Our pioneering scholars link the past and present to a better future.
All-American sprinter Just'N Thymes attacks his studies as if each exam is a track meet.

“I know that if I study hard, just like if I train hard, I will get the results I want,” he said. “It’s simple.”

Thymes, who transferred to USC Dornsife in September from Riverside City College, commented that USC had always been his “dream school” both for athletics and academics. He majors in sociology because he enjoys analyzing society’s evolution.

“I’m taking an elective anthropology course called ‘Cross-Cultural Research on Urban Gangs,’” Thymes said. “It’s interesting to learn the mindsets of gang members and explore why they do what they do.”

Thymes’ unique name stands out on the Trojans’ roster almost as much as his impressive results.

“I was born just before the Northridge earthquake hit in 1994,” Thymes said. “So my mom chose to spell my name ‘Just’N.’ It is actually written on my birth certificate.”
I imagine frontiers as the demarcations between what we know and what we don’t know — the line between the familiar and the thrilling space where discovery resides. How we transition between the known and unknown is one of the joys of being a scholar.

But not all frontiers have sharp edges.

It was on Dec. 23, 1971, that President Richard Nixon signed the National Cancer Act, initiating what we know as the “War on Cancer.” In the more than 40 years since, researchers have been in the trenches struggling to conquer one of humanity’s most dire challenges. Now, in 2015, we are finally beginning to step over into a new realm of breakthroughs led by such trailblazers as USC Dornsife’s Peter Kuhn.

Peter is revolutionizing methods for the detection and treatment of cancer by identifying malignant cells that have invaded the bloodstream before they can metastasize. His work is bringing us ever closer to a model of precision medicine that allows for tailored care of the individual patient and, it is hoped, improved survival rates.

At USC Dornsife, we are facing new frontiers in every field — from digital humanities to quantitative social sciences to convergent bioscience, and many others. Of course trying something new can be risky, but taking calculated risks is what effects meaningful change.

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On a recent trip to Washington, D.C., Peter was in a restaurant, and at the end of his meal his server approached him and simply said, “I recognize you from your picture. Thank you for saving my mother’s life,” and walked away.

We are invigorated by these moments. Sometimes we feel lost in that space between familiarity and breakthrough and become tempted to turn back. A gentle reassurance is often all it takes to rekindle our belief that we are indeed moving ever closer to innovation.

Steve Kay
Dean of USC Dornsife
Anna H. Bing Dean’s Chair
Layer by Layer

Inspired by da Vinci and the spirit of the Renaissance, The Bridge@USC scientists work to create the first atomic-resolution model of the human body — from the molecules up. By Emily Cavalcanti and Lynell George

Wild for Movies

USC Dornsife researchers explain what it will take for the U.S. film industry to break into China’s notoriously complicated movie market. By Michelle Salzman Boston

Wonder of the West

The Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West documents the region’s history, from its pioneering roots to its transformative growth into a dynamic, global economic power. By Susan Bell

At the Edge of the Known World

An excerpt from alumna Laila Lalami’s new book, The Moor’s Account, offers a fresh perspective on the ill-fated 16th-century de Narváez expedition through the eyes of the first black explorer in America.

The Great Explorers

These alumni are bona fide pioneers, either venturing into gender-imbalanced professional territories — and excelling — or forgoing a secure gig to find a true calling. By Laura Paisley
**Life Line**

**NEWS AND EVENTS**

**12.10.14**

USC Dornsife’s **HOLIDAY RECEPTION AND AWARDS CEREMONY** honors outstanding staff achievements, recipients of the Raubenheimer Outstanding Faculty Awards and more.

In tribute to late USC Dornsife alumnus **LOUIS ZAMPERINI ’40**, USC mascot Traveler walks as a riderless horse, the traditional symbol of a fallen soldier, during the **TOURNAMENT OF ROSES PARADE**.

**1.19.15 - 1.23.15**

Scientific leaders and faculty members from **USC Dornsife and UNIVERSITÉ DE VERSAILLES SAINT-QUENTIN-EN-YVELINES** meet to develop a joint strategic program that strengthens environmental and climate-related research and education.

**1.26.15**

**PETER KUHN**, Dean’s Professor of Biological Sciences, delivers a **DEAN’S SPECIAL LECTURE** on his research that could potentially revolutionize cancer treatment.

**2.2.15**

“**Innovate Armenia,**” an all-day event organized by the **USC INSTITUTE OF ARMENIAN STUDIES**, celebrates Armenians’ past and continuing contributions to technology, social movements and the arts.

