

Smith

SPRING 2024

At His Best

Sprinter Sam Effah talks about his career on the track and life beyond

A Seat at the Table

Smith experts: What it takes to serve on company boards

Succession, Anyone?

Professor Sarah Burrows on why some family businesses are built to last

DATA MINING

How Jody Conrad built Krux Analytics by helping miners around the world go high tech

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FSC



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HOMECOMING

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DEAN'S MESSAGE

The power of research

IN THE FALL 2023 ISSUE of this magazine, I wrote about the many ways we are embracing our strategic priority to “Be a positive force in our communities” — to increase Smith’s positive impact beyond the school, at the local, national and global levels. I hope you had a chance to read that issue and see the many ways our alumni are making a positive impact in their communities.

Another driving force of our strategic planning is the knowledge that business schools can contribute to solving the world’s biggest issues through research, partnerships and teaching.

Research plays a vital role in the fabric of higher education. By generating new knowledge and fresh perspectives, our research faculty investigate issues that help advance organizations and businesses while also tackling important societal challenges.

Two of the six strategic priorities outlined in Smith’s new Strategic Action Plan focus on research and thought leadership. They are:

▪ **Support a vibrant and productive research culture.** Leverage and grow Smith’s research culture and capabilities to create new knowledge that positively contributes to business practice and to society.

▪ **Change the world with our knowledge.** Be a thought leader by sharing evidence-based ideas and insights that propel business and society forward.

There are many great examples of how research at Smith positively impacts our communities. One in particular in which we are leading is in harnessing analytics and AI for social good.

Under the leadership of our Scotiabank Centre for Customer Analytics (SCCA), Smith faculty have launched the Healthcare Analytics Initiative, which looks at how to harness big data and AI to disrupt and transform health care in Canada. This is a collaborative,

interdisciplinary effort that brings together Smith faculty from digital technology, marketing, organizational behaviour and management analytics. The Queen’s faculties of Health Sciences, Engineering, Arts and Science and the School of Computing are also involved.

The Healthcare Analytics Initiative has two key objectives: to improve the design and delivery of community-based mental health care; and to improve equity and access to health care in rural and remote communities. We plan to expand the initiative to include a lab that will support graduate students studying health-care analytics, bridging our research into teaching at Smith.

In addition to all the great research work Smith faculty are doing, in May we celebrated 45 years since the launch of the PhD in Management program. The event, held on May 10 at Goodes Hall in Kingston, featured a research symposium with PhD alumni from across Canada and around the world presenting their research. Alumni from as far back as the Class of 1984, current students, staff and faculty joined the celebration. Read more about our PhD alumni thought leaders on page 34.

You can also learn more about the great research and thought leadership at Smith with our Smith Business Insight newsletter (smithqueens.com/insight), which offers monthly thought-provoking insights, perspectives and ideas delivered directly to your inbox.

Please visit SmithConnect.com to stay in touch with us and the alumni community.

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ONE MORE THING...

One of the best parts of my job is meeting our alumni in person and sharing updates from the school. In April, we held our West Coast Connection tour with alumni events in Calgary and Vancouver. Here I am with (from left) LIZA CHOI, EMBA’21, UJAL THAKOR, AMBA’13, UCHE ADIELE, MMA’21, and LANDON MODIEN, EMBA’12, at the Calgary event, held at the Trolley5 Brew Pub. Special thanks also to Deloitte in Vancouver for hosting!

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Nice threads!

Faculty jackets emblazoned with students' faculty, year and the university crest were first introduced at Queen's in the 1940s. Since 1994, the student-run retailer Oil Thigh Designs has kept the tradition of the Commerce leather jacket alive, designing new crests annually to commemorate that year's graduating class. This year, the Commerce Society business is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

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Best of the best

Big news! The Full-time MBA program snagged the top spot in Canada in the 2024 *Financial Times* Global MBA ranking. Smith climbed nine spots from last year, landing at 62nd globally, with only four Canadian programs making the cut.

“Our students and alumni have long known the value that a Smith MBA holds in today’s business landscape,” says **KERRI REGAN**, who began her term as director of the Full-time MBA program in December. “That our program has been recognized as the top-ranking MBA in the country speaks volumes about our team’s dedication to excellence over many years and is, of course, a reflection of our incredible graduates.”

Smith also clinched the No. 1 spot in Canada and 30th worldwide for career services. Ninety-six per cent of Smith MBA students landed jobs within three months of graduation, with a whopping 108 per cent salary bump. **KAREN JACKSON-COX**, executive director of Smith’s Career Advancement Centre, is thrilled: “Being on top for career services in Canada four years running shows how committed we are to helping our students succeed. From personalized coaching to strategic networking, we’re focused on empowering our students to achieve their career goals, and it shows.”

Smith also claimed the top spot in Canada for its alumni network and value for money. **MATT REESOR**, who helmed the program from 2016 to 2023, is proud to see the vision he and the team laid out in 2016 realized. “We can now definitively say what we have long known — that Smith has the best full-time MBA program in the country.”

Paralympic partner

Smith has expanded its partnership with Team Canada, becoming the official national business education partner of the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC). Through the partnership, CPC staff, leadership and sport members will have greater access to professional development and training opportunities offered by the business school.

“Smith’s support of the sport community has been immense over the past number of years, and we are so pleased to be officially entering a partnership with them,” says Karen O’Neill, CEO, Canadian Paralympic Committee. “Working directly with Smith will provide our staff and community with greater opportunities to grow and develop their skills, which will ultimately help to advance Paralympic sport and create more meaningful change for an improved sport system.”

The partnership will expand the school’s involvement in Paralympic sport. As a founding partner of Game Plan, Smith provides financial award opportunities to a suite of MBA and professional master’s programs, with 16 Paralympic athletes receiving awards to attend the school over the past seven years. Smith’s latest wave of Game Plan award recipients includes **VICTORIA NOLAN, EMBA’26**, who was part of the crew that won Canada’s first-ever Paralympic Games medal in the sport of Para rowing in 2016.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with the Canadian Paralympic Committee to help expand business education opportunities for the Paralympic community,” says Dean **WANDA COSTEN**. “At Smith, we strive to foster a supportive and resilient learning community that drives a culture of belonging and collaboration. This new partnership is one important way that Smith

is strengthening its dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Now airing

How will artificial intelligence transform the way we work in the next few years? What impact will it have on sectors like marketing, human resources and the legal profession? And what biases are buried in AI that we need to understand and fix?

These are a few questions facing business leaders in the AI age. And they’re questions tackled (with some answers) in the latest episodes of the Smith Business Insight podcast. *AI Reality Check* is a six-part series that’s now available and features school faculty and alumni experts.

As Professor **STEPHEN THOMAS** notes in Episode 1, *Welcome to the Age of AI*, artificial intelligence is already clicking away in countless products and services we use every day. AI isn’t coming. It’s already here! Yet the pace

On April 8, an estimated 6,000 students, faculty, staff and community members gathered across from Goodes Hall at Tindall Field to observe a rare natural phenomenon: a total solar eclipse. For the first time in almost 700 years, Kingston was in the path of totality — where the sun is completely blocked out by the moon. The region won’t experience this for another 375 years. We’re sure the Class of 2399 will enjoy the view.



of innovation is astounding. Exhibit A: Chat GPT and the rise of generative AI over the last year.

Each episode of *AI Reality Check* delves into various issues and industries: Episode 2 is on battling AI bias; Episodes 3, 4 and 5 focus on AI in HR, marketing and the law, respectively. Finally, Episode 6 explores how we'll work in the office with our robot colleagues. Throughout history, humans have created machines to help us work more efficiently. But, as Professor **ANTON OVCHINNIKOV** says in the episode, AI is something utterly new. "We really never had brain machinery — something that extends us intellectually. And that's what's different."

Tune in to *AI Reality Check* on the podcast tab at smithqueens.com/insight or wherever you listen to your favourite podcasts.

Leaving a legacy

The Agnes Benidickson Tricolour Award is one of Queen's University's highest honours. And two of this year's recipients are business students.

TARA REZVAN, BCom'23, MSc'24, and **MEENA WASEEM, Comm'24**, were recognized for their leadership, character, service and impact on the Queen's community. They join a list of 500 alumni winners spanning more than eight decades who have been inducted into the Tricolour Society, including past Smith recipients like long-time marketing professor **KEN WONG, BCom'75, MBA'76**, and *Dragons' Den* TV star **MICHELE ROMANOW, MBA'08, BSc(Eng)'07**.

Rezvan's decision to get involved at Queen's was inspired by those who came



Tricolour Award recipients **MEENA WASEEM**, (left) **Comm'24**, and **TARA REZVAN**, **BCom'23, MSc'24** (right)

before her. "I wanted to be a part of all the great initiatives that they had started . . . a lot of times these initiatives get passed down from older generations. Being a part of that legacy is really inspiring."

Along the way, Rezvan helped launch a new initiative at Smith. As ComSoc president, she wanted to expand students' job perspectives beyond the traditional corporate career. That search led her to Smith's research office and to form the Research Impact Hub. It introduces undergraduate students to business research and to research careers in both academia and industry.

"Looking back to first, second and third year, I didn't know academic research in business schools was a thing, let alone a pathway that you could pursue a career in," she says. Rezvan

is now completing her Master of Science in Management (a research-driven program) at Smith and will continue on to get her PhD at Smith.

For Waseem, lived experience motivated her to help close gaps at the university and improve the system for current and future students. Each time she encountered a personal challenge, she asked how she could help ease the burden for other students.

Waseem worked with a team of students to advocate for equitable developments in admissions, curriculum and financial aid in the Commerce program. She's particularly proud of her work to establish the university's first-ever Ramadan-in-Residence initiative. For the next 20 years, Ramadan will fall during either the fall or winter school semester,

which poses a challenge for Muslim students.

"Queen's really needed a system to support first-year students who are observing Ramadan while living in residence," Waseem explains. "That means a lot of logistics with the dining halls . . . and thinking about how students can maximize the value of their meal plan so that they're still getting nutritious food while also not having to compromise observing their faith."

Humbled to be recognized, Waseem says it is the community that will benefit most from future students who, in learning about the award recipients and their contributions, will go on to make their own impact at Queen's.

"I really hope people see that this type of initiative is valued here." ■

Personal ties

PhD student channels lived experience in her research

BY KRISTEN SEARS

EVERYONE REACTS TO TRAGEDY differently. The spectrum of feelings and responses is vast. Where one person might withdraw from the outside world, another might find a purpose.

For **ALYSSA GROCUTT, MSc'21, PhD'25**, it was the latter. When a workplace safety incident claimed the life of her father, a heavy-duty mechanic working in Alberta's oilsands, she felt the need to do something.

"My mom played a big role in that. I know she sat down early on and thought, how I deal with this will show Alyssa how to deal with things in her life," Grocutt recalls. "She was very supportive and tried to help me see the positive and grow from the experience."

Grocutt was just 11 years old when her dad died. She began delivering workplace safety talks in classrooms at her school the next year — on April 28, the National Day of Mourning to remember workers who have died, suffered injury or illness on the job. She delivered these talks every year from Grade 7 to Grade 12.

She carried her passion for workplace safety into her post-secondary studies, pursuing industrial/organizational psychology during her undergrad at the University of Calgary followed by her MSc and now PhD, both at Smith.

"Within research, especially within management, there's not much research on workplace safety, and the research that does exist is on prevention . . . which is important, of course, but it neglects the fact that things do happen. So how can we best support people that are affected by these tragedies?" she says.

To date, a major focus of her research has been looking at the consequences of workplace injuries and fatalities on secondary victims such as family members, co-workers and workplace leaders.



She was recognized for that work in the 2023 Canada's Safest Employers Awards, where she won the Minerva Award for Rising Star of the Year.

"I love the recognition, and it's great to win awards, but I just really hope to get a conversation going about the consequences of safety incidents," she says.

She volunteers with Threads of Life, an association for workplace tragedy and family support, and shares her personal story through guest talks. But now, Grocutt has shifted her research to something less emotionally taxing but no less personal. Alyssa loves tattoos. She has

many, including some she cannot cover on her hands. Her dissertation will explore how having tattoos as a leader impacts employee perception and behaviour. "It's early stages, but I'm excited," she says.

Post-doctorate, Grocutt wants to get more business research into the hands of the people working in organizations who can benefit from it. "What I really want to do is knowledge translation and dissemination," she says. "The research that's being done is so important, but we don't always do a good job as academics of getting it out there. I really want to help share research insights more broadly." ■

FACULTY

Doing the right thing

New Smith professor tackles the changing role of business in society

BY REBECCA HARRIS

BORN AND RAISED IN PERU, JUAN FRANCISCO CHAVEZ R. traces his career path back to his grandparents. Both sets were born in small towns and moved around in search of better opportunities. Eventually, they landed in the bustling capital city of Lima.

“I see my grandparents as adventurous and courageous . . . trying to build a better future for the next generations,” says Chavez. His parents were among the first in their family to earn university degrees. Chavez, meanwhile, has earned three degrees in three countries: a bachelor of science in social studies in Peru; a master of arts in development studies in the Netherlands, and a PhD in international management and organization in B.C. Last fall, he joined Smith as an assistant professor of strategy and organizations, moving from Victoria to Kingston with his wife and young son.

