companies with great ideas can grow, where jobs can be created [3,100 new jobs are expected to be created in the next 20 years] and then move market-ready products and services around the world.”

UCalgary’s goal is to position the University Research Park as a destination of choice for innovators and entrepreneurs. “If you’ve got a great idea in life sciences or other areas in which UCalgary is leading — bring that idea here, evaluate it and grow your company. This is actually the place where you can do just that,” says McCauley.

Above: Ed McCauley in the new Life Sciences Innovation Hub that offers 30,000 sq. ft. of lab space.
Vivian Coles, 56, gives herself a pep talk as she maneuvers through traffic in Calgary. The dental hygienist juggles her job with looking after kids at home and attending to her mom, Esla, 76, who has Alzheimer’s and lives in a retirement residence. Today, she’s on the way to take her mom shopping at lunchtime.

“How can I make it a nice day for her?” thinks Coles. “How can I help her focus on things that make her feel positive and grateful?”

Coles started her day at 6 a.m., kicked it off with a coffee, called her mom, rushed to the nearby Fitness Plus for a workout, got home, made sure others in her family had something to eat, grabbed a shower, called her mom again to remind her she’d be there at noon (her mom had already forgotten), got dressed, called her mom again (for whom voicemail is overwhelming) and then jumped in the car.

Her mother was raised by deaf and mute parents in Chile. She was a strong and independent woman, but has had mental-illness challenges throughout her life. More recently, there have been outbursts at her retirement home. Coles is worried that, in time, her mom may have to move to a less-familiar, more expensive facility.

“She needs to feel loved and special. She isolates herself socially at the retirement home.” — Vivian Coles

Her mom pauses, looks up and says: “You.”

**Preparing for a rising tide of seniors**

The daily, overwhelming problems that Coles and others like her face are multiplied by millions across the country and swell into every corner of society. We can’t foretell the future, but if we view certain trouble spots through the lens of the work done by University of Calgary researchers, we can gain a better understanding of how to move forward.

The brunt of caregiving for aging and ailing parents usually falls to women. Like Coles, they’re often members of the so-called “sandwich generation,” hard-pressed between parents and children. Unlike Coles, some look after parents who can stay in their own current home, but need help; others combine their households with their parents.

Mike Lang, MSc’15, who is now working on his PhD at UCalgary, launched the web series, Being There: Helping Caregivers See Their Place in the Story, in 2018 with the support of the TELUS Fund. There are more than 8 million active caregivers in Canada, most of whom are unrecognized and unpaid, and this number is expected to double within 20 years, he says.

This legion of unpaid caregivers is growing across Canada as the country braces for a tsunami of aging citizens. The population of seniors — those age 65 and over — is set to surge, boosted by aging baby boomers and increased life expectancy. And many caregivers will soon enough be seniors themselves — if they aren’t already.

In 2016, for the first time, the percentage of seniors in Canada (16.9 per cent) exceeded the percentage of children (16.6 per cent). There were 5.9 million people aged 65 and older in Canada, slightly more than the country’s 5.8 million children under 14.

The statistics are daunting. Over the next 20 years, Canada’s seniors’ population is expected to grow by 68 per cent. The 75-plus age group will double, including in Alberta where, by 2038, more than 1 million Albertans will be over the age of 65. In Calgary, the number of seniors is expected to grow to more than 280,000, or 15 per cent of the population, by 2042.

We’re in uncharted territory. Caregiving is just one slim tributary in a vast network of social undercurrents driven by an aging population. While the House of Commons has declared a national climate “emergency” no such designation has yet been afforded the potential stormy weather brewing alongside an aging population.

According to Calgary’s Aging Population Report, the city of Calgary is “on the edge of a rising tide of seniors” that will impact our communities, challenge the way services are delivered, and alter housing and support services, health services.
recreation, transit and more. And these changes will not just impact this city, but communities across Canada.