**2.21.15**

**2.5.15**

“**We have a responsibility to deliver scholarship of consequence to the world.**” **MANUEL PASTOR** delivers remarks upon his installation as the inaugural holder of the **TURPANJIAN CHAIR IN CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE**.

Democratic Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives **NANCY PELOSI** talks with students about her journey through the American political landscape as part of the Department of Political Science’s **POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS** series.

**2.9.15**

“If you understand all of the heated rhetoric and tensions surrounding Vladimir Putin, it is important to have a solid basis of historical and empirical research.” **MARY SAROTTE**, Dean’s Professor of History, presents a **DEAN’S SPECIAL LECTURE** exploring her research on NATO’s post-Cold War expansion pertaining to the German reunification negotiations of 1990.

**3.6.15**

The USC Dornsife Office of Communication receives seven **AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE** — including a grand gold award for USC Dornsife Magazine — from the **COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION’s District VII**.

**3.9.15**

Jane Lubchenco, Distinguished University Professor at Oregon State University, and Madhav Gadgil, D.D. Kosambi Visiting Research Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Goa University, receive the 2015 **TYLER PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT**, which is administered by USC Dornsife. The award honors environmental science of great benefit to humankind.

“Improve Armenia,” an all-day event organized by the **USC INSTITUTE OF ARMENIAN STUDIES**, celebrates Armenians’ past and continuing contributions to technology, social movements and the arts.

**3.25.15**

The film **IMAGINARY FEASTS**, directed by Anne Georget, has its U.S. premiere in the Dornsife Neuroscience Pavilion’s Joyce J. Cammalleri Hall. The event was organized by the **BRAIN AND CREATIVITY INSTITUTE** and the **USC SHOAH FOUNDATION — THE INSTITUTE FOR VISUAL HISTORY AND EDUCATION**.

**3.12.15**

**A LEVAN INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES AND ETHICS** Coffeehouse Conversations on Practical Ethics event presents a panel of USC experts speaking on the death penalty.

**4.24.15**

**A LEVAN INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES AND ETHICS** Coffeehouse Conversations on Practical Ethics event presents a panel of USC experts speaking on the death penalty.

**TRAVELER PHOTO COURTESY OF USC MEDIA RELATIONS; PASTOR PHOTO BY STEVE COHN; PELOSI PHOTO BY MATT MEINDL; AWARDS PHOTO BY LETTY AVILA; TYLER PRIZE PHOTO BY STEVE COHN**

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**WENDY WOOD**, Provost Professor of Psychology and Business, and vice dean for social sciences, reflects on organizing a conference that convened experts from **USC** and the **BROOKINGS INSTITUTION** to discuss how behavioral and policy changes can improve people’s overall health.

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**TRAVELER PHOTO COURTESY OF USC MEDIA RELATIONS; PASTOR PHOTO BY STEVE COHN; PELOSI PHOTO BY MATT MEINDL; AWARDS PHOTO BY LETTY AVILA; TYLER PRIZE PHOTO BY STEVE COHN**
The art and science of peppermint is @ScientificAmerican's video of the week!

@USCDornsife a liberal arts degree is great preparation for career as a successful author

@MyNameIsWater: Thanks for the great support @DeanSteveKay @USCDornsife @HollywoodFest - special moments made more special when shared with #trojanfamily!

@Portantino: Honored that the Hon. AJ Blumenfeld inspired my USC Leadership class. @AndrewJasonB @USCDornsife #usc #leadership

@WeirMB: Love @USCDornsife CALIS TIRP team members bringing their energy & reinforcing the value of Human Rights education into my classroom

@LAConservancy: @USCDornsife faculty & students bring #BoyleHeights #history to life with "History in a Box" program

@LeighJacobsonSC: Having the best first week of my study abroad experience in London courtesy of @USCDornsife! Stay tuned for updates

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Watch the latest videos from the USC Dornsife community.
dornsife.usc.edu/instagram
Follow our feed for snapshots of the #DornsifeLife.

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE
In the days leading up to USC’s 132nd commencement on May 15, valedictorian Alexander Yuen and salutatorian Carrie Ruth Moore shared their journeys of self-discovery. Yuen, a biological sciences and health promotion and disease prevention studies double major, will enter UCLA’s Geffen School of Medicine, and Moore, a creative writing major, will begin an accelerated M.Ed. program at Stanford University. View their videos at dornsife.usc.edu/yuen and dornsife.usc.edu/moore.