“If it wasn’t for my grandparents making those decisions,” he says looking back, “I wouldn’t have had the opportunities that I had. I’m here because of them, and that is always present in the work that I do.”

His father, a university professor in Peru, is another inspiration. “He’s a natural scientist. His work was always about how to support local farmers and local communities in their economic development projects,” says Chavez. As a youngster, “I was always travelling with him for fieldwork and looking at his research. So, his work has really influenced the path that I have taken.”

Earlier in his career, Chavez consulted for multinationals and governments on how they can “be active players in local development processes.” That became the focus of his master’s studies.

“We often talk about how the role of business is to create value, but sometimes in creating one form of value — like creating jobs or increasing revenue — we may start destroying other forms of value, like undermining ecological systems or damaging the culture of the local population,” Chavez explains. “So, being active players in development processes is about how businesses can create value that doesn’t destroy value for other stakeholders.”

These days, Chavez brings those ideas to life in the classroom. His colleague, **JEAN-BAPTISTE LITRICO**, associate professor and former director of the Centre for Social Impact at Smith, came up with the idea for a new course, *Business for Good — An Introduction to Impact-Driven Leadership*. Chavez helped develop the curriculum and teaches the course, which encourages students to understand the changing role of business in

society. It’s not all about maximizing profits, says Chavez, but also finding ways businesses can address social and environmental issues and make a positive impact.

“There is a business case for being a good corporation. A lot of work has shown there is a relationship between having good sustainability standards and [outcomes like] increasing your customer base, increasing customer loyalty, attracting and retaining talent and mitigating or reducing operational, financial and legal risks,” Chavez says. “But to me, one of the main reasons is not because the business case is going to make [an organization] more money, but because this is the right thing to do.”

That philosophy is reminiscent of advice his father gave him early in his studies. “He said, ‘Whatever you do, just try to do the right thing. Try to support people, try to have an impact and try to do the best you can,’” Chavez says. “And that’s what I carry with me.” ■



CLUBS

WEARING IT WELL

Oil Thigh Designs celebrates 30 years of apparel awesomeness

THERE'S SOMETHING KIND OF magical about the sense of camaraderie that a cozy school-branded hoodie hanging in your closet inspires. For 30 years, the students behind Oil Thigh Designs (OTD) have delivered that experience to fellow students and Queen's alumni.

Touted as Queen's Commerce Society's longest-running business, OTD has been around since 1994. It designs and supplies custom Queen's apparel for more than 180 student groups and the wider Queen's community, and, just like the university anthem it is named after, has thrived through the decades.

Each year, the OTD team sets out to create new designs for shirts, hoodies, hats and more. A few iconic items continue to be offered year after year.

"It creates that sense of community within Commerce and represents your time in university. Having that connection to Queen's; people take pride in



that," says **ARIANE GUYONNET, Comm'24**, one of the retailer's three outgoing managing directors.

One item that has remained an OTD staple is the Commerce leather jacket. Years ago, crest designs were painted on the sidewalk outside Dunning Hall. The designs were voted on, and the winning crest went on that year's jacket. Today, OTD takes the lead on crest design.

The retailer has a store on the first floor of the Rideau Building but also hosts pop-up shops around campus. All its proceeds go to charity. "I believe we've donated over \$500,000 throughout our history," says managing director **DAVIS WILKIE, Comm'24**. A few charities OTD has supported include Martha's Table, Kingston Interval House, SickKids and Big Brothers Big Sisters. "We've been invited to see how our profits are actually making an impact, and it's really eye-opening."

For its 40 team members, OTD is an opportunity to make a difference and leverage their skills working on a real business. Their talents span sales, marketing, design, logistics, finance and more.

"We leverage everyone's strengths and what they are interested in and ensure that's what they're working on throughout the school year. We genuinely like what we do and enjoy giving back to the community," says managing director **COOPER RAPOSO, Comm'24**. "We have fun." ■ — *Kim Pallozzi*

CLASSROOM

New perspectives

Commerce course introduces students to the world of research

DOES BACKGROUND MUSIC influence consumers to spend more? Does the presence of friends affect purchasing behaviour? Are people more willing to donate to charity with a cashier vs. at self-checkout? A new course offering in the Commerce program sees students explore these questions and more.

In *Discovering New Knowledge*:

Introduction to Research in Business (COMM404), students dive into the world of research and how it is applied in business. It was spearheaded by **LYNNETTE PURDA**, associate dean (graduate programs), and **LAURENCE ASHWORTH**, associate dean (research). "There's so much data that's available now in the business world that we're seeing research skills being much more highly in demand, even in industry," says Purda, who is a professor of finance and oversees the business school's MSc and PhD programs. "Research is not only being done in academia. Now, we're seeing that people are looking to have these skills and this kind of analytics done in practice."

COMM404 explores fundamentals such as qualitative methods and quantitative analysis, preparing literature reviews, formulating research questions,

collecting data and more. Introduced in the fall of 2023, the inaugural session was a success; it has even impacted some students' post-graduation trajectory. "The program was responsible for kick-starting my pursuit of graduate studies. It really accelerated my interest in the research field as a viable postgraduate employment opportunity," says **NOAH LEE, Comm'24**. Former student **MARIAM GUIRGUIS, Comm'24**, says she is also considering postgraduate study options as a result of the course. "Being in Commerce, we're not exposed to many research opportunities. I think this course is a great way to bring people into that world and show them that this is something they could do," she says. "Not knowing exactly what field you want to pursue and finally having that eureka moment, specifically in a course, is beautiful." ■ — *K. P.*

Insight

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Studying the family business

Entrepreneurship professor Sarah Burrows goes deep to uncover why family businesses thrive for years and years. Here, Burrows stands inside Cooke's Fine Foods and Coffee in Kingston, run by the same family for 100 years.

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PAYING THE CULTURAL TAX

Corporate diversity efforts rely too much on minority workers. Professor Eddy Ng has ideas to help change that

BY KRISTEN SEARS

THE MURDER OF George Floyd, a Black man, by a white police officer in Minnesota in May 2020 caused something of a racial awakening across corporate North America. Companies everywhere added equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) programs to address racial biases.

Businesses had good intentions. But four years later, many of their programs have inadvertently

hurt the very employees they intended to support. That's because minority workers are usually expected to do the heavy lifting on workplace EDI.

Eddy Ng, Smith Professor of Equity and Inclusion in Business, has experienced this phenomenon first-hand. Before joining Smith's faculty in 2021, Ng worked at a U.S. university. There, he was asked to help with EDI efforts. "Oftentimes, organizations don't really have an EDI specialist on staff, so they look around and they generally tap into those they think are suitable to take on roles like that," he explains.

As one of only four or five non-white faculty within his school, and an experienced EDI researcher, Ng felt he had to step up. The work was time-consuming and took him away from his research. The polarizing nature of the topic also meant that he dealt with backlash and microaggressions from some peers.

He knew the importance and value of what he was doing, but it took a personal and professional toll. "It culminated in me being depressed. I didn't want to go into work to face microaggressions and hostility," he recalls. "It's really hard to do work like that when you have active resistance, and when you're the only person willing to do it."

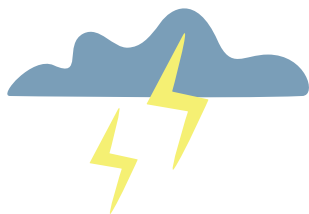
What Ng experienced is called "cultural taxation." For many readers, the term might be new. However, it was coined in 1994 by Stanford University professor Amado Padilla to describe the expectation for people of minority groups to serve as ethnic representatives and unofficial diversity consultants. Its prevalence has only increased as EDI efforts have become table stakes for companies.

ADDING THE TAX

In an ideal world, every company has a critical mass of diverse employees willing to support EDI efforts. Unfortunately, that's not the reality. So firms mostly rely on a small group of minority employees to do the work. "It's a form of 'conscripted' because they can't avoid this burden," Ng says.

These employees are expected to support organizational needs by providing racial, cultural and gender representation, and to share their knowledge and expertise, be it on boards or committees, at events or in mentorship capacities. It's invisible work that goes over and above their regular jobs. "This is a tax that minority employees are expected to pay to demonstrate good citizenship, and it's a form of labour that is not demanded or expected of white employees," Ng notes.

EDI topics are often poorly understood and undervalued within organizations. Consequently, the work in this area is time-consuming, mentally exhausting and takes minority employees' focus away from their personal and professional development. It can also be emotionally painful and draining, which can impact the employee's health and career mobility. "The cultural tax can be a silent killer of careers," Ng says.



TAX RELIEF

So how can companies make progress on EDI objectives, while easing cultural taxation? Ng suggests three steps to get started.

First, set limits on the amount of EDI service work expected of your minority employees. Let them do the jobs they were hired for. EDI service work is tough and emotionally exhausting. It's stressful and can lead to burnout. Relieving cultural taxation lets underrepresented employees dedicate their time and talent to the work they were hired to do, which can help their careers flourish.

Second, reward and even pay

"This is a tax that minority employees are expected to pay to demonstrate good citizenship"

diverse employees for their EDI work. Think about it: If EDI programs are valuable to a firm (and they are), shouldn't minority workers receive something for making them a success? Another option is to bring in external expertise instead of relying on employees to work for free. Many academic institutions offer online resources for business leaders, and EDI consultants can also help.

Third, get everyone involved in EDI at work. In other words, both underrepresented and represented employees should take part. Not only does fair representation mean minority workers aren't shouldering the burden of EDI alone, but dominant group members, such as white employees, also gain what's called "contextual experience," says Ng. They develop an understanding of both the intellectual and emotional cost of EDI work and their own privilege.

Of course, sometimes minority employees simply need to say "no" to taking part in one more corporate EDI initiative, "Until you say no, employers will always rely on and ask you," Ng says. And their colleagues need to step up too, he adds, because saying no isn't easy, and underrepresented employees may feel pressure to say yes.

Ng's advice? If you see someone being put on the spot to serve on a committee over and over, speak up. "EDI itself will not end. It's like climate change, it's like solving world hunger. I don't bemoan that, but I feel like we can share the workload." ■

ASK AN EXPERT

Do I need a career support team?

Imagine running a big firm alone. No managers to consult. No board to lean on. It's all you. No one would run a company like that. Now think about your career. It's like *your* company. You're the CEO. Why make career decisions alone? Why not get help?

That's where a personal advisory team, or PAT, comes in. A PAT is a group of trusted experts to go to for advice — from decisions on changing jobs to tackling major work issues. PAT members can offer different perspectives, identify opportunities, suggest solutions, pinpoint obstacles and speak candidly about your strengths and weaknesses. "They are essentially your career partners," says **KAREN JACKSON-COX**, executive director of Smith's Career Advancement Centre. She suggests your PAT should include these four roles:

A career coach: This person understands the business of career management, helping you to establish career goals and to take informed steps based on your strengths, skills, values and interests. It could be a paid coach or colleague at work with the right abilities.

A mentor: An ideal mentor is five to seven years older with more work experience yet "hasn't forgotten the career journey that you are on," Jackson-Cox says.

A business expert: This individual has walked the path you're pursuing and knows the skills required. They're working in the industry you want to transfer into or have the kind of job you want.

A friend: Look for someone who knows you well personally, who you trust implicitly and who is always honest with you.

"If you are looking to advance in your career, a personal advisory team offers a nice structure to guide your decisions," Jackson-Cox says.



It's a family affair

Professor Sarah Burrows digs into the dynamics of family businesses and why only some are built to last

BY DEBORAH AARTS, Artsci'04

WHEN YOU THINK of a family business, your mind likely goes to one of two places: You might think of your local corner store that's been there forever, with the family that's always around, quietly and consistently serving your community. Or you might think of the embattled Roy family of HBO's *Succession*, each member scheming over their perceived dynastic right to run a multibillion-dollar global conglomerate.

But family businesses comprise so much more than these extremes. They come in all sizes, thrive in virtually every industry and demonstrate all degrees of ambition. If there is a common thread, it's this: Every family business is deeply affected by how the family behind it functions.

This is where things get really interesting for Sarah Burrows, assistant professor of entrepreneurship. Her research draws on a background in psychology to better understand how what happens in the living room affects what happens in the boardroom. Here, she talks with *Smith Magazine* contributor Deborah Aarts.

Deborah Aarts: What interests you most about family businesses?

SARAH BURROWS: The underlying theme of my research ties what goes on in the family and the dynamics among family members to the next generation: how willing they are to be an entrepreneur, how they approach the family business, and how all that influences the strategic management of the firm. Essentially, I'm very interested in understanding how what goes on in the family influences the entrepreneurial and business side of things.



Your dissertation looked at the career paths younger generations of entrepreneurial families chose. What surprised you?

There has been a lot of research to prove that, if you are a kid that comes from an entrepreneurial family, you're significantly more likely to become an entrepreneur. One of my favourite studies is by Stockholm University professor Matthew Lindquist and colleagues from 2015. They had access to Swedish adoption data, including information about the careers of adopted kids, of their biological parents and of their adoptive parents. They found that one-third of intergenerational transmission of entrepreneurship was attributable to biology — in other words, nature. But two-thirds, twice as much, was attributable to upbringing and the work of adoptive parents — in other words, nurture.

I wanted to understand: What's going on in these families that makes their kids so likely to follow their parents' paths? So, my dissertation involved interviewing the parents and children of enterprising families to better understand how that's nurtured and why one kid might choose it when another rejects it.