So, what’s the plan? The City of Calgary’s Age-Friendly Strategy, launched in 2015, has a focus on seniors and includes UCalgary faculty on the steering committee. There’s a federal Ministry of Seniors Canada. The Province of Alberta has its own Ministry of Seniors and Housing. Quebec even has a Minister Responsible for Seniors and Informal Caregivers.

Dr. Yeonjung Lee, PhD, an associate professor in UCalgary’s Faculty of Social Work, says preliminary findings from her ongoing research project to identify the concerns of older adults in Calgary show that aging communities have grown rapidly and spread across the city.

There is recognition that splintered services for seniors can be improved. A March 2018 report by a team of UCalgary researchers, presented to the Kelby Centre, focused on caregiver perceptions of support programs in Calgary. Creating a one-stop shop for caregivers to navigate available services was among its recommendations for community-support bodies to consider.

Is the system that serves seniors, their families and caregivers byzantine? Yes, given the sheer size and breadth of services. For housing alone, senior living and care arrangements span a wide range at varying costs, from independent retirement living (typically private-pay) and assisted living, to residential care homes. Alzheimer’s and dementia care in nursing homes, along with government-subsidized options such as supportive housing and long-term care homes.

When speaking to anyone involved in dealing with our aging society, including caregivers, it’s clear there are no quick solutions. Study is required to understand the varied problems and lay the groundwork for implementing practical solutions.

University of Calgary researchers, graduates and alumni are already on the front lines.

UCalgary at forefront of solutions for an aging population

Calgary Ward 3 Councillor and UCalgary alumna Dr. Jyoti Gondek, MA’03, PhD’14, knows well the tight squeeze that sandwich-generation caregivers feel daily — she’s one of them.

She’s got a 14-year-old daughter and an 80-year-old mother at home. As she zips from council meetings to home to her mom’s medical appointments to her kid’s school and activities, time is always tight.

“I’m the primary caregiver for my mom, but I have to prioritize like everyone else and it’s very difficult,” says Gondek, who earned her PhD in urban sociology and worked as the director of the Westman Centre for Real Estate Studies in UCalgary’s Haskayne School of Business before being elected to city council.

If you’re between the ages of 40 and 65 and have parents — get ready. The reality of an aging population is that about 50 per cent of Canadians have cared for an aging, sick or disabled family member or friend at some point, according to the latest data from Statistics Canada.

Women face a larger caregiving burden: The proportion of women who cared for an adult family member or friend on any given day was three times that of men in 2015, according to StatsCan. And 43 per cent missed work, 15 per cent cut down their hours and 10 per cent passed up a promotion or new job because of their caregiving duties, again according to StatsCan.

“Sometimes it just kills me, but I know I’m not the only one doing this.”

— Dr. Jyoti Gondek, MA’03, PhD’14

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There are more than 8 million active caregivers in Canada, most of whom are unrecognized and unpaid, and this number is expected to double within 20 years.
to address them. There has also been mutual work on the One Win-
dow initiative that aims to improve how Calgarians, including seniors, access housing.

Gondek says seniors would love to age in place, but Calgary needs to diversify its housing stock and be more creative. Today, for example, City approvals are required to build a secondary or backyard suite.

UCalgary’s School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL), formerly the Faculty of Environmental Design, has presented the City with innovative advancements in aging-in-place laneway housing. Technology including medical devices and health monitoring was part of the SAPL design for a one-bedroom, portable housing unit that could be temporarily placed in the backyard of a residential lot.

“Calgary was far behind in approving secondary suites in the home,” says Gondek. “I think we’ll get to the point where we understand laneway housing is a good thing for seniors and communities, but we’re still catching up on this idea.”

On a much larger scale, the Univer-
sity District is a new comprehensive, 200-acre community development lands owned by UCalgary. The mixed-use, multi-family development features The Brenda Strafford Foundation Cambridge Manor.

Slated to open for occupancy in mid-2020, Cambridge Manor will provide innovative aging-in-place living while being an integrated research and education facility in collaboration with the university’s Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging. The centre is a cross-faculty, interdisciplinary organization under the umbrella of the university’s O’Brien Institute for Public Health.