Instagram @USCDornsife

BITE-SIZED VIDEOS
In just 15 seconds, glimpse some of the USC Libraries’ more than 5 million volumes, learn the difference between a deflagration and a detonation, and reacquaint yourself with a few of the many “faces” across campus, including that of George Tirebiter. View all of these videos at Instagram.com/USCDornsife.
Hub of Armenian Studies

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the Institute of Armenian Studies raises awareness of Armenian culture, history and contemporary issues. By Lizzie Hedrick

At a ceremony marking his installation as the inaugural holder of the Turpanjian Early Career Chair in Contemporary Armenian Studies in March, Richard Antaramian defined why his field is crucial.

"Armenians have, over the centuries, ruled over their own kingdoms, been subject to others, circulated through empires, converted to and from different religions, and constructed a worldwide network of churches," he said.

"They have suffered genocide — and survived."

As a member of the faculty, Antaramian will conduct research and encourage students to investigate long-held beliefs about Armenia's history and people.

His arrival coincided with the 10th anniversary of USC Dornsife's Institute of Armenian Studies (IAS), as did that of director Salpi Ghazarian, who is working to fortify the links among the university, the global scholarly community and members of the Armenian community in Southern California and beyond.

In February, IAS organized "Innovate Armenia," an all-day event on USC's University Park campus, celebrating Armenians' past and continuing contributions to technology, social movements and the arts. More than 2,000 attendees heard contemporary Armenian music and met innovators, such as Alexis Ohanian, co-founder of Reddit, and Raffi Krikorian, engineering lead for Uber.

Honoring the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, IAS launched YEAR100.org, a global directory of events, to boost awareness of the publications, conferences and other happenings worldwide commemorating the occasion.

On April 24, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, Ghazarian joined 10,000 people — Turks, Armenians and members of the academic, media and diplomatic communities — in Istanbul to remember the atrocities committed 100 years ago and their consequences. Other IAS staff members participated in the symbolic six-mile “March for Justice” in Los Angeles.

This Spring, Ghazarian and Antaramian attended a conference, co-sponsored by the institute, at The Hague Institute for Global Justice in the Netherlands exploring the legacy of the Armenian Genocide from the perspective of law, humanities, media, politics and education. Also, Antaramian taught a Maymester course on the Armenian diaspora. The forced migration following the genocide led to the expansion of Armenian communities throughout the world, particularly Southern California. Students took field trips to places such as Armenian churches and those of other nationalities, studying the experience of Armenians in the context of different immigrant and minority communities in the L.A. area.

Looking to the future, Ghazarian and Antaramian will continue to promote scholarship and raise awareness of how Armenians are contributing to society on a global scale.

"The three words — ‘USC, Armenia and innovate’ — together reflect the institute’s mission in this second decade," Ghazarian said. "Our goal is to support new multidisciplinary approaches to Armenian studies by capitalizing on USC’s tremendous resources.”
In "Case Studies in Modern Leadership," undergraduates examined what the world may look like in 2015 from the perspective of a global leader who helped shape the world we live in now. Gordon Brown, British prime minister from 2007 to 2010, joined Steven Lamy for an intensive study of international politics and economics. One of the first to initiate calls for worldwide action during the 2008 financial crisis, Brown is credited with averting a global financial meltdown. A dedicated multilateralist, he played a major role in the G-20 and continues to work as a United Nations (U.N.) special envoy for global education.

Brown shared his views on the challenges leaders face and discussed the economic, political and cultural forces that continue to shape every country's domestic and foreign policy priorities. A major theme of Brown's lectures was the growing need for global decision making and cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world.

"Are there global problems that need global solutions? And are we now in a position in the 21st century where we have national problems that cannot be dealt with simply by countries acting on their own?" Brown asked. The financial crisis, climate change, economic growth, poverty, financial stability and nuclear security are all issues that require nations to cooperate across borders to find solutions, he said.

Other course topics included the world financial crisis, global growth and the role of the United States, the 2009 U.N. Climate Change Conference, and the U.N.’s role regarding poverty, education and disease. —S.B.
In Hollywood’s early days, an intimate look at a favorite celluloid celebrity simply required plunking down a nickel and selecting from a dozen publications devoted to the private lives of film idols. From Gene Tierney and Gene Kelly to Norma Shearer and Joan Crawford, Tinseltown’s brightest graced the glossy covers of fan magazines such as *Motion Picture* and *Photoplay*.

“Fan magazines began publication in 1911 and drew readers by sharing some behind-the-scenes information — although tame by today’s standards — about the stars’ lives,” explained Karen Sternheimer, director of undergraduate studies in USC Dornsife’s sociology department.