It can vary a great deal. For example, often the first-born child would reject entrepreneurship because they were the ones who saw kind of the grittiest and most brutal phases of the entrepreneurship process — they might have seen Mom and Dad hustling, not having a life, and not being there, in service of building the business. Whereas their younger siblings who came later were more likely to reap the benefits and were therefore more willing to follow in their parents' footsteps. They had a very different experience, even in the same home.

When people learn what you do, how fast do they start talking about Succession?

Pretty quickly! Here's one thing I really like about *Succession*: People often have preconceived notions that family-owned businesses are small and medium-sized enterprises. But the term "family business" can also apply to publicly held, multinational corporations. So, family businesses really are everywhere.

Why do you think the succession plot lines of *Succession* struck such a chord?

Succession is one of, if not *the*, biggest challenge for all family businesses. If you're a company on the scale of a Rogers or a Walmart, with a board of directors and other stakeholders and components at play, it's more complicated. But with almost all family businesses, there's intent and desire to pass things on to the next generation, and how people handle that is incredibly important.

The number of family-owned businesses that successfully transfer from first to second generation is about 30 per cent. That means that 70 per

cent are not making it. And as for businesses that successfully transfer from the second to the third generation? Only 12 per cent get there.

Why is succession so tricky?

Because mixing family and business is messy. We have to remember that years, often decades, of family history are influencing the outcome as much as what's happening in the business. The success of the succession, if you'll pardon the wordplay, is very much influenced by the family dynamics.

Sometimes a succession plan fails because the subsequent generations don't have a desire to take it over. Sometimes it's because the predecessor doesn't want to let go of the reins because the business is in many ways like a child to them. In other cases the research suggests it's because of breakdowns in trust and issues with communication.

People think of succession as a single action that takes place when the baton is passed. But the most successful multi-generational family businesses I speak with see succession as a continuous process.

What does that look like?

The family starts having conversations about the transition well before the next gen takes over. They don't wait until the kid is 22 years old to try to get them interested. They bring the kid to the office at a young age, maybe give them an odd job, to get them involved with the employees and with other important stakeholders. That sort of socialization helps not only form tacit knowledge of the business but also creates a sense of attachment and a kind of emotional connection to the firm.

In addition, usually the incoming generation will go out and not only get a relevant education but also work elsewhere in the industry for three to five years. And when they come back, they have to kind of work their way up. Sometimes you'll see a non-family employee step in — someone who has been around in a senior leadership position with the family CEO or founder for a long time — to help guide the firm during the transition.

Why does it matter so much that family businesses get it right?

Because family businesses are so prevalent. Today, it's estimated that 87 per cent of the businesses in the world are family-owned. They are a part of our communities, they contribute to our GDP, and they are what keep the economy going in many ways.

So, despite the very messiness that can come from blending families and business, the majority of business owners worldwide are choosing to do so. It is incredibly rewarding to them, and it's incredibly important to our economy. That's why we need to understand how they function. ■

The wide world of influencers

The influencer industry is massive, growing fast and barely understood. Robert Kozinets, PhD'97, explores how it all comes together

BY KRISTY STRAUSS

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE tune in every day to their favourite influencers. Some take note as 75-year-old Barbara “Babs” Costello — the self-proclaimed “internet mom/grandma you didn’t know you needed” — offers handy housekeeping tips like how to properly clean a garbage disposal. Others watch as popular YouTuber MrBeast buries himself alive for a week.

But behind this engaging and entertaining content is a world that followers don’t see on their screens. The world of influencers is filled with a range of behaviours and actors that move far beyond sales pitches into the worlds of activism, education, politics, public health and much more. Yet, with all the sensationalism and monetization, this is a world that few of

us understand much about.

Robert Kozinets studies the ins and outs of this hidden world. He recently co-authored a textbook on the subject called *Influencers & Creators*. A professor at the University of Southern California, he teaches students about the fascinating cultural phenomena wrapped around this multibillion-dollar industry.

Message boards

Kozinets began studying online influencers long before the term existed. It was 1994, and the internet was new and exciting. At Smith, Kozinets did his marketing PhD dissertation on *Star Trek* fandom and discovered lots of online chatter

about the sci-fi franchise. The fans he studied called the internet “a 24/7 *Star Trek* convention,” he recalls.

Soon, Kozinets was looking into other online communities. He studied coffee culture and gamers. With the arrival of social networks like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, some of the early mommy bloggers, for example, became the earliest influencers, sharing their parenting experiences and their favourite products with followers.

From those early days, an influencer ecosystem evolved, which today includes a broad group of players. There are many kinds of influencers: people, yes, but also pets and virtual influencers (more on that later). Then there are intermediaries who



connect influencers with brand deals, talent agencies and influencer marketing platforms. “At the core of this commercial ecosystem is the relationship between influencers, their audiences and brands,” Kozinets says. Increasingly, people communicate and understand one another through the world of influencers and content creators, which makes it an important industry for researchers to study, he adds.



Becoming “influential”

It is perhaps easy to see why someone like singer Selena Gomez has become one of the world’s most popular influencers. After all, long before her influencer career took off, she already had a large fan base as a singer and Disney TV star.

But one needn’t already be famous to make it as an influencer, Kozinets says. Non-celebrity influencers, such as Swedish YouTuber PewDiePie or pet influencer Mr.Pokee, have amassed many followers because they have built close relationships with their audiences. The secret sauce for successful influencers is trust. “When audiences trust your opinion, they’ll listen to you,” Kozinets says. But the term “influencer” can be misleading. Influencers, he says, “are not puppet masters controlling their audience. They are like trusted friends.”

Influencers build relationships with followers through a steady flow of content. That can be anything from posting nature pictures, to dispensing dating advice, to explaining how to repair old watches. Kozinets believes most successful influencers have one thing in common: they are multi-dimensional figures. “For Martha Stewart, it’s cooking, but it’s also home tips and her somewhat quirky personality,” he says.

Marketing match

A Goldman Sachs report estimates that the influencer economy — individual creators with their own brands and online audiences — was worth US\$250 billion worldwide last year. It expects that value to nearly double to \$480 billion by 2027. Marketers will help drive that growth as they look for ways to connect with the growing audiences that influencers attract.

“It’s a very, very important part of the way we’re doing business now and doing business going forward,” Kozinets says. “Social media has become such a part of our lives.”

Governments are also capitalizing on influencers. For example, Finland turned to influencers to get the word out about vaccines and masks during the pandemic. Governments recognize the ability of influencers to speak directly and easily to their viewers. “Influencers can translate corporate messages or government messages, which are written in corporate speak or a formal language, into a human language that reaches a certain group of people in a meaningful way,” he explains.

As influencers are increasingly relied upon to spread a message or sell a product, there is one thing brands often get wrong: They think they know more about the audience than the influencer does. “Sometimes the brand will give them something heavily scripted where they basically tell the influencer what to say. That rarely works as well as finding the right influencer for your message and letting them customize it,” Kozinets explains. He says brands should view the influencer as hired talent rather than a mouthpiece for the company.

But as the influencer industry grows, ethical issues are emerging. Take children, for example. In Hollywood, there

“In the future, an influencer might license their likeness ... So you could have a conversation with a Kim Kardashian chatbot ...”



are strict laws about how many hours child actors can work per day. Child influencers, however, have no such protection.

“Some of these child influencers are making much more money than child actors in Hollywood, with no regulation at all. These kids are home-schooled and spend who-knows-how-many hours in front of a camera,” says Kozinets. “This is clearly child labour, in my view.”

There’s an even darker side to the child influencer industry. The *New York Times* recently published an investigation into moms who manage their influencer daughters. The article was headlined “A Marketplace of Girl Influencers Managed by Moms and Stalked by Men.”

In addition to exploitation, influencers can face gruelling work conditions. Posting regularly can mean working seven days a week, 10 to 14 hours per day. Indeed, few influencers make big bucks. Only around four per cent are considered professionals, meaning they earn more than US\$100,000 a year, according to the Goldman Sachs report, which also found that 70 per cent of influencers’ income, on average, comes from brand deals.

“Most influencers are like your Uber driver. They’re members of the gig economy. If their brand deals dry up, they have to adjust by moving into other types of content production,” Kozinets says. “Influencers can be vulnerable. So, when companies play hardball with them, it’s not very ethical.”

Artificial stars

So what’s next for the influencer industry? Kozinets is watching the rise of computer-generated, virtual influencers. Lil Miquela, for example, is described as “a 19-year-old robot living in Los Angeles” and has more than 2.5 million Instagram followers. Barbie and Minnie Mouse have also amassed millions of followers and helped Mattel and Disney, respectively, expand their audiences.

The industry is likely to see more virtual influencers with artificial intelligence-driven chatbots attached as well as “digital doubles” of human influencers. “In the future, an influencer might license their likeness for what we would now call an authorized deepfake,” Kozinets explains. “So you could have a conversation with a Kim Kardashian chatbot that looks just like Kim and responds to you and remembers your name, and she could be recommending products.”

Looking ahead, Kozinets hopes to see more focus on diversity, equity and inclusion within the influencer world. That includes more representation for people with disabilities and equal pay for Black influencers. He also hopes to see more regulation and structure. “I’d love to see more dialogue and discourse around regulations,” Kozinets says. “This industry is still like the Wild West, and it shouldn’t be.” ■



BY JORDAN WHITEHOUSE, Artsci'07

Data Driller

Jody Conrad's dashboard analytics help the mining industry dig more efficiently and lower costs during a metal mining boom

THERE'S A COMMON REFRAIN JODY CONRAD, EMBA'18, keeps hearing from some of her employees these days: "Stop building data dashboards."

Dashboards are digital tools that help companies (or anyone really; your online financial portfolio is just one example) track, analyze and display data so they can better understand the story behind the numbers.

"You're the founder and CEO of a booming software company," say her employees. "You have enough to worry about. Leave the dashboards to your developers."

But Conrad, who grew up in Saskatchewan, just cannot put the dashboards down.

"I won't," she says with a laugh on a recent call while driving between appointments in Calgary. "It's my favourite thing to do because they're all about solving problems, and I love helping clients find a problem and solve it."


Solving problems has always driven Conrad, whether during her 20-plus-year career in the drilling sector or juggling the demands of a young family with two kids. But now, finding solutions to problems goes much deeper — *literally*.

Since founding Krux Analytics in 2016 from her home in Calgary, Conrad has taken her company global. With offices in Calgary and Perth, Australia, Krux puts its data analytics platform to work with some of the world's biggest drilling and mining companies on six continents.

One big reason for that rapid growth: Krux was one of the first software companies in the world to offer a reliable alternative to the Excel spreadsheet methods used by most in the mining industry to capture and analyze data.

Krux's platform is specifically made for drilling. It collects info from mining sites, such as timesheets, daily shift reports and mine survey data, and then converts all that data into those dashboards Conrad is so fond of building, making sure it is in the same format no matter where the data comes from or who inputs it. Normalizing the data in this way makes it easier for companies to see exactly where their time and money are going and allows them to quickly adjust operations to improve efficiencies and lower costs.

Now Krux is encouraging clients to take the next step: real-time data acquisition. This means taking data directly from the drilling instrumentation as it is used. This can give a more advanced understanding of what is happening in the ground so that clients can make better decisions above ground about everything from optimal drilling parameters to carbon emissions. "It's really cool stuff," says Conrad. "And it's the whole reason why I started the business in the first place."

 Conrad came up with the idea for Krux Analytics a few years before the company opened. She was working at Saxon Energy Services, a drilling service provider, and told her boss, Michael McNulty, that she was ready to take the big leap into entrepreneurship. "I was a bit surprised," remembers McNulty, who now chairs Krux's board of directors. "But I probably shouldn't have been. I'd seen at Sax that she was a very driven young lady and wasn't prepared to just accept the status quo. And so that tenacity, that thinking outside the box she had, was ideal for her to actually jump in and create this new organization."

By then, Conrad already had lots of experience working in the drilling sector, most of it in the oil and gas industry.

After getting a diploma in mechanical engineering technology and later a bachelor's degree in technology, she worked with a few different companies. They included the oilfield services giant Schlumberger, rig equipment manufacturer Canrig Drilling Technology and then Saxon. She learned everything from designing and building drilling rigs to project management.

But it was when she started doing data analysis in some of these jobs, especially at Saxon, that a lightbulb went off, she says. "It was that optimizing of everything by finding the story in the data that I really enjoyed. And in some of the down patches in oil and gas, you had to cut costs or optimize your business. Cutting costs is one facet, but optimizing actually benefits you long term."

Initially, Conrad thought that Krux would target drilling operations in oil and gas, and, indeed, some of Krux's early clients were in that sector. But that all changed after she was accepted into Smith's Executive MBA program.