“We can’t work in silos,” says Burns. “The health and housing sectors will have to work together so that people across the spectrum can get the right level of support at the right time.”

Housing is a social determinant of health, says Burns, having just returned to Calgary from showing her documentary film in New Zealand.

“Without proper housing, seniors’ health will decline and they’ll become socially isolated, which can lead to even worse health.”

The federal government’s announce-ment in 2017 of a $55-billion, 10-year national housing strategy is a timely investment into remedying problems, she says.

Burns, who has experience as a frontline social worker, combines academic know how with on-the-ground grit with her role as a documentary filmmaker. Her film, Beyond Housing, which she shot with the help of Calgary media artist Joe Kelly and released this year, focuses on seniors as they bounce in and out of homelessness.

“If you’re age 55 now, you may live another 40 years. You have to ask yourself, ‘What can I do now to enjoy the last third or more of my life?’” says Hogan, who was the Brenda Strafford Foundation Chair in Geriatric Medicine at UCalgary for 25 years and is now the academic lead of

Of social work at UCalgary. “We’re seeing people over 50 becoming part of the homeless population that wouldn’t have in the past. There are long lists for social housing. We need more of it.”

Dr. David Hogan, MD, a UCalgary professor who has been at the forefront of geriatric medicine research, says one of the main challenges posed by the wave of aging seniors is advising them on how to remain as healthy as possible and financially secure so they can live a meaningful life. There is an element of personal responsibility that will require foresight, planning and perseverance.

“Old-age pensions used to be a kind of saving grace for people, but social security hasn’t kept up with the housing and rental markets across the country,” says Dr. Victoria Burns, PhD, an associate professor of social work at UCalgary.

“If life is one lengthy marathon, how do we best get to the finish line once we become seniors?”

The 75-plus age group will double, including in Alberta where, by 2038, more than 1 million Albertans will be over the age of 65.

“We need to start thinking about it early, consider how we treat our bodies and minds, stay engaged in society and life and activities that you find rewarding.” — Dr. David Hogan, MD
The importance of physical activity and the role it plays in overall health can’t be overstated, especially for vulnerable populations, says Dr. Meghan McDonough, PhD, an associate professor and researcher in the Faculty of Kinesiology. Activity contributes to keeping people mentally and physically fit, allowing them to retain a degree of mobility and independence.

“I see the urgency of learning more about our aging population, and people’s particular experiences, so that we can determine how to help them,” says McDonough, who, in her research, is investigating the social supports that adults 55 and older have that keep them physically active. UCalgary has put considerable weight behind this area of research. This study and others that the university is collaborating on with the City of Calgary — there are at least five of them ongoing — will translate into practical applications and recommendations on how to move forward, she says.

Making the mind-body connection is another key to promoting good health.

With demographics changing globally, there will be an increase in dementia and other diseases of the brain. Each year, 25,000 Canadians are diagnosed with dementia, and, by 2030, that number is expected to be just shy of 1 million. Led by the Hotchkiss Brain Institute, UCalgary has more than 200 researchers engaged in brain and mental health research.

The Alberta government launched a strategy for addressing the impending epidemic of dementia in 2017, including plans to improve the primary care system’s ability to manage patients and better educate the public. More than 42,000 Albertans live with some form of dementia; that number could triple to 155,000 if nothing is done, says the strategy.

Dr. Marc Poulin, PhD, a Cumming School of Medicine professor, and a research team from UCalgary conducted Brains in Motion, a study that focused on the links between lifestyle interventions — such as diet and exercise — and sleep and cognition. The findings showed regular aerobic activity can lead to declines in anger, confusion, depression, fatigue and tension.