“During the Great Depression, fan magazines offered readers a glimpse into the lives of people enjoying the fruits of fame, suggesting that the American Dream was still possible.”

The relationship between studios and fan magazines was symbiotic. If a studio wanted to generate interest in an ingénue or bring positive attention to a celebrity, it would open the gates for interviews.

All that changed after World War II when adulation turned into gossipmongering.

“Early on, fan magazines were essentially studio mouthpieces,” Sternheimer said. “Gossip magazines began to emerge as the studio system started to decline in the 1950s. The disappearance of a powerful, centralized organization meant more creative freedom for performers, and less pressure for magazines to uphold a particular image of a celebrity.”

Photographed en route to a USC football game, Carole Lombard appeared on the December 1938 cover of *Picture Play*. 
World-Changing Major
A new interdisciplinary degree program examines non-governmental organizations and nonprofits.

According to a 2014 report from Oxfam, 85 people around the globe possess more wealth than the whole bottom half of the world’s population.

Increasingly, private individuals and organizations, rather than democratically elected governments, are controlling wealth, noted Nina Eliasoph, professor of sociology. At the same time, she added, the number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) has exploded, partly due to this concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer private hands.

“Now, some international NGOs are more powerful than some small governments,” Eliasoph said. “Within the United States, there are also many nonprofits that do certain social services that used to be done by governments. So here’s this increasingly powerful type of organization, but it kind of falls through the disciplinary cracks — it’s not really political science because it’s not really government.”

Seeking to address this gap, USC Dornsife in Spring 2015 launched a new bachelor’s degree program in NGOs and social change. The new major focuses on the economic, political and cultural roots of social conflicts, and the varied forms of NGOs that address them. Through interdisciplinary coursework, students learn how these organizations aim to diminish human suffering and environmental destruction around the world.

“This program will give students both practical tools and a broad theoretical, historical and global view,” Eliasoph said. “They will examine not just what organizations have done to try to solve problems, but the problems’ histories, also. If you want to solve a social problem you have to investigate its root causes. Otherwise, it will just come back to haunt you.”

The major’s requirements include a one-semester internship in which students work at a local nonprofit or NGO while participating in a seminar in which they analyze and reflect on their experiences, and ultimately produce a research paper.

First-year student Sharon Dong is among those who have already been attracted to the program. “I’m really into social activism, and seeing all the injustice and inequality around me compels me to do something to make a positive impact on people. This led me to the new major,” she said. “I’m hoping it will teach me the skills necessary to successfully help others and affirm my choice in this career.” —L.P.

Getting Warmed Up
Vitaly Kresin of physics finds that clusters of aluminum metal atoms become superconductive at surprisingly high temperatures.

The reason your laptop heats up when you leave it on for a long time is that electricity meets resistance as it courses through the machine’s circuits, generating heat — wasted energy. When superconductivity is achieved, however, electricity is transmitted without any resistance, and no energy is lost.

While superconductors that work at room temperature were long thought impossible, USC Dornsife scientists may have discovered a family of materials that could make it reality. A team led by Vitaly Kresin, professor of physics, found that aluminum “superatoms” — homogenous clusters of atoms — appear to form Cooper pairs of electrons (one of the key elements of superconductivity) at temperatures around 100 degrees Kelvin.

“This may be the discovery of a new family of superconductors and raises the possibility that other types of superatoms will be capable of superconductivity at even warmer temperatures,” said Kresin, corresponding author of a paper on the finding that was published in Nano Letters.

Beyond the specific applications for which superconductors are already used — MRI machines, particle accelerators and ultrasensitive magnetic field sensors, to name a few — a room-temperature superconductor would allow engineers to make any electronic device ultraefficient. —R.P.
**Fit as an Astronaut**

Students at Norwood Street Elementary School learn the science behind staying fit in space.

Freshman Sophia Nguyen showed fourth and fifth graders how to set a table in space by using Velcro to prevent food packages and trays from floating away. “Look!” said fifth-grader Karla Martinez, proudly displaying a food tray to her classmate, and I want to share and give back,” she said.

Nguyen and Martinez were participating in an after-school workshop on health and fitness in space, held at Norwood Street Elementary School near the University Park campus on Nov. 10. An initiative of the Joint Educational Project’s (JEP) Young Scientists Program (YSP), the event was partly funded by USC and JEP alumni donors Michael and Cindy Winn.

“Today I learned astronauts float without shoes because they don’t need them in the space station. But my favorite part was the exercising station because you get to use weights to be strong,” said Martinez.

Nguyen, a human biology major, said she is excited to be part of YSP. “I didn’t get opportunities like this as a kid, and I want to share and give back,” she said.