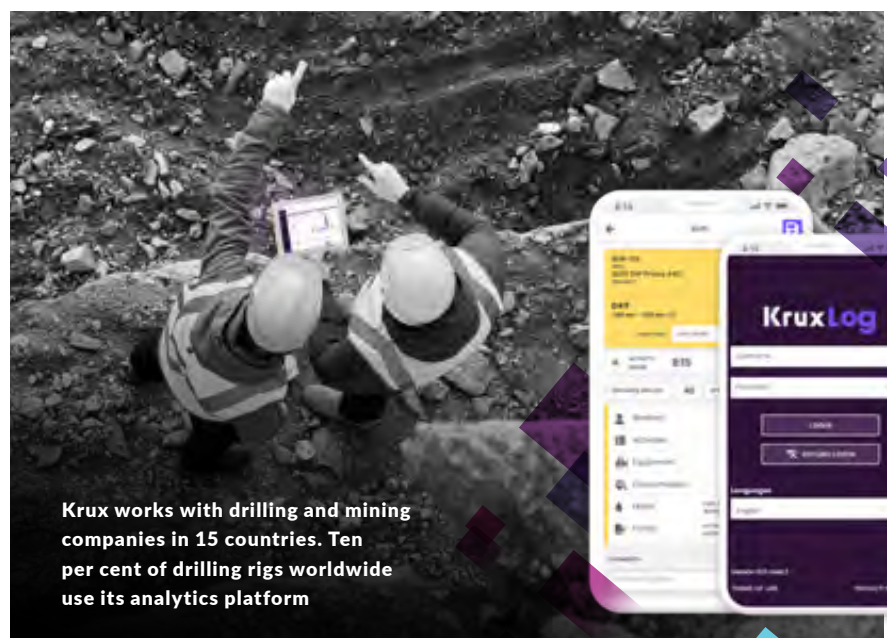
She went back to school for a few reasons, one of which was to equip herself with the tools that she thought would help Krux thrive. Her EMBA courses did indeed provide that help, but the most significant lessons came from her classmates, who she says taught her that a big part of being a good leader means being a good team player, surrounding yourself with the right people and listening to your team.

She was certainly listening to a classmate one night in Kingston. They were at a karaoke bar, where, in between sipping whisky and belting out classic rock covers, Conrad told him about Krux and her plans to target the oil and gas sector. He owned a drilling company in the mining industry and suggested she help his firm because it still used a paper system to track and analyze data.

Another lightbulb went off.

"I didn't even realize that there was this opportunity in mining until that conversation," says Conrad. "There was this whole other industry that wasn't as far along as oil and gas in terms of gathering and analyzing data."

By the time she graduated with her EMBA, Conrad had a new business plan for Krux to target the mining sector. The story since then at Krux has been one of growth.



Krux works with drilling and mining companies in 15 countries. Ten per cent of drilling rigs worldwide use its analytics platform



Krux started in business with only three people: Conrad and two consultants. Eight years later, there are 43 people at

Krux working with drilling and mining companies in over 15 countries. Some firms are among the world's largest in the sector, including Barrick Gold, Newmont and Rio Tinto. Krux's platform is now used on about 10 per cent of drilling rigs worldwide. By the end of 2025, Conrad believes that number will hit 20 per cent.

The biggest win for clients right now is in how Krux transforms their billing and invoicing processes, says Conrad. Invoice reconciliation is notoriously bad in mining, and there are many ways that companies do their calculations. That makes it tough to see where time and money are spent and therefore harder to identify spots to improve operational efficiencies. The Krux platform, however, standardizes all this info no matter who is entering the data.

Take Barrick Gold. In 2020, after Barrick implemented Krux on a drilling site, it reduced costs per metre drilled by about half. Some of these savings came after Barrick used the platform to see that one drilling rig was spending way more time on standby than others [see story, right]. "That really is the power of the data," says Conrad. "Until you see it — and see it in the same way across your operations — you can't action on it."

Although Krux was one of the first companies to offer a software platform like this, three different companies have released data analytics tools specifically for the mining sector over the last two years, says Conrad. This competitive heat is happening for a few reasons, but the big one is the current boom in metals mining in response to the clean energy transition. That switch requires huge amounts of metals like copper, nickel, cobalt and lithium for electric vehicles,

solar panels and grid infrastructure. Some estimate that copper demand alone could grow by over 600 per cent by 2050. The problem is that some mining companies are having a hard time keeping up with this demand, which is why a growing number are turning to software providers like Krux to help them get more minerals out of the ground more efficiently.

As for the future, Conrad expects artificial intelligence will be more integrated into software tools to make drilling operations even more efficient. Yet, she says, "these amazing AI technologies are great tools, but they don't work without good data. And as the saying goes, 'Garbage in, garbage out.' So making sure our customers are entering data into that normalized model, capturing that instrumentation data in real time and at depth, will allow us to take advantage of AI and provide even more value."

Although he may be biased, McNulty says he wouldn't bet against Krux continuing to provide that value. And Conrad is a major reason why. "What I've seen with Jody and what I find remarkable is how she's grown as a person and a leader. Very often with entrepreneurs, it's their way or the highway. But even though Jody is tenacious, she's not so set in her ways that she won't consider other ways to do things or get input from people from various backgrounds. And I know her people have a ton of respect for her. I think they'd follow her anywhere."

Conrad says she couldn't be prouder of what her team at Krux has accomplished. "This company is my third child — or fourth, if you count my husband," she laughs. "We have an amazing culture here, amazing people. And I really hope to inspire other women to do this as well. It's tough, but if you put your heart into it, you can do it. You can do anything."

That includes building as many data dashboards as you want. ■

How Krux helped miners blast inefficiency

In the winter of 2020, at a remote northern gold mine, drilling was slow. Krux helped Barrick Gold change that:



STEP 1 Implement

Barrick spent a week putting Krux's platform in place with all four of its on-site drilling contractors.



STEP 2 Report

Drilling contractors used Krux to report all hours of their shifts, what they were doing during those hours and what equipment they used.



STEP 3 Analyze

From Krux's platform, Barrick discovered one contractor had high standby times compared to others during blasting. Further investigation found this was because the contractor took 12 hours to move rig operations in/out of the blast zone.



STEP 4 Respond

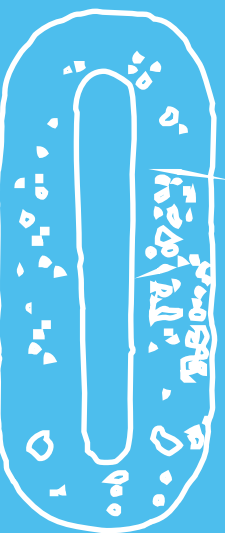
Barrick moved the contractor permanently outside of the blast zone and replaced it with other contractors that can quickly move in and out of the danger area.



STEP 5 Result

Combined with other efficiencies discovered with Krux, Barrick cut contractor standby time from 66% to 46% and downtime from 9.5% to 6.1% for a 50% reduction in costs per metre drilled.

THE SPEED OF SAM



**SAM EFFAH, MMIE'21, WAS AN EXPLOSIVE
SPRINTER WHO WOWED CROWDS AND BROKE
RECORDS. NOW HE'S HELPING TO GROW THE
NEXT GENERATION OF CANADIAN ATHLETES**

BY ROBERT GERLSBECK





SAM EFFAH, MMIE'21, knows what life in the fast lane is like. *Really.* The sprinter from Calgary was Canada's fastest man not once, but twice, winning the Canadian 100-metre championships in 2010 and 2011. In university, he broke the all-time U Sports record in the 60-metre sprint. In that race, in 2010, Effah ran what is essentially two-thirds of the length of an NFL football field in an astonishing 6.57 seconds. His record remains unbeaten.

Effah excelled in his sprint career. Twice he represented Canada at the Commonwealth Games and three times at the World Championships. He won seven gold medals in university competitions and four times was a U Sports Athlete of the Year.

Off the track, Effah is an accomplished keynote speaker and has volunteered in support of youth-focused initiatives such as Right to Play and Classroom Champions. In 2019, he and hurdler SARAH WELLS, MMIE'23, competed together on season 7 of *The Amazing Race Canada*. They finished second. And in 2022, he served as Team Canada's co-Chef de Mission at the Commonwealth Games.

Now, as a brand manager at RBC in Calgary, Effah is helping Canada's future elite athletes through RBC's Training Ground program. In conversation with *Smith Magazine* managing editor Robert Gerlsbeck, Effah talks about his career on the track, a near career-ending injury (one of several that kept him from the Olympics), life after sports, and that time he put it all on the line for a sponsorship deal with Nike. ›

HOW DID YOUR TRACK CAREER START?

I didn't do a lot of sports in high school. I played some football, and, in Grade 10, I joined the track team and went to provincials in Alberta. I did it for fun and to get a day off school. At provincials, a lot of kids around me were very competitive. They were decked out in the right gear and had been running for a long time. I was just a kid in baggy shorts who, as it turned out, was kind of fast.

When I got to the University of Calgary, I joined the track team and fell in love with the sport. When I found out that athletes could receive athletic scholarships if you were fast enough — I was sold. It started as a way to help pay off student loans and turned into a passion that almost got me to the Olympics. In that first year, I won a national medal in relay with my university team. In my second year, I made the world championships. And in my third year, I broke the Canadian university record in the 60-metre sprint — which still stands. So it was a very fast ascension, but once I got the opportunity, I just ran with it, no pun intended.

WHAT EXACTLY HOOKED YOU ON SPRINTING?

I grew up with three older brothers and a younger sister, and I always wanted to be faster than them. But later, what I loved most was having my own time on the track, getting into my own head. It was an opportunity to just be myself. I wanted to see how far I could push my body and see how fast I could go. And when it came to competition, there was something about being on the starting line — and it's just you. You've gotten everything you can out of the training. You can have a great start and run fast. And if you don't, you can't blame anyone but yourself. Knowing that my fate was in my own hands was something I absolutely thrived on.

WHAT LESSONS FROM YOUR FAMILY STAYED WITH YOU AS AN ATHLETE?

I had very supportive parents and family growing up. My mom and dad are from Ghana, and they came to Canada. I was born in Calgary and that's where I grew up. My parents instilled discipline in me and in my older brothers and younger sister. But I think the number one thing they gave us was this idea that you can never dream too big. So what that means is, they came from another country to give me a better life. They gave me this opportunity and said, Hey, the sky's the limit. Nobody can tell you that you can't do anything. You just have to go do it.

WHEN YOU LOOK BACK AT YOUR CAREER, WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST HIGHS?

There are lots of highlights but one that was extra-special for me was my second 100-metre national championship, in 2011. It was in my hometown of Calgary, and it happened to be on the very first track I ever ran on. I remember stepping on that track when I was in middle school for our sports day, you know, I was just a little kid. And I dreamt of being a superstar athlete. I never would have imagined the same track — Foothills Athletic Park — would one day host Canada's fastest athletes.

So, fast-forward to 2011, to have my friends, my family, my university behind me, as I crossed the line first. It was just one of these moments where it didn't have to be at the Olympics or the World Championships. To be able to accomplish that feat where it legitimately all started for me was the most powerful, amazing feeling.

AND WHAT WERE YOUR TOUGHEST MOMENTS?

There are two. One was during the pandemic, in late 2020, and trying and believing I would make the



Olympics. I didn't have access to training facilities, so I had to train in an underground parking garage for months. It was at the underground grad parking lot at the University of Toronto, so even though it was in the thick of winter, it was quite warm. Training in a parking garage, continually pushing yourself day after day, month after month, and not knowing if your Olympic dream was going to come true, was tough. That experience forced me to dig deeper than I ever had before.

The other tough point was in 2014 when I got injured. I had a labral tear in both my hips [the labrum is cartilage that lines the hip socket]. It was very painful. It's like having two broken hips. To sit hurts, to stand hurts, to cough hurts. I was told I may never run again at the same pace, which was devastating. Looking back though, it was a blessing in disguise because it forced me to think about what might come next. Since university, sprinting was all I knew. My whole focus was the podium — period. If I wasn't an athlete, then what?

YOU DID HAVE SURGERY AND COMPETED AT THE 2018 COMMONWEALTH GAMES. BUT HOW DID THAT INJURY CHANGE YOUR OUTLOOK?

It forced me to figure out what I could do after my career as an athlete ended. I had a business degree but no real work experience. I remember going to my computer and googling “jobs for athletes with no work experience”. Fortunately, I came across the RBC Olympians program and was able to start working part time. Part of the job was in the office and part of it was going out to do public speaking. I wasn’t a public speaker, but I decided to make myself one because when you need to make it work, you find a way. And today I do keynotes in front of hundreds of people. Eventually, thanks to Game Plan [of which Smith is a founding partner], I decided to get my master’s degree, which led me to the Master of Management Innovation & Entrepreneurship program at Smith. For me, this was a way that I could ensure that I’d be ready for whatever else life threw at me post-sport.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR JOB NOW AS A BRAND MANAGER AT RBC.

In 2022, I jumped into a full-time manager position on the brand marketing team at RBC, where I help find and fund Canada’s future Olympians via RBC Training Ground and support RBC’s broader sports marketing initiatives, including each Olympic Games campaign.

With RBC Training Ground, we’re committed to finding and funding the next generation of Olympians. This program tests athletes aged 14 to 25 on their speed, strength, power and endurance to see if they’ve got what it takes to make Team Canada. With the RBC Olympians program, in addition to financial support, RBC provides opportunities for personal brand exposure, professional skills development and, for select athletes, valuable career experience they can attain while training in a flexible work environment. I came through this program and, in full circle, I now help other athletes in the same way the program helped me.

EARLY IN YOUR TRACK CAREER, YOU GOT NIKE TO SPONSOR YOU. HOW DID YOU DO THAT ALL BY YOURSELF?