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<td>There are signs, literally, that the health-care system in Alberta recognizes that caregivers need help. Taped to the wall of a room at Bowmont Medical Clinic in Calgary, where UCalgary medical students train and graduate work, is a poster that reads: “Learn how to recognize that, in order to care for a loved one, you must learn to care for yourself.” The sign promotes COMPASS for the Caregiver, a free nine-session weekly workshop launched last year, offered by the Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network. Primary care networks streamline patient access to primary health care. Within these networks, groups of family doctors work with Alberta Health as part of the province's public health-care system.</td>
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| “You can’t expect people to function every day as heroes, sacrificing themselves and their aspirations.” — Dr. David Hogan, MD |

The following study led by Poulin, the Brenda Strafford Foundation Chair in Alzheimer Research, is Brain in Motion II. This study explores the connection between physical activity and cognition in adults who may be at risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease or another related form of dementia.

| The increasing prevalence of dementia is daunting for policy-makers and their families who face a dizzying array of information pathways into services across governmental, private and volunteer organizations. |
| Here’s a primer to help get you started: |
| **Federal government programs and services for seniors** (canada.ca/services/employment-social-development/campaigns/seniors.html) |
| Open the landing page on the federal government’s Programs and Services website and you’ll see large, boxed instructions to help you increase the page-view type size. There’s information on the Canada Pension Plan, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Old Age Security, caregiving benefits, health, safety at home, funding programs and more. Or call 1-800-O-CANADA (1-800-622-6232). |
| **Alberta government programs and services for seniors** (alberta.ca/seniors-and-housing.aspx) |
| The Ministry of Seniors and Housing, “provides quality and affordable housing and assists seniors to have the resources and care they need.” Find information here on affordable-housing programs, the Alberta Seniors Benefit, Seniors Financial Assistance programs, dental and optical assistance for seniors, the Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair Program, and more. Or call toll-free 310.0000 in Alberta and request help with what you’re seeking. |
| **City of Calgary seniors’ services and resources** (calgary.ca/CSPS/CSPS/Pages/Seniors/Seniors-Programs-Services.aspx) |
| The City of Calgary offers a range of activities, services and resources for local seniors. Find housing and home-support services (there is a Housing Options navigation tool), recreation programs and the |

In Calgary, there are also a number of service organizations available: * Kerby Centre (kerbycentre.com) The Kerby Centre, a not-for-profit organization founded by UCalgary alumna Patricia Allen, MSW ’69, has been a flagship agency in Calgary since 1973, assisting more than 30,000 older adults annually in living as well as possible. You’ll find handy links to the City of Calgary’s 2019 Housing Directory for Seniors, as well as Calgary’s Seniors Directory of Services. And there is information on support services, volunteering, events, activities and recreation. Call 403.265.0661. * Calgary Seniors’ Resource Society (calgaryseniors.org) This charitable organization combines outreach with volunteering programming and community engagement. You’ll find information on its website that includes social workers and volunteer programs, as well as agency programs such as CaregiverConnect. There is an information field on the website where you can submit questions. Main phone: 403.266.6200. * Brenda Strafford Foundation (bwsf.ca) The core business of the Foundation is seniors care. Founded by Barrie Strafford, Hon. LL.D’01, the organization invests in research and education at UCalgary, including the Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging, to enhance the health and wellness of seniors. You can find information on its seniors-care manors, private choice care services and publicly funded care services on its website.
help seniors with low income meet essential spending. “Financial benefits are available to supports for seniors and Albertans for Seniors and Housing Minister Jo-anderson, acting spokesperson director, service delivery, for the Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network.

Andrew Hanon, acting spokesperson for Seniors and Housing Minister Josephine Poon’s office, says the province is working to improve access to supports for seniors and Albertans with low income, while eliminating red tape, duplication and non-essential spending.

“The great thing about the work-shop is that it’s peer-led by dedicat-ed people who have been caregivers themselves,” says Allison Fielding, who has been caregivers herself.

“Financial benefits are available to help seniors with low income meet their basic needs, make adaptations to their homes, afford personal and health supports, and more,” Hanon says. “The government has commit-ted to maintaining these benefits.” Moving forward, we’ll need to strike a balance between what the health-care system can provide and what the family can do to support its members.

“It’s not always easy to strike the most appropriate balance, and we will need to be flexible,” adds Hogan. “Most family members are happy to assist a family member to live a fruitful, productive life, as long as it doesn’t get excessive. You can’t expect people to function every day as heroes, sacrificing themselves and their aspirations.”