Funded by a grant from the Safeway Foundation, the activities were the brainchild of Dieuwerie “DJ” Kast, STEM programs manager for YSP and JEP’s WonderKids.

“I wanted to approach health and fitness from a different perspective,” she said. “We want kids to ask themselves: Am I fit enough to be an astronaut?”

Students answered that question by rotating among seven stations. At each, they watched a video of an astronaut doing a particular activity in space, then tried to perform the task themselves. YSP teaching assistants, each a science major at USC, led activities and answered questions.

Human biology major Geoff Kusaka said participating in the program helped him hone his communication skills by speaking before a class of children, their teachers and sometimes their principal, four times a week.

“I love seeing the look on the kids’ faces when they really enjoy an experiment,” Kusaka said. “It’s incredibly rewarding. I love science, and I hope I can instill that passion in these students.” —S.B.
Psychology alumna Kina Grannis, a 29-year-old singer-songwriter who runs her own music label, recently embarked on a European tour to promote her new album, Elements.
Numbers

THE USC DORNSIFE/LOS ANGELES TIMES POLL

The USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times Poll is a series of statewide public opinion polls of registered voters in California designed to survey voter attitudes on a range of political, policy, social and cultural issues. Conducted throughout the year, the widely cited poll helps to inform the public and encourage discourse on key political and policy issues.

3/4

Almost three-quarters of California voters said they felt relations between people of different races were “good” or “excellent” in their own neighborhoods.

27%

of California voters said they felt that race relations were “good” or “excellent” in the U.S. as a whole.

2:1

ratio of California voters who supported a statewide law banning single-use plastic grocery bags at supermarkets effective July 1, 2015.

7 in 10

voters said they would rather live in California than anywhere else.

48/44

percent of California voters who said the state’s high-speed rail project should stop versus the percent who said it should proceed.

dornsife.usc.edu/poll

Courage, Faith and Service

Former U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, retired U.S. Navy Capt. and astronaut Mark Kelly, deliver the 14th annual Carmen and Louis Warschaw Distinguished Lecture.

Compared to his wife, Mark Kelly thought he had the risky job: combat pilot and astronaut. Instead it was Gabrielle Giffords, the former U.S. representative, who nearly died serving her country on Jan. 8, 2011, when a would-be assassin shot her and killed six others at an outdoor “Congress on Your Corner” event in a Tucson, Arizona, suburb.

“What happened that day would certainly become the biggest challenge we would ever face,” Kelly said as the couple spoke to more than 500 people at Town & Gown on March 8. The two delivered the 14th annual Carmen and Louis Warschaw Distinguished Lecture, which focuses on how Jewish life and culture have shaped the lives of political figures.

“My spirit is strong as ever,” said Giffords, descendent of a long line of Lithuanian rabbis. “I am still fighting to make the world a better place and you can, too. Get involved with your community, be a leader, set an example. Be passionate, be courageous, be your best.”

Kelly, a retired astronaut and U.S. Navy captain, spent more than 50 days in space and is one of only two people who have visited the International Space Station four times. Giffords ran in six elections in her home state and won them all; during her tenure in the U.S. Congress from 2007-12, she championed energy independence and the needs of military families and veterans.

After the 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, in which 20 children and six teachers lost their lives, Giffords and Kelly started Americans for Responsible Solutions. The organization, dedicated to keeping Americans safe though improved gun control laws such as a universal background check for gun buyers, now has some 800,000 supporters.

Money Talks

The Martens Economic History Forum examines current economic issues through the lens of history.

Kelly said the couple’s determination to take action on gun laws came about “not because she was injured in that horrific attack in January 2011, but because Gabby is about service. When she saw that 20 little kids needlessly died in their classroom, she thought that maybe, just maybe, she could be a little bit helpful in trying to prevent that from happening again.”

At the event, Hope Warschaw reflected upon the legacy of her parents, whose endowment gift established the lecture series in 1999. “My parents always thought there was something in Jewish culture that led people to participate in civic life,” she said. “My mother, in particular, loved to hear people’s stories, where they came from and how they got to be who they were. So to continue this lecture series, I thought, was very important.” —S.B.
HASHTAG

‘hash-tag’ noun 1. on social media websites and applications, a word or phrase preceded by a hash (#) and used to identify messages related to a specific topic. 2. a cultural product representing a social movement, new trend, brand, idea, old fad or simply nonsense. 3. a method to group together a topic across thousands — sometimes millions — of individual posts to make that post searchable and connected. 4. an indicator of psychological states; a window into the moral, political, economic and religious stance of its user, and collective norms.