I studied marketing in my undergrad. As an amateur athlete, you don’t get a lot of funding, so I thought, who better to ask about sponsorship than my marketing professor. He told me that in looking for sponsors to make sure their brand was authentic to me, that it aligned with my values. And so I wrote down my values. Community was very important to me, and I loved some of the youth programming I’d see Nike do with athletes in my area.

I didn’t specifically ask Nike to sponsor me. Instead, I spoke with a Nike manager and said, “Hey, I’m going to be running at this meet. I just want you to watch.” That meet was in Florida at the North American, Central American and Caribbean Under-23 championships. I won the championship race and broke the meet record in 10.06 seconds. So I think I got their attention.

YOU WERE ON *THE AMAZING RACE* IN 2019 WITH ANOTHER SMITH GRADUATE, SARAH WELLS, AND ALMOST WON. WHAT SURPRISED YOU ABOUT THE SHOW?

One thing you learn on *The Amazing Race* is the importance of persistence. When you’re at a challenge for five or six hours on the show, it’s the person who is most persistent, who can take control of their

emotions that is going to succeed.

The show had teams drive to a bungee jump park where we had 60 seconds to memorize a Nanaimo bar recipe. Then Sarah and I had to jump off a 150-foot-high bridge down the Nanaimo River Gorge. If we correctly recited the ingredients afterwards, we received the next clue. If we didn’t, we’d have to go back up through the same process for as many times as it took. I’m terrified of heights; it’s my biggest fear. Luckily, we only had to do this twice, but it was one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do.

WHO’S YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCE?

My dad. He had a never-settle mentality, which was huge. I never saw him complain, and he just showed our family so much love.

YOU’VE GIVEN SPEECHES ABOUT FINDING YOUR PURPOSE. SO WHAT DO YOU SEE AS YOUR PURPOSE?

Well, I’m a father now. I have a nine-month-old son, so that’s my purpose. I want him to know that life isn’t just about getting on the podium, or money. It’s about the goals that are set, it’s about how you are impacting people and really stepping out of your comfort zone. Beyond that, I want to continue to speak, I want to continue to inspire people, I want to continue to connect, and I want to be in spaces that I never would’ve thought I would be in. If I’m making a difference, then I know I’ve done my job. ■



Sam Effah celebrating victory in the men’s 100-metre race at the Canadian Track and Field Championships in Calgary, in 2011

Getting ON BOARD

Joining a board can seriously boost your career. But how do you land a seat? And what should you know first? We asked Smith experts for advice

BY **DEBORAH AARTS**, Artsci'04







PATRICIA McLEOD'S (EMBA'11) board awakening came nearly 15 years ago at a moment that was, on paper, pretty awkward. She had a demanding day job as an associate general counsel and compliance officer. She was finishing her Executive MBA at Smith. She had young children to wrangle, a new house under construction and a raft of volunteer commitments. Her daily to-do list would make Taylor Swift seem like a slacker. Why on earth would she add a part-time gig — an unpaid one, at that — to the mix?

Yet when McLeod saw an ad soliciting applications for a volunteer board director at the non-profit Calgary Economic Development, her mind lit up. The board was hoping to fill the role with someone younger; she was in her early 40s. They were looking for someone with energy experience; she worked at a power company. They wanted legal expertise; she had a decade and a half of practice. More than that, the opportunity promised the challenge that her insatiably curious brain craved. "It was that chance I'd been looking for to apply the concepts that I was learning and experiences that I was having to a context different from law," she reflects. "So I thought, 'OK, I'll throw my hat in.'" She consulted her mentors, prepared a detailed application, practised (and nailed) the interviews and — much to her delight — was offered the role.

She quickly found board work more than made up for the sleep and TV sacrificed to fit it in her schedule. "For the first time, I was using my whole brain, which can be both detail-oriented and big-picture," McLeod says. "It made me realize I wanted to be at the table where people make and test deals, where they

strategize, where they push buttons."

The feeling was addictive. In fact, over the next few years, McLeod tapered her legal work and replaced it with board service — some volunteer roles, but also, increasingly, paid positions. In 2017, a year after earning her first corporate board chair appointment, she decided to focus full-time on board work. To date, she's served on more than two dozen; she just accepted her eighth chair position. "I just love it," she enthuses.

Board service has some clear benefits. It can round out your resumé, bolster your professional network, up your likelihood of promotion, and — if you land a spot on a corporate board — pay handsomely. Because the board oversees the overall direction of the organization, it offers opportunities to engage in wide-lens problem-solving that can be hard to find in the weeds of a day job; all while often contributing to causes and efforts you really care about.

Yet, the process of securing a meaningful board gig can seem vague and confusing. So we spoke to accomplished Smith alumni with a rich range of board experiences to demystify the process.

Many veteran directors recommend creating a "board resumé" that is specifically devoted to selling why you'd be a strong director

Tally your experiences

One quandary facing would-be directors is how to start. Not many boards — even small, volunteer ones — will appoint a director with no experience. That can place newbies in an awkward chicken-or-egg position.

But the experience many boards want can come from different places, says McLeod. While you're unlikely to land a high-profile corporate directorship without having done the job elsewhere, non-profits, industry associations and community groups are often open to considering your passion and potential — as long as you show proof of your ability to work well with others. "Look for any situation where you've sat at a table with groups of people with different perspectives to try and get consensus for a decision or execute on a project," McLeod advises. Think of that time you volunteered to plan an industry association conference or that cross-functional project team you helped lead at your work. These experiences demonstrate an ability to collaborate towards a common goal, McLeod says, and are a great way to show your skills, gain references and build confidence.

It's a good idea to not only take inventory of these experiences but also to learn how to communicate them. Many veteran directors recommend creating a "board resumé" specifically devoted to selling why you'd be a strong director. The better you get at communicating your suitability, the more successful you'll be.

Hone your skills

There are some things you don't need to know to be an effective director. For instance, you don't need to be an expert in the finer points of business law or governance processes (at least, not at first). Nor do you need to be well-versed in the industry or community the organization serves. "If you're in a position of being considered for a director role, the assumption is that you're going to lean in and come up that learning curve," says

HAZEL CLAXTON, BCom'83, a retired executive who now sits on five corporate and non-profit boards. It's important, she says, to recognize where your skills and experiences match up with what the organization needs most — that “you can connect the dots and bring relevant constructive insights from your experience in other sectors.”

What *do* you need? Ideally, your financial literacy is strong enough to understand the levers most relevant to the economics of an organization and assess the integrity of financial reporting. Curiosity and critical thinking are also crucial. You must be able to ask tough questions and respond with conviction when you don't get satisfactory answers. And you need excellent time-management skills: You'll be tasked with reviewing and interpreting high volumes of information about all manner of organizational imperatives. That can't be done by scanning a few emails before a meeting.

“You can't just be passive and expect to be spoon-fed,” explains Claxton. It is your duty, she says, to seek out information, to take real time to assess the issues at play and to consider how it all adds up.

Put your hand up

You might dream of a situation in which a board chair taps you on the shoulder and implores you to please accept a seat. Or one in which your application simply dazzles the recruitment committee. Those things do happen. But it's more likely that you'll need to hustle to make it known you're willing to serve. Especially if you haven't done much of it.

“You kind of have to be your own head-hunter,” says **JP GLADU, EMBA'12**, founder and principal of the strategic consultancy Mokwateh. Gladu currently sits on four boards, including that of the non-profit Institute of Corporate Directors, which educates and represents Canadian directors and boards. Having been through the board recruiting process many times, on both sides of the table, he's seen how fortune favours the bold.

Be prepared to do a lot of old-fashioned

WE LIVE TO SERVE

Our star panel of Smith alumni hold positions and serve on a variety of boards



HAZEL CLAXTON, BCOM'83

Retired human resources executive, formerly at PwC and Morneau Shepell

FIRST BOARD: Shaw Festival (director)

CURRENT BOARDS: Allied Properties REIT (trustee), Bank of Montreal (director), Telus (director), Unity Health Toronto (director), University Pension Plan Ontario (trustee)



JP GLADU, EMBA'12

Founder and principal, Mokwateh

FIRST BOARD: Lake Nipigon Forest Management Inc. (director)

CURRENT BOARDS: Broden Mining (director), Canada's Forest Trust (chair), Institute of Corporate Directors (director), Suncor (director)



PATRICIA MCLEOD, EMBA'11

General counsel and compliance officer turned full-time board chair and director

FIRST BOARD: Calgary Economic Development (director, then vice-chair)

CURRENT BOARDS: City of Calgary Green Line Board (director), FutEra Power Corp. (chair), MINDD Bra Company (director), Pieridae Energy Ltd. (chair), Quantum Algorithms Institute (incoming chair)



BETTINA PIERRE-GILLES, EMBA'14

Founder, president and CEO, Luxeum Renewables Group; president and CEO, Pierre-Gilles & Associates Professional Corporation

FIRST BOARD: Poplar Point Energy Ltd. (director and treasurer)

CURRENT BOARDS: Bow Valley College (governor), Piikani Investment Corporation (chair), Queen's University (trustee), Renewable Energy Transition Inc. (audit committee chair)

networking. Let past and present colleagues, mentors and industry connections know you're open to board opportunities. (A well-crafted LinkedIn post can do wonders.) Research the executive search firms who've worked with boards you'd like to join and reach out to recruiters to get on their radars (most keep "evergreen" lists of good candidates). And show up to relevant industry, organizational and charitable events. "It really is about relationships, relationships, relationships," Gladu explains. "You never know who in what circle has a connection, and who can make an introduction. Showing interest and showing face is very important."

Find the right fit

New directors are often so eager for experience they'll go all-in on the first opportunity. It's worth taking a beat to think about how you want to serve, says **BETTINA PIERRE-GILLES, EMBA'14**, an accomplished entrepreneur and finance executive with extensive experience on both corporate and non-profit boards. "You need to treat it like you would a regular career opportunity. You don't just take the first job that's offered to you because you're desperate," she says. "You need to make sure that there is a fit."

What makes a board role a fit depends on how your objectives mesh with what the organization needs, says Pierre-Gilles. Will the position allow you to apply your skills and knowledge? Will it teach you things you want to learn? Will it propel you to another board? Will it allow you to contribute to something you really care about? If you can't answer "yes" to at least one of these questions, you're probably better off holding out for something different. "You have to put in the effort to know what it is that you want, and what value you are willing to add," Pierre-Gilles advises. "Once you know that, focus your energy on boards who are looking for it."

Understand the risks

A final factor to consider: Board service is not just a serious commitment. If you're not careful, it can be a potential risk.

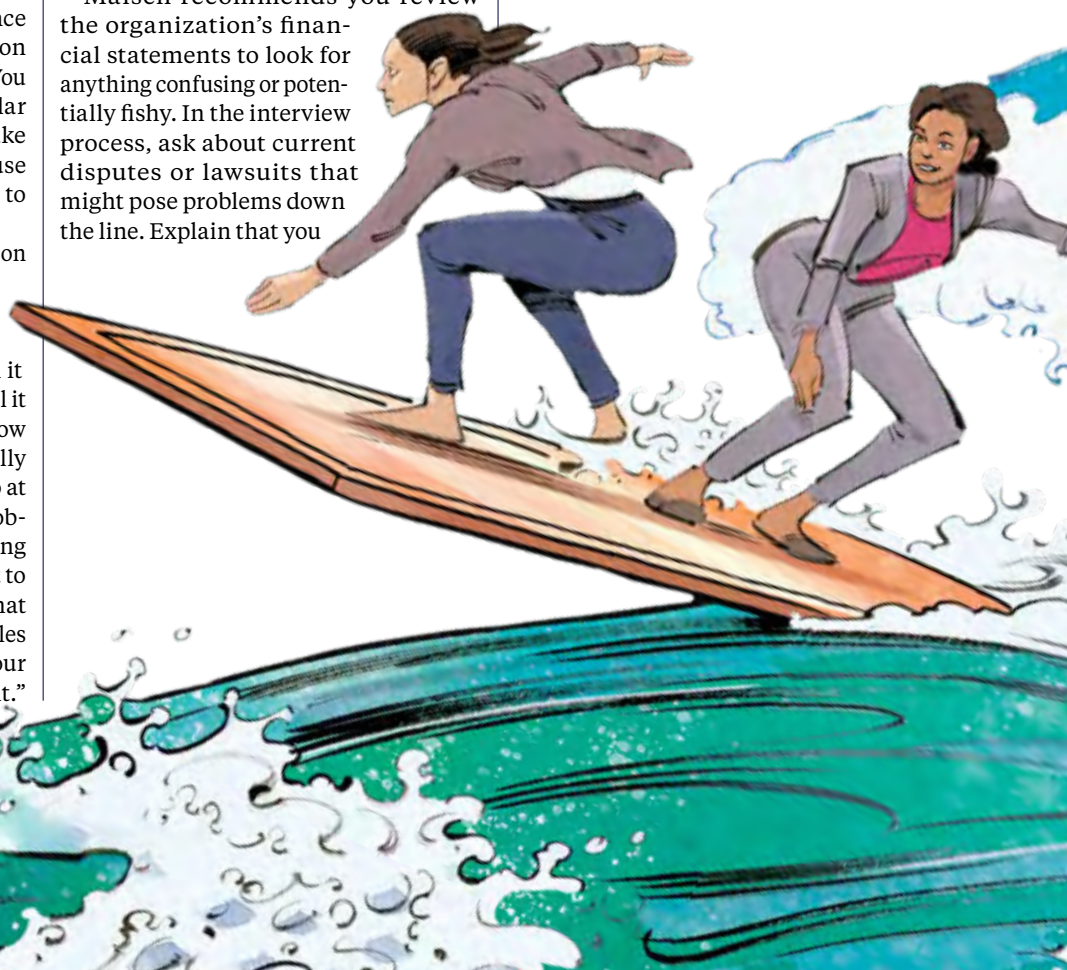
"When you're interviewing for a board position, remember: The organization is evaluating you, but you also need to evaluate it," explains **BERTRAND MALSCH**, the PWC/Tom O'Neill Professor of Accounting at Smith, who researches governance in professional service firms. "Because when you take the position, you become legally responsible for a lot of the things that can go wrong in the organization."