Meanwhile, Vivian Coles, caring for her mom while balancing her home and work duties, believes the time for everyone to start discussing the impacts of an aging society is now.

“Our situation with my mom has opened up discussions with friends and peers,” she says. “My husband and I have discussed what will happen with us. At the end of the day, as we all age, we have to ask ourselves: ‘who is going to care for whom?’”

KENDALL ...

my stupidities, picked me up when I was failing, guided me at the forks in my career, advised me in decisions, and supported me when issues arose,” he writes. “They are also the mothers of three won-derful children and four amazing stepchildren who are, collectively, far more important to me than any success that my career has brought.”

Who better to ask than Kendall for a few words about attaining a proper work-life balance?

“Getting this balance is not easy,” he admits. “Finding superiors, bosses, professors, leaders or colleagues who understand this issue and who can advise one in one’s choices is critical. My wives and others who helped me find this balance are why I have had the successes and fortunes that I have attained.”

MEIKLE ...

our consensus over the rules that govern. What is the long-term implication for all of us, for my kids and their kids?”

Having resided in Japan, Taiwan, the U.S. and Can-ada, we had to ask Meikle his favourite place to live.

“I’ve liked every place I’ve lived,” he says. “In Japanese, there is a saying, ‘suzume miyako,’ which translates a little bit like, ‘there is no place like home,’ with the added nuance, ‘wherever home might be.’”

AUGER ...

And what a voice, one that was heard as a Crown prosecutor (for seven years) and now at Legal Aid Alberta (where she’s worked for 12 years). Whatever side of the bench she’s been on, Auger has spent her career narrowing the cultural gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.

Former UCalgary professor and now Supreme Court of Canada Justice Sheila Martin remembers Auger as a “quiet leader who made superb contribu-tions to class . . . with an eye to putting her legal expertise and brilliant mind to work for the better-ment of Indigenous people and communities.”

The biggest thing that Auger gives her clients is the sense that someone is listening to them. That sense that someone is listening to them. That is what Auger brings to the table.

MOSER ...

... Stories continued from pages 26-31...
Who says learning stops after convocation? UCalgary alumni reconnect all over the world for various networking and educational opportunities. Learn about upcoming events at alumni.ucalgary.ca/events.
Here's what you need to know about me: I'm a connector. Once upon a time, I was the sort that faded into the landscape — you've probably barely noticed me forever. Now I've got a clear sense of purpose, and that's to serve as both an anchor and a link.

As of 2017, I started my effort to hold down the fort, but not with defensive cannons — quite the opposite. My drawbridge has been wide open ever since. Come on down! I'm big, bold and beautiful.

A lot of thought went into my production, which isn't complete; suffice to say, I'm very keen on “work-life balance.” To that end, it wouldn't be unfair to describe my components as “carefully curated” and certainly “homely.”

I'm a work in progress, quite honestly. Before my reconfiguration began in 2015, I'd been idling for an awfully long time. I wouldn't say I'm currently on the move, per se, but I'd call myself an up-and-comer.

I'm causing a bit of a stir, in a good way. The things people say about me might make a modest individual like yourself blush. Good-looking? Yep. Inviting? I should hope so! Well-built? Duh! Astute? Absolutely! Health conscious, thought-provoking, entertaining, nurturing, nourishing? Yes, yes, yes, yes and yes. One of the greatest virtues of my new incarnation — if I may be so bold — is the fact that I hold a broad appeal. It’s not my intention to reject anybody, but instead to welcome all kinds, cradle to grave, or at least cradle to Knowledge Network Partnership.

So what makes me perfect for this neck of the woods? I'm practical, first off. If you value your time, I'm here to help. I anticipate making the university proud, and that's no small boast. What else do I offer? Convenience. Connection. Trustworthiness. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's focus now on what's really important. As the proverbial narcissist once said: “But enough about me. What do you think of me?”

Where am I?
— Kate Zimmerman

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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

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