Origin: Hashtags originated on the social network Twitter. The first recorded use of the term hashtag was in a tweet posted on Aug. 25, 2007, by social technology innovator Chris Messina. He suggested using “#barcamp” to group together messages about an international network of tech conferences called BarCamp.

Usage: #IranElection and later #ArabSpring were among the first uses of a hashtag that denoted and symbolized social movements.

Morteza Dehghani, assistant professor of psychology and computer science, investigates cognitive processes using narratives, social media, transcriptions of speeches and news articles, as well as behavioral studies. He is a researcher at USC Dornsife’s Brain and Creativity Institute and principal investigator of the Computational Social Science Lab.
NNENNA EZEH ’16
Health and Humanity Major

“Being a primary care doctor will allow me to better serve people who don’t have access to quality, affordable health care.”

As a child, Nnenna Ezeh pretended to perform surgery on her dolls. At age 5, she opened a present on Christmas Day and found a real stethoscope.

“This is a tangible expression of your dreams,” her mother told her, hoping to reinforce her daughter’s passion. “Keep it to remind you of what you want to do.”

The presidential scholar is now pursuing those dreams as a major in health and humanity. She seeks to work with underserved communities. Ezeh is president of African Americans in Health at USC. The group supports African American students in their pursuit of careers in health.

Participating in the Joint Educational Project’s Trojan Health Volunteers, she shadowed an obstetrician attending to a pregnant woman experiencing complications. Ezeh watched as the doctor translated complicated medical terms into plain English.

“The physician modified her bedside manner, so her patient could better understand,” Ezeh said. “But it never affected negatively upon how she interacted with the patient.”

Ezeh was reminded always to see the humanity in whomever she treats.

“As a doctor you have the power to help a patient understand her body by explaining in a way that she understands without devaluing her.”

On a bitterly cold day in January 1945, the Soviet Army — pushing across Nazi Germany as the Allies drew closer to victory in Europe and the end of World War II — arrived at a Nazi concentration and extermination camp in southwestern Poland called Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Some 1.1 million people died within the barbed-wire fences of Auschwitz during the Holocaust, but those who lived to tell about the suffering and death they had witnessed have made sure Auschwitz is never forgotten.

On Jan. 27, 100 of these survivors and their liberators, along with thousands of attendees from around the world, returned to Auschwitz for the official commemoration of the 70th anniversary of its liberation.

“Just to be alive 70 years after we were liberated from this — excuse me for the expression — hell on earth, is already an accomplishment in itself,” said Eva Kor, an 80-year-old survivor. “To be able to come back and retell this story of the Holocaust is a way of illuminating the world, a way of healing and a way of empowering people to repair the world.”

Housed at USC Dornsife, the USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education partnered with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Discovery Education and the World Jewish Congress to plan a four-day observance of the milestone called “Auschwitz: The Past Is Present.”

The program also brought 25 teachers to Poland for professional development activities aimed at engaging a new generation of educators and their students in remembering, and learning from, the Holocaust. For example, USC Shoah Foundation education staff instructed the teachers in using the institute’s Visual History Archive, a collection of more than 53,000 audiovisual testimonies from genocide survivors and witnesses.

“Those who lived through the Holocaust have carried the burden of remembering long enough,” said Stephen D. Smith, the institute’s executive director. “It’s up to us now to lift its heavy weight off their shoulders. We are ready to take on the responsibility of ensuring that this tragic chapter of human history is never repeated.”
Diplomatic Chess

Brian Rathbun focuses on 1920s Europe to examine diplomacy and its ripple effect on negotiating styles today.

The brutal murders of journalists and aid workers by terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda and ISIS have thrust the issue of negotiation into the spotlight. With the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the public has watched European prisoners, whose governments will negotiate for their release, go free. It has also gnawed over the beheadings of American and British prisoners, whose governments refuse to negotiate with terrorists.

Anytime you have principles involved, negotiations become more difficult,” said Brian Rathbun, associate professor of international relations. “If we negotiated for at least one of our POWs for a certain number of al Qaeda or Taliban prisoners at Guantánamo Bay, are we essentially validating them as a party?

“Culturally that’s not something the government wants to do. At the same time, there might be tangible gains from negotiating. We get our POWs back. It’s a very difficult question."

Rathbun has been studying the art, practice and theory of negotiations among states for a number of years. Cornell University Press in September published his book Diplomacy’s Value: Creating Security in 1920s Europe and the Contemporary Middle East.

When he began his research about a decade ago, he found an enormous gap in scholarly work about diplomacy.