In Canada, corporate board directors hold both duty of care and fiduciary duty of loyalty. That means you're legally on the hook to put the interests of the company first and to keep on top of what's going on. (You really can't skip the reading — and there is a lot of reading.) It's less intense for non-profit directors, but even then, a bit of prudence will go a long way to minimize risk.

Malsch recommends you review the organization's financial statements to look for anything confusing or potentially fishy. In the interview process, ask about current disputes or lawsuits that might pose problems down the line. Explain that you

understand that this may be confidential information, but that you cannot responsibly proceed without doing your due diligence. (If you get pushback, consider it a red flag.) Also, take note of the dynamic between other board members. Is there excessive conflict or groupthink? Either can be problems. "People are so eager to become board members because it carries so much symbolic capital and recognition," Malsch says. "But that should never cause you to underestimate the risks. They are material. And your reputation depends on it."

Indeed, with great power comes great responsibility, as any Spider-Man fan will tell you. But when you get it right — when you contribute to a board that challenges an organization to be the best version of itself and challenges you to be the best version of yourself — it's worth every bit of effort expended to get there. "When you get that," reports Gladu, "it's wonderful." ■



Connect

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Better business through research

When you think of “research”, you might imagine medical breakthroughs or other scientific studies. But research is everywhere — in business too. Graduates from Smith’s PhD in Management program are breaking new ground in studies that cover leadership, the workplace, marketing, the digital world, accounting and more. Their work can improve business, and our world.

Next page



Research with impact

This year marks a milestone at Smith. It was 45 years ago that the school launched the PhD in Management program. Graduates have since gone on to teach at universities around the world. They also do important research that businesses (and society) can learn from. Here, we feature six of these alumni. As always, good research findings start with an inquisitive question.

How do stigmatized consumers reshape markets?

EILEEN FISCHER, PhD'88



One thing that today's consumer-driven economy excels at is providing an abundance of every product and service that people are willing to pay for. In other words, the market works. But what if it doesn't? What if some consumers have the money to buy, but they struggle to find the goods they want? It happens more than we may think.

Eileen Fischer, marketing professor and associate dean of research at Schulich School of Business in Toronto, has researched this problem. In one study, she and colleagues looked at the fashion industry and the dearth of fashionable apparel for plus-size consumers. They studied strategies that "fatshionistas" (as people in the market call themselves) use for inclusion in the fashion market, which has historically stigmatized plus-sized bodies.

"Papers like this help raise awareness about the discrimination that sometimes goes unquestioned in markets and can help increase the potential for greater market inclusivity," she says.

As a marketing professor, Fischer pays particular attention to market drivers that change consumer behaviour and affect entrepreneurship. But as with her research on the fashion market, she says, "I am interested in trying to help those who are less powerful gain greater agency, often through acting collectively."

Why do some firms go green, and is there a payoff?

YUE LI, PhD'95



Accountants can explain a lot about a company — how well it's doing financially and so forth. But by digging into the numbers, accountants can tell much more. For example: Do firms that invest in sustainability perform better? And based on that answer, what can governments do so more go green?

Yue Li is among researchers on the case. A professor of accounting at the University of Toronto and director of its Master of Management and Professional Accounting program, Li studies corporate environmental performance.

In one paper, Li and colleagues examined decades of data from firms in high-polluting industries: pulp and paper; chemical; oil and gas; and mining and metals. They found profits and cash flow do indeed rise with improved environmental performance.

But there's more: Companies that invest in sustainability (known as progressive firms) tend to first have better financial resources and management capabilities than companies that do not (regressive firms). In other words, going green isn't just a matter of will; sufficient resources count too. That offers lessons for policymakers, Li says. Governments should provide incentives to encourage regressive firms to do better and ensure progressive companies do not let their green progress falter, he explains.

How can we halt harassment at work?

SANDY HERSHCOVIS, MSc'02, PhD'06

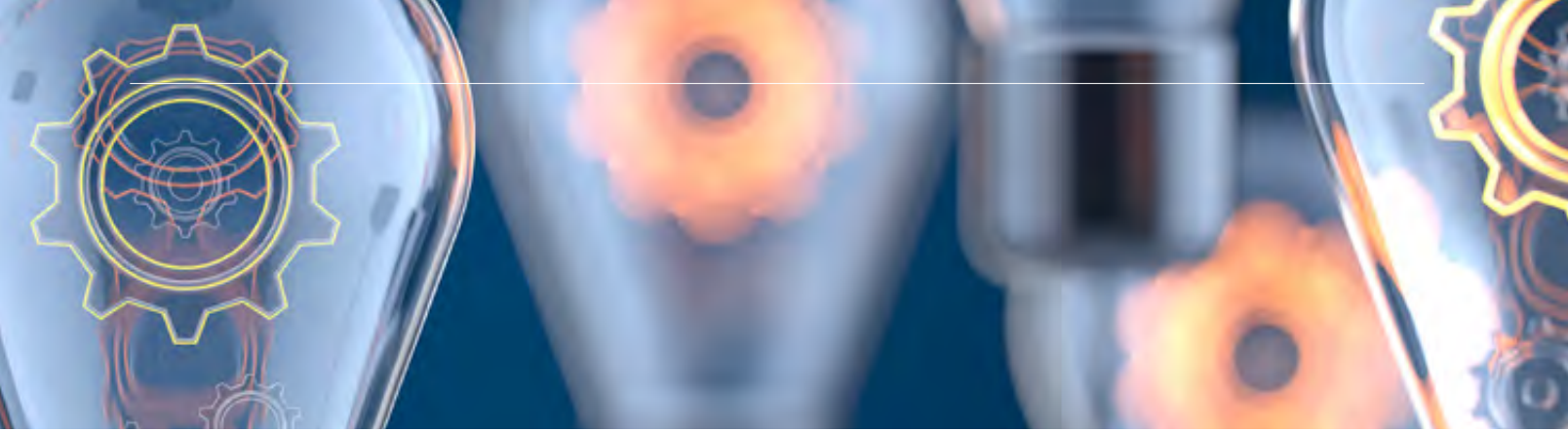


Workplaces can be wonderful. Or they can be toxic. Sandy Hershcovis digs into the latter. She studies aggressive behaviour like bullying, sexual harassment, abusive supervision and incivility. She's especially interested in "bystander intervention." What do colleagues do to stop mistreatment, if anything?

While doing her PhD, she found much literature on how to get employees to work harder. "It seemed obvious to me that organizations would not succeed in extracting more performance out of employees if they didn't first ensure and take care of their well-being," she says.

Today, Hershcovis is a professor and senior associate dean of research and faculty at Haskayne School of Business in Calgary. In one paper, she looked at the "climate of silence" around sexual harassment, where employees refrain from speaking about it, managers and co-workers dissuade bringing it up, and those who come forward are dismissed. One hallmark of such workplaces: a hyper-competitive culture with office power largely controlled by men.

"To dismantle this silence," she says, "organizations must foster cultures of collaboration over competition, and ensure diverse representation, particularly of women and other equity-deserving groups, at all organizational levels, especially in leadership roles."



Is there a better way for people and AI to collaborate?

YI-TE CHIU, PhD'14



Technology like artificial intelligence can make workplaces better and more efficient. It can also create apprehension, confusion and resistance when tech tools don't line up with how employees work. How can firms ensure people and tech align? That's where Yi-Te Chiu, associate professor at National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan comes in.

In one study, for example, Chiu looked at interactions between office employees and Microsoft Viva Insights, an enterprise intelligence personal assistant (IPA). One of Viva's features aimed to enhance employee productivity by scheduling uninterrupted "focus time". But the feature didn't line up with the collaborative nature of work today, where being accessible and responsive is crucial. As a result, many employees simply cancelled or ignored the IPA's suggestions.

"Misalignments between AI design and the way people function hinders collaboration," Chiu says. So what's the solution? Managers must better support employees in adapting to technology. That's one step. But too often technology isn't designed with people in mind.

Chiu's suggestion: Involve all stakeholders in AI development and integrate continuous feedback to align AI with organizational goals. This, he says, "addresses both the technical and human aspects for successful implementation."

What can we learn from people doing perilous work?

DERIN KENT, MSc'12, PhD'17



Office employees may find their days daunting. But there are other people whose jobs aren't just pressure-filled; they're dangerous. Derin Kent studies how "extreme context workers", as they're called, manage. To understand his subjects, he's spent time following along with storm chasers in Tornado Alley in America and with seafarers on container ships crossing the Atlantic.

Kent, an assistant professor at Warwick Business School in Coventry, England, got interested in extreme work during the 2003 SARS outbreak in Toronto. Later, while doing his PhD, he interviewed doctors and nurses who had contained the outbreak.

"While it was a difficult period for many, I was surprised to discover for others it had been a highly meaningful experience, something which had gone on to inspire their career interests years afterwards," he says.

One thing he's found: even risky jobs come with mundanity. Take firefighters. It's not all five-alarm blazes; water leaks, false alarms and other minor incidents take up their day. In one recent study, Kent found these workers are more satisfied when they learn to appreciate these less exhilarating, yet important, parts of the job. All jobs have tedious work, so "this is something perhaps we can all learn from," he says.

How can startups succeed in the digital age?

TING LI, PhD'22



Unicorn companies make it look easy, don't they? Anyone with a good idea and a bunch of ready-made digital tools can be the next Airbnb or Instacart. Not so fast. Ninety per cent of digital startups fail, says Ting Li, assistant professor at Ivey Business School in London, Ont. Through her research, she hopes to increase the odds of success.

Li studies how digital technologies fuel entrepreneurial innovation. For instance, she's examined how business incubators can better support new ventures via cultivation of digital capabilities. "I became interested in this field because of the great potential that comes when technology and creativity meet," she says.

Consider the path of OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT and Sora. "It shows the disruptive power of technology combined with brilliant minds," she says. Li aims to extract actionable insights from these types of entrepreneurial stories for others to learn from.

Li's findings aren't just for startups; firms of all types and sizes can benefit. Two lessons she cites: First, companies must balance using ready-made digital tools with developing customized, proprietary ones. Second, being up to date on digital knowledge is not enough for success. Digital tech moves fast so it must be applied quickly to maximize the benefits. ■

Milk man



A career in cosmetics took Tim Coolican, BCom'01, around the world. Now he's taking an upstart beauty brand global too

BY REBECCA HARRIS

TIM COOLICAN “STUMBLED INTO” the cosmetics industry, working on Unilever’s DermaSilk hair-care brand as an intern. After graduating, he held a number of roles at Unilever before joining L’Oréal Canada in 2004. Coolican had several international positions — spanning Paris, Singapore, London and New York — and was named president of L’Oréal Paris USA in 2017.

After three years at the helm of the cosmetics giant, Coolican joined startup Milk Makeup, a New York City-based cosmetics and skin-care company, as CEO. Here, he talks to *Smith Magazine* contributor Rebecca Harris about how he got started on his globe-trotting career path, how social media has changed the makeup biz, what’s hot in cosmetics and what’s next for Milk.

Rebecca Harris: What brought you to Smith, and how did you land on your chosen career path?

TIM COOLICAN: The short story about why I chose Smith is I’d been told it was the best school. I wanted to be in a place where I would have hopefully the most opportunities possible coming out of school. I didn’t have any specific job in mind, but I knew that I wanted to have an international career, and I knew I wanted it to be in the marketing or advertising space. My first job was an internship in the beauty division at Unilever as a third-year student at Smith . . . They gave me the opportunity



to come back full time but also to take six months [before I started] to go backpacking, which had always been a dream of mine.

What drew you to the cosmetics industry?

It happened because of opportunities I was given at Unilever, [where I had various roles] in the beauty and personal-care divisions. When I was in Montreal, I was recruited by L’Oréal. So it was a category that I had always been involved in. I was interested in the beauty category because it has a really involved group of customers. They care a lot about the products and care a lot about beauty in general. And so, it was always a fascinating, dynamic place to be with lots of innovation and an engaged community of people.

Why did you decide to work at a newer, smaller brand after working for an industry giant like L’Oréal?

I was fascinated by the opportunity to learn from a brand that was at a much earlier stage of development, where every action you take as a part of that team can be an important part to how successful the brand is long term. When you’re working on a big legacy brand, you’re writing pages in a book, and when you’re working on a smaller brand, you have the opportunity to write chapters.

I believe very deeply in what Milk Makeup stands for, and I wanted to be part of helping it grow. The reason the brand was created and exists today is to promote a positive vision of beauty that is about challenging historical beauty standards and promoting self-expression,



Tim Coolican at Milk Makeup's New York City headquarters.
"We want our products to be unlike anything else in the market"

community and diversity and inclusion. I wanted to be part of that. And I love the products — they're innovative, high-performance and clean. The people behind the brand were incredibly inspiring, and I thought I could learn a lot from them.

What is your marketing approach for Milk Makeup?

Everything that we do is about serving our community and helping them to "live their look," which is the brand's signature. There was an early mantra internally, which was "It's not how you wear your makeup that matters, it's what you do in it." And so, our approach is to try to help our community to live their look and to be of service through the products. We want our products to be unlike anything else in the market — fundamentally new and different, hardworking and clean,



vegan and cruelty-free. We don't really do traditional marketing. Everything we do is about connecting with our community and celebrating our community.

Is there a specific target demographic for Milk Makeup?

We don't have a stated targeted demographic. It's more about an ethos. The community that we want to connect with shares our values around the importance of self-expression and inclusion and diversity. It's also a community that loves to try new things, and they aren't afraid to experiment with new things and come up with their own ways of using them. We talk about our products as being tools for expression. We develop products with our community in mind, but we also welcome the community to use them the way that they feel is best.

How has social media changed the cosmetics industry?

It has completely changed the cosmetics industry. Before social media, [marketing] was a one-way communication: the brand developed a message and put it out through television, print, radio or outdoor [advertising]. But there was no opportunity for the community to ask questions, to provide feedback in a public forum and to share information, knowledge and tips and tricks.

Social media has become the most important way that brands connect with people and that people connect with brands. Because of social media, you can go as deep as you want in terms of exploring a brand and its products. It allows people to make a conscientious choice about which brands and products they want to use, and it allows them to be much more informed about the products, both in terms of how they're formulated and how to use them.

What are some of the big trends in the cosmetics sector today?

From a product standpoint, people are enjoying playing with colour again. During the pandemic, beauty was driven by self-care and so categories like skin care and hair care did very well. On some level, cosmetics has always been a more socially-driven category. When you're able to travel and go out with people, you tend to use more makeup. Coming out of the pandemic, we've seen excitement return to playing with colour and experimenting with self-expression. Cosmetics has had a strong return to growth, and the category is well above where it was going into the pandemic. You can see that people are excited about makeup because the category itself has returned to a very healthy [position].

Where do you see Milk in five years? What's the goal?

The way I look at it, the potential for Milk is limitless. The focus of the company has always been and will continue to be on its community: finding ways to connect, celebrate, amplify and serve that community — and increasingly now on a global scale. In 2019, the brand was only in four markets internationally, and today we're in over 20. Over the next five years, we'll continue to become more of a global brand. ■

LONDON CALLING

A curious mind has taken Julie Ioffe, MBA'20, from neuroscience to high finance and Europe's economic capital. Here, she explains how she got there

MY PARENTS INSTILLED a love of learning in me. My dad still, to this day, has a set of encyclopedias that I read growing up. If you wanted to keep me busy as a child, you just had to give me a book. From that, I grew to love puzzles and solving problems.

Though I was always very science and very math-oriented, I was also athletic and adventurous. I played volleyball in high school and university, and I've been a dancer most of my life. I got into running because somebody told me I couldn't run a marathon. So I ran three. And to feed my sense of wanderlust, I've travelled to over 50 countries so far.



Julie Ioffe, photographed
in Central London in March

Career-wise, at first, I wanted to be a doctor. I was interested in the human brain, so I got a dual degree from the University of Calgary in neuroscience and clinical psychology. I published research on how to prevent memory loss associated with aging. I was very proud of all my work in the field, but I didn't see myself making a career out of medicine.

My first job out of university was working at a TD branch in Calgary, my hometown, as a financial adviser. There, I discovered my interest in investing — the numbers, formulas and analytical nature of the work. I started my CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst designation) to progress my knowledge and began to learn more about macro investing and how it moves the world.

In 2015, when I was a macroeconomic analyst in New York City, I was given a project to study populism's potential effects on the financial markets. I think no one thought this topic was relevant at the time, which is why it went to someone junior like me. As I was doing my analysis, Brexit and then Trump threw some unexpected curveballs. Suddenly, my work was at the centre of attention at a major global bank.

I came into the MBA at Smith very academically focused. But the program helped me recognize the importance of cultivating relationships with people. I'm great friends with several of my classmates to this day. I value their thoughts massively and they impact my life quite a bit.

After my MBA, I wanted to live in Europe. London seemed a logical place for a finance career. Today, I'm a fixed income portfolio manager at TD. London is such a vibrant city and has vast opportunities to meet very interesting senior people in finance and politics. I can call someone at the Bank of England and say, "Hey, I'm right next door. Can I pop over to discuss the effects of monetary policy on inequality?"

I want to make a difference in the world, and because I have this love of economics, I think that's the way I can do it. I'm doing research on my own time now. My thesis is that monetary and fiscal policy should be for people. You'll read about inflation and GDP numbers, but it's missing the quality of life and satisfaction of an average citizen. We should also assess the inequality of opportunity and access to education or health care. This is the side of economics where I hope to make a positive impact. ■



Alumni Notes

1970s

WILLIAM COWLING, MBA'76, Artsci'74, retired after 35 years with the Ontario public service. Five of these years were spent in the cabinet office, primarily serving as manager of planning and development for information technology. After graduating from Queen's, where he says he was "best known for announcing and producing a wide range of CFRC programming," William spent 10 years in financial planning and later automated office systems at one of Canada's largest chemical companies before joining the public service.

TERRY COLLINS, BCom'77, was awarded the Fleming Medal for Excellence in Science Communication from the Royal Canadian Institute for Science. Terry says that receiving the Fleming Medal is the honour of a lifetime and humbling, given the list of past recipients

CONNOR EMENY, BCom'18, made history in February by becoming the first person to complete an Iron-Distance Triathlon on all seven continents. Yes, he swam 3.9 km, biked 180 km and ran 42.2 km in Antarctica. This is his second world record. He's already recognized by Guinness World Records as the youngest person to complete an Ironman Triathlon on six continents. Connor says his message to the world is, "dare to dream and make it happen." He is working on a documentary about his journey titled *Chasing Antarctica*. Follow behind the scenes on Instagram: @connor.emeny.

and because of the award's famous namesake. Sir Sandford Fleming, the institute's founder, was a renowned inventor and engineer and the father of worldwide standard time. He also served as the second chancellor of Queen's, from 1880 to 1915.

DAVID COURT, BCom'79, has been appointed chair of the Queen's Board of Trustees, the governing body responsible for the overall operations of the university. David is a senior partner emeritus with McKinsey & Company. He joined the Queen's board in 2020 and has since served as both vice-chair and chair of its finance, assets, and strategic infrastructure committee. He is also the former chair of Smith's Advisory Board. "Queen's holds a special, enduring place in my life, first as an alum and more recently in my current capacity as a trustee. I look forward to taking on this added leadership responsibility and am eager to support the university in its mission to deliver research excellence and an exceptional education to its students." David will begin his four-year term June 1.

1980s

MARK BENNETT, MBA'80, PHE'78, was chosen by the Canadian Senior Golf Association to represent Canada at the biannual Triangular Matches, which

were held last October at Brandon Dunes Golf Resort in Oregon. Mark said the Canadian team played well but fell behind its counterparts from the U.S. Senior Golf Association and Great Britain Senior Golf Association. He previously represented Canada at the 2018 and 2022 events.

DAVID ANDERSON, BCom'85, let us know that he has retired from Synnex Corporation as AVP of finance after a more than 25-year career. He and his wife plan to spend more time at their cottage in Muskoka, Ont., and intend to travel to some of their favourite spots in the world.

1990s

DONG LEE, BCom'96, became the CEO of the business automation, process engineering and software solutions organization Axiom Innovations in February.

2000s

SCOTT TREBILCOCK, MBA'01, BSc(Eng)'94, has been appointed EVP and chief development officer at Mandalay Resources, a Canadian-based natural resources company with mines in Australia and Sweden.

My new venture

With rax, Marley Alles, BCom'18, looks to redefine fashion consumption

My company:

Rax is a peer-to-peer wardrobe rental platform where you can lend out clothes from your closet and borrow from others.



Why I started it:

Rax emerged from a personal frustration that I knew many could relate to — buying expensive clothes, wearing them once, and then leaving them to gather dust in the closet. Recognizing the potential in these underutilized items, I envisioned a platform where individuals across Canada could monetize their closets.

What niche I'm filling:

With the fashion landscape increasingly embracing circular practices, rax fills a crucial void, providing a space where users can contribute to sustainability while simultaneously capitalizing on the opportunity to be their own entrepreneur or affordably access the latest trends.

Most exciting moment so far:

Securing \$65,000 in non-dilutive grant funding. This marks a pivotal moment for rax, providing the necessary resources to scale our operations and amplify our impact. It also symbolizes the endorsement of our vision and the collective belief in rax's capacity to bring positive change to the world of fashion.

My best advice for new entrepreneurs:

Embrace the fun side of the hustle. Shifting my mindset from "Ugh, I have to do this" to "I get to do this" has been a game-changer. It turns the entrepreneurial journey into a thrilling adventure rather than a daunting challenge.

Something that didn't work:

I experimented with launching rax using a no-code tool to test the idea and get customer feedback. The tool turned out to be slow and laggy. This experience taught me the importance of selecting the right tools for the job, even in the initial phases. The right technology can significantly impact the user experience and overall success of a platform.



JOANNE SALLAY, BCom'04, (left) and **MEGHAN ROACH, BCom'05,** made the list of Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women by WXN (the Women's Executive Network) last November. Roach, president and chief executive at Roots, was named one of Canada's most powerful CEOs. Sallay, president and CEO of Teachers on Call, was awarded in the entrepreneurship category. They were joined in the Top 100 by **VICTORIA GRANOVA, AMBA'19.** She is a manager at Amazon Web Services and was recognized in the STEM category.



MICHAEL HENNESSY, EMBA'03, has been appointed CEO of customer communications management and engagement technology provider Doxim. Michael has been with the firm since 2017.

GEORGE JEFFREY, EMBA'03, Ed'92, took over as the CEO of Canadian Orthodontic Partners (COP) in September 2023. "I have always focused on delivering smiles inside and outside of the organizations for which I've worked. The only difference is that now it's official. I'm joining a team that builds self-esteem, one beautiful smile at a time," he says.

2010s

AHMAD BAKHSHAI, BCom'10, writes that he was awarded the 2023 FP Canada Fellow distinction for his contributions to furthering FP Canada's mandate to lead the advancement of professional financial planning in Canada. Ahmad is the AVP of advanced wealth planning at Wellington-Altus and an adjunct professor at Smith.

BERNARD LEDUC, MBA'10, was named to the Order of Ontario, the province's highest civilian honour. Bernard, who retired from his role as president and CEO of

Ottawa's Hôpital Montfort in June 2023, launched the Institut du Savoir Montfort, which became a leader in training Franco-Ontarian health professionals and he created the Aline-Chrétien Health Hub, providing innovative outpatient care. Since 2015, Montfort has been listed as one of the top 40 research hospitals in Canada, and in 2019, it entered *Newsweek* magazine's list of the world's top 1,000 hospitals.

KATHERINE WONG TOO YEN, BCom'12, says that she's taken on a new role as director of marketing at Adro, a fintech company based in New York City that offers credit cards, chequing and savings accounts to U.S. newcomers.

WAHUB JAHANGIR, MIB'15, tells us that after graduating he moved to Pakistan and took on a business development role in his family's sports goods manufacturing firm, Tempo Sports. Wahub is also serving a term as SVP of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Pakistan. On a personal note, he adds: "In 2019, I got married, and now I am a father of two beautiful girls."

JENNA ARCHER, MBA'16, has launched Flower Girl Goods, a company specializing in handcrafted and hand-painted ceramic smokeware that, she says, "look equally beautiful in bloom (during use) or as décor in your home environment." Jenna also runs a contemporary ceramic brand (jennaarcher.com),



JOHN HUI, EMBAA'15, has received the Entrepreneur Award from the New Jersey Chinese-American Chamber of Commerce. John is the founder of several health-care businesses: Rendr, a large physician group dedicated to serving the underserved Asian community in New York City; and Twiage, a digital health firm and a past winner of Smith's UPstart Venture Challenge.

which was featured in the fall 2023 issue of *Smith Magazine*. "I am happy to share that my ceramics are used daily in homes around the world."

MATHIEU LABERGE, EMBAA'16, informs us that he has been appointed SVP of housing economics and insights at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Mathieu is in Chelsea, Que.

UMAIR KHAN, MMA'19, has been promoted to lead financial analyst for Canada and the Dominican Republic at WestRock, an American packaging company. He's in Mississauga, Ont.

2020s

CHRISTINE BROOKS-CAPPADOCIA, MMIE'21, became the assistant vice-president of continuing studies at York University in September 2023. Christine has been at York since 2014 and has held several positions at the School of Continuing Studies.

BROOKE FINLAY, MMIE'21, Artsci'10, shares that her company and team at Navio Immigration in Whistler, B.C., were honoured with the 2023 Whistler Excellence Award for Innovative Business of the Year.