“You would think diplomacy is one of the most studied phenomena in the field of international relations, and yet it is practically not studied at all in any systematic way,” Rathbun said. “I thought, here’s an opportunity for me, personally, to put it on the map.”

The book highlights Europe in the 1920s, when France was preoccupied with security and terrified of Germany.

“This period in European history was the last and best chance France and Germany in particular had for creating a reconciliation that could have prevented the Second World War,” Rathbun said. “It was when France and Germany came closest to reaching a modus vivendi, a way of living together that could have laid the foundation for a more permanent peace between the two.”

The period that may have prevented World War II is what motivated Rathbun to take a closer look at diplomacy. —P.J.J.

Fight On

The creation of Buckybombs could one day be used for demolition of cancer cells.

In 1996, a trio of scientists won the Nobel Prize in chemistry for their discovery of Buckminsterfullerenes — soccer ball-shaped spheres of 60 joined carbon atoms that exhibit special physical properties. Now 20 years later, scientists have figured out how to turn these Bucky-balls into Buckybombs.

“These nanoscale explosives show potential for use in fighting cancer and may one day target and eliminate cancer at the cellular level — triggering tiny explosions that kill cancer cells without affecting surrounding tissue.

“Future applications would probably use other types of carbon structures such as carbon nanotubes, but we started with Bucky-balls because they’re very stable and a lot is known about them,” said Oleg Prezhdo, professor of chemistry and corresponding author of a paper on the explosives that was published in The Journal of Physical Chemistry.

Carbon nanotubes, close relatives of Bucky-balls, are used already to treat cancer. They can be accumulated in cancer cells and heated up by a laser, which penetrates through surrounding tissues without affecting them and directly targets carbon nanotubes. Modifying carbon nanotubes the same way as the Buckybombs will make the cancer treatment more efficient, Prezhdo said.

To build the miniature explosives, Prezhdo and his colleagues attached 12 nitrous oxide molecules to a single Bucky-ball and then heated it. Within picoseconds, the Bucky-ball disintegrated — increasing temperature by thousands of degrees in a controlled explosion.

The source of the explosion’s power is the breaking of powerful carbon bonds, which snap apart to bond with oxygen from the nitrous oxide, resulting in the creation of carbon dioxide, Prezhdo said. —R.P.
INTERACTIVE MAPS FOR THE BRAIN

What’s the route between smell and memory? Where’s the connection between habits and Parkinson’s disease? How does habit detour into addiction?

To answer these and other complex scientific and medical questions, University Professor Larry Swanson and neurobiology graduate student Ramsay Brown have built Golgi, an interactive map of a rat brain that makes exploring the brain as easy as using Google Maps.

The new web application offers details at the click of a button about how the regions of the brain communicate and interact. Golgi will help accelerate the research and aid treatment of ailments such as Parkinson’s and depression by layering complex scientific data onto a single simple brain map that provides information to doctors and researchers quickly and intuitively.

“We have a big advantage because we’re the only group — really in the world — that has a flat map of the brain,” said Swanson, Milo Don and Lucille Appleman Professor of Biological Sciences.

Swanson, a longtime pillar of the neuroscience community, collaborated with Brown, who designed the program while an undergraduate in Swanson’s laboratory.

“Larry and I have learned so much from each other while building Golgi,” Brown said. “Mixing product design into his immense knowledge of neuroanatomy let us build something really special.”

Golgi is based on a decade’s worth of neurological data that the Swanson lab has pioneered and collected.

Golgi’s mapping function draws on more than 70,000 data points showing connectivity in the molecules and cells that make up the brain.

There are more than 1,000 disorders involving the nervous system, including autism, schizophrenia and stroke. Many researchers believe that combating these neurological disorders will require a deeper understanding of the brain’s circuitry.

Watch a video on Golgi at dornsife.usc.edu/brainmaps
Hidden Costs

A new study led by biologist Donal Manahan finds that organisms defend themselves against climate change — to a point.

Stresses from climate change such as rising temperatures and increasing ocean acidity can edge an organism closer and closer to the brink of death without visible signs. But a team of researchers led by USC Dornsife’s Donal Manahan was surprised to learn just how good organisms can be at hiding the stress they are under.

The group’s findings, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in March, showed that when carbon dioxide levels in water are increased to those expected by the end of this century, the sea urchin — a commonly studied model organism — more than doubles the amount of metabolic energy it spends. This includes protein synthesis, the most basic function needed for the urchin to stay alive, without showing visible evidence of the distress.