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ALUMNI READER



A FRESH JOURNEY

An executive career at Procter & Gamble took **DENIS BEAUSÉJOUR, BCom'78**, around the world. But a near-death experience in Japan led to a series of awakenings that made him a sought-after spiritual mentor. *The*

Biggest Idea Ever is a business and spirituality memoir, wherein Beauséjour aims to help readers look at every aspect of their lives and chart a fresh journey. "If you are experiencing anxiety, fear or burnout, or just want more from life, this book is for you," he says.



FARMING FOR KIDS

Before becoming a program assistant in Smith's Full-time MBA office, **LEV ELEAZER CALANG, MMIE'21**, spent years working in early childhood education in Canada.

She's channelled that experience and passion for creative storytelling with *Ani, The Little Backyard Farmer*. In this story, young readers meet Ani from the Philippines, who introduces them to all the possibilities of backyard farming and the importance of food sustainability and making healthy choices.



THE AI CHALLENGE

As AI works into every nook and cranny of our lives, one question emerges: Will the AI future be ethical? **SAM KIRSHNER, PhD'15, MSc'09**, BSc(Eng)'08, helps tackle it in *Checkmate Humanity: The How and Why of Responsible*

AI. Sam, an associate professor of business analytics at the University of New South Wales in Australia, and his co-authors offer practical solutions for leaders about responsible AI. We want the robots to do their thing, yes, but it has to be the right thing too. This book offers a path.



1



2

Celebrations

Births, engagements, weddings and other reasons to celebrate. Let Smith Magazine know about your special occasion (and share your photos) at smithqueens.com/alumninotes.

1. **ALEX RADU, BCom'13**, married his partner Laurelea in September 2023 and writes, "We couldn't be more stoked!" They live in Bracebridge, Ont., where Alex started a coaching practice after seven years with BCG. **Ont.**, on June 24, 2023. The pair live in Halifax where they are both university professors.
2. **MICHAEL SCOTT, MFin'22**, and his wife Haley welcomed their third baby girl, Violet, on Sept. 25, 2023.
3. **NIKI KALERGIS, BCom'16, GDA'16**, and Nick Murray, BSc(Eng)'16, were engaged in August 2023. They live in San Francisco, where Niki is a manager at a professional services firm and Nick is a mechanical engineer at a space tech startup.
4. **STEPHANIE KELLEY, BCom'12, MMA'17, PhD'22**, married Kyle Tousignant in Ganoque, **Ont.**, on June 24, 2023. The pair live in Halifax where they are both university professors.
5. **KIMBERLEY SHUYA, AMBA'20**, and Warren Shuya welcomed a baby boy, Finn Eli, on Dec. 2, 2023 in Edmonton.
6. **ALEX DRAKE, BCom'11**, and **LAUREN DRAKE (DI PEDE), BCom'13**, welcomed Violet Rose Drake on Dec. 19, 2023. The couple lives in Toronto with their "beautiful baby girl."
7. **TARA RAJESH, MIB'19**, got engaged to Tonio Vos on Aug. 29, 2023 in St. Charles, Mo., where they first met nine years ago.
8. **TAYLOR OSTOICH, BCom'15**, married Jake Woloshyn on Sept. 16, 2023 at the Toronto Hunt Club.



3





If you're ever in...

Lausanne, Switzerland

A BCom'92 grad gives us a tour of the region of sport, wine and natural beauty

HELEN VASILEVSKI'S CAREER

has taken her to live in six countries and experience life in over 80. Born in Hamilton, the self-described city person has spent the past 18 years boomeranging back to Switzerland between work trips. As founder and managing director of advisory and fractional management firm flect., her work takes her across the globe, but she's put down roots in Lausanne. She moved to "The Capital of Sport" and the home of the International Olympic Committee in 2006, trading the hustle and bustle of city life in Toronto and New York City for hiking, paddle boarding and skiing.

If you're planning a trip, Vasilevski suggests activities that combine both natural beauty and tourist spots in Lausanne and the surrounding region. Why venture beyond the city? For perspective, Kingston to Toronto or Montreal is about the same distance as crossing Switzerland from Geneva to Zurich, so there's "lots to see and discover within 15 to 30 minutes of Lausanne," she says.

Tourist traps you can't miss:

The Olympic Museum. Walk uphill (everything is uphill in Lausanne!) from the lakeside to the front entrance. The interactive museum is great. Enjoy a meal at the restaurant (it has amazing views of the lake), or eat nearby at the terraces of Château d'Ouchy, Hôtel Angleterre or Beau Rivage Palace.

Hidden gem:

La Cité (Old Town) and the Cathedral de Lausanne. Most people focus on the lake, the Alps and the vineyards. La Cité is amazing with a twist and turn at every point. The cathedral was built in the 12th century. Between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., the cathedral's night watchman stands at the top of the bell tower and shouts out each hour to the residents: "Plus ça change..."

For a short jaunt:

Use public transit including the CGN boat cruise from Lausanne and be sure to stop at Evian (La Source), Château de Chillon (the impetus for Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon"), Montreux (Freddie Mercury statue), or Vevey (Charlie Chaplin Museum). Slightly further by car, tour the Cailler Chocolate Factory and visit Gruyères (home to fondue and the HR Giger Museum).

Best place for families:

Walk along La Petite Corniche in the UNESCO-listed Lavaux vineyard terraces for the view. Most owners don't mind if you walk through the vineyards. Stop at Le Deck or at one of the many maisons for a glass of wine ("Prenez un verre"). Swim in Lake Geneva (Lac Léman; jump in from anywhere, really) or rent SUP boards. Wander the farmers' markets for seasonal delectable produce. In winter, ski or snowshoe ("raquette"). In any season, go hiking. The views of the Alps are phenomenal and "cottage country" life abounds.

My fav restaurants:

For Canadians, try rotisserie chicken at an original "Swiss Chalet", the Auberge de Dully in Dully. Or enjoy the locally-sourced filets de perche at Café de la Poste or Fondue Bacchus at Le Léman, both in Lutry.

My tip for visitors:

Check events calendars in Switzerland for your travel dates. There are globally renowned festivals and annual events. To not miss my faves, I plan my travels 12 months in advance. My top travel tip: Don't forget to pack good walking shoes!

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“At Navio Immigration, we have redefined the immigration industry through our innovative ‘Done-with-You’ service,” Brooke writes. With the company’s Navio-Platform, she says, clients can prepare their immigration applications while still benefiting from the expertise of Navio’s immigration consultants.

RACHEL HUCKLE, MFin’21, was named CEO of Staples Canada in March. Rachel started with the office products firm in 2019 as chief retail officer. Before landing the chief executive job, she was president and chief operating officer.

ELLEN WATKINS, EMBA’21, became CEO of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association in February. Ellen has been with the branch since 2021. In her role as director of corporate services, she was involved in several engagement initiatives, including a strategic plan art project that she worked on as a participant in the Queen’s Advanced Leadership for Social Impact Fellowship program.

CHELSEA KITTLESON, AMBA’23, tells us she has taken on the role of executive director of British Columbia’s Municipal

Pension Plan, the sixth largest pension plan in Canada. She and her family live in Victoria, where she says she and her husband can often be found at the hockey rink cheering on their two teenage boys. She hopes they both follow in her footsteps and attend Queen’s.

MOHAMMAD OSMAN QADEER, MMA’23, shares that he has secured a permanent position as a business analyst at Metrolinx. Before joining the Toronto-based agency, Mohammad spent over a decade in the financial services industry in the Middle East. “I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities and support that have led me to this point,” he says, specifically citing the solid foundation and lessons gained during his time at Smith and the support of the Smith alumni network. “Your mentorship and camaraderie have been invaluable.” Outside of work, Mohammad enjoys hiking and swimming. With the warmer weather now, he’s also eager to explore golf.



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Smith Remembers

PETER GILMAN, BCom’57, died on Jan. 14 in Ottawa. He was 88 years old. Peter enjoyed a long career as an executive at Ketchum Manufacturing. He was also active in the Rotary Club of West Ottawa, where he was named a Paul Harris Fellow for his philanthropic work. He is survived by his wife, three children, including Stephanie Gilman, Artsci’89, Ed’90, and three grandchildren.

ADRIAN DONOGHUE, BCom’74, died on Nov. 9, 2023. He was 74 years old. Adrian is survived by his wife of 46 years, Raymonde, two children and three grandchildren.

MARY KATHLEEN McGURRAN, BCom’74, died on Oct. 26, 2023 in Calgary, one year after a cancer diagnosis. She was 71 years old.

STEPHEN MARTIN, BCom’78, died on Oct. 11, 2023 in Victoria. He was 68 years old. Stephen spent his career as a chartered accountant, working at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Toronto before moving to Victoria. There, he was a CFO for several businesses and applied his skills in volunteer positions. He is survived by his wife, three sons and eight grandchildren.

JOCELYN DAVIE, BCom’82, died on Jan. 29 in Richmond Hill, Ont. She was 64 years old. After graduating from the Commerce program, Jocelyn moved to Toronto to pursue a career in financial services. She put her career on hold to devote herself to raising her children and later restarted her career, working at York Region District School Board until her retirement. She is survived by her husband, three children, including Tyler Davie, BSc(Eng)’09, and one grandchild.

JOANNE SUMMERS, BCom’90, died in Newbury, Ont., on Nov. 22, 2023. She was 59 years old. After graduating from the Commerce program, Jo continued learning; travelling, reading and pursuing many hobbies. She is survived by her sister, Linda Broughton, BSc(Eng)’85.

RONALD ROBINSON, EMBA’97, died on Oct. 10, 2023 in British Columbia following a brief battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 71 years old. Ron spent his career in engineering, working on some of the largest projects in Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon with Fedderson Engineering Ltd. and Bridgeworks Inc. The latter part of his career was spent providing consulting and dispute mitigation services. Ron loved music, sports, the outdoors and spending time in Hawaii. He is survived by his wife, daughter and stepdaughter.

MYSTERY QUEEN

Melodie Campbell, BCom'78

MELODIE CAMPBELL WROTE her first novel on a dare. Since then the Burlington, Ont.-based author has written 17 of them. Many are in the mystery genre, including *The Goddaughter* comedic crime-caper series and her latest novel, *The Merry Widow Murders*. She's also scored bestsellers in fantasy with the *Rowena* series.



What's your hometown?

Toronto mainly, West Vancouver for high school.

When you were growing up, what did you want to be?

A mystery writer! First I wanted to be Carolyn Keene [author of Nancy Drew books]. Then Agatha Christie. Instead, I became a director of marketing, which some people might say is criminal.

What was your first job?

Bell Canada, in the toll plant, where the long-distance switching machines were located. Talk about being thrown headfirst into the world of men! Yes, I was probably a token experiment, but it went pretty well for both of us.

Why did you start writing novels?

I was at the bar of the Toronto Press Club, and a well-known male *Toronto Star* columnist said to me, "You're a humour columnist, you've won a slew of short story awards. Why don't you write a novel?" I answered, "Because they might make me write a second one!" So he dared me. I have avoided scotch ever since.

What's the hardest part about writing a book?

The length of time it takes. I can write a crime short story in a week. I love writing short stories — I've had over 60 published. A novel takes me 1,000 hours to write with edits, so about a year. That's an incredible amount of time, memory, dedication and coffee.

Any advice for aspiring novelists?

Write the book you wish someone else would write, so you can read it.

What's your biggest-ever career mistake?

In 1993, I had a wacky play performed in Toronto. A television producer was in the audience. He came up to me after and said, "You are completely nuts. I'd like you to come to Los Angeles and write pilots for me." We kicked around a deal that I ended up declining because it would have meant moving my husband and two preschoolers to the States. Besides, who had ever heard of HBO in 1993?

What's your career highlight so far?

A crowd of students cornered me to say I was their "rock star" for writing *The Goddaughter* series. That beats out all 10 crime fiction awards I've received.

Name someone you admire.

Agatha Christie. She was the best, and she wrote in a time when women had an even harder time getting published. A close second is Dorothy Parker, for her wit and sheer bloody guts.

Your favourite all-time book?

The entire Inspector Montalbano series by Andrea Camilleri.

What trait do you most admire in others?

Compassion, hands down.

What do you do when you're not working?

All writers dream of the day they can give up their day job and make writing

their work. Trouble is, when you do that, you lose your hobby! But if you're talking about interests, I've always been mad about cars. My first car was a Triumph Spitfire; my second, a Lotus Europa. I've had two Corvettes. And I have my motorcycle licence.

What's the best advice you ever got?

If you want to be admired, get a dog.

What is your most treasured possession?

Probably my Arthur Ellis Award statue for excellence in crime writing from the Crime Writers of Canada, followed by the Derringer Award medal from the Short Mystery Fiction Society in the U.S.

What's your best Queen's memory?

Science Formal '76 with my late husband David Campbell, BSc(Eng)'76. We were together for 40 years. Many kind classmates sent condolences after Dave died, but **MICHAEL O'CONNELL, BCom'78**, helped me find my way back from grief. We were married two years ago. I will always be grateful that Queen's brought us together.

What's on your playlist right now?

Rachmaninoff, Elgar, Ella Fitzgerald, PDQ Bach, Great Big Sea.

What's your idea of perfect happiness?

A dinner party for eight, with clever, witty friends. I love great conversation. ■



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