“Think of a metabolic budget like your household financial budget,” said Manahan, professor of biological sciences. “Protein synthesis, one of the most basic things an organism does to stay alive, is like your rent. Added stresses from climate change cause that rent to get more and more expensive. You can still survive, but that money has to come from somewhere. And without increasing your budget, you get closer and closer to the brink of disaster, unable to cope with any unexpected crisis.”

Calculating the metabolic budgets took two years of work, including overseeing the early stages of sea urchin development at the USC Wrigley Marine Science Center on Catalina Island — one of the few places in the United States with the facilities needed for such large-scale culturing experiments, Manahan said.

Now, the team is building upon its new understanding of cellular metabolism and stress by studying the genetic and environmental (nature and nurture) bases of physiological responses to global change.

“We think that variation in the ability to allocate cellular energy within a fixed budget may be a key basis of resilience to environmental change,” Manahan said. —R.P.
In 2008, three years after earning his bachelor’s in international relations, Justin Arana traveled the world on a spiritual quest to find himself. The journey was spurred by his grandfather, who had asked Arana if he would be happy with the worth of his life if he died the next day.

While visiting the surfing village of Morrungulo, Mozambique, he took a walk that steered the course of his travels — and life. It was a long walk. He was accompanying a local family to collect drinking water. After nearly two hours, the group arrived with their containers. Arana saw the dirty, shallow pools of water. Nearby, cows had defecated. This was the family’s water source.

“The experience was a stark eye-opener,” Arana said.

During this time, Arana was filming his experiences to share with folks back home in Los Angeles. That footage would evolve into Arana’s debut documentary, "My Name Is Water." Produced by actress Sharon Stone, the documentary chronicles Arana’s efforts to bring clean water to Mozambique.

Arana helped get a water well installed in the village. Children who previously stayed home from school to help their mothers collect water were back in class. Diseases were prevented. Six years later, the well in Morrungulo is thriving.

Arana continues to bring clean water to African communities with the nonprofit he founded, Water Underground.

Although Arana’s grandfather died before seeing his grandson’s contributions, Arana is at peace knowing the answer he would give his grandfather now would be, “Yes.”
It’s hard to fathom anyone actually wanting to go to prison. But for people in some parts of the world, the idea of getting three hots and a cot in an American prison is Shangri-La compared to their disadvantaged lives.

That’s one lesson Gary Mancuso discovered when he left behind a lucrative finance career to journey the world and see the Earth’s remaining intact cultures and wildernesses. Discouraged by the rate at which biological and cultural diversity is vanishing due to globalization, Mancuso departed the United States in November 2005 and set off on an enlightening six-year adventure to exotic but disappearing destinations.

Midway through his quest, Mancuso wound up in Myanmar, shortly after the devastating Cyclone Nargis in 2008. His local guide asked Mancuso how he could get himself and his family thrown into “Mr. Bush’s jail.” The guide apparently believed life in the Guantánamo Bay detention camp would be better than life under Myanmar’s military regime.

The exchange is one surprising revelation documented in Mancuso’s 2014 book, The Last Places on Earth: Journeys in Our Disappearing World (Great Lands Publishing).

Other once-in-a-lifetime experiences detailed in the book include voodoo lessons from a Togolese witch doctor, dining with onetime cannibals in New Guinea and attending a surprisingly uplifting death ritual in the Central Highlands of Madagascar — with exhumed corpses as the guests of honor.

“Famadihana” was the name the Malagasy gave to this practice, which involves exhaling the remains of the deceased to inhale the last breath of life from the living.

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“At first, the ritual or famadihana sounded truly bizarre. However, after spending the entire day and evening with the extended family and village of the two deceased persons being honored, it didn’t seem so strange,” explained Mancuso, who earned his master’s in international relations in 1995. “Instead, I felt it was a very touching show of love and respect by the family and surrounding community.”
LAYER
Part meticulous study, part eloquent homage, Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man is considered not only a seminal work of art, but the very embodiment of the boundary-breaking, outward-looking curiosity of the Renaissance period.

Based on the work of a first-century Roman architect, Vitruvius, the intricate sketch of a man—arms outstretched, torso floating within a circle balanced neatly within a square—is a poetic rendering of symmetry and proportion. However, what the image and accompanying text most vitally illustrate is an intrinsic bridge between the arts and sciences. It underscores that humans are microcosms of the universe itself. “Man,” da Vinci wrote, “is the model of the world.”

Five hundred years later this rendering continues to loop through the minds of a group of leading biomedical researchers at USC Dornsife—both as a challenge and an inspiration.

“One of the biggest scientific accomplishments in history was da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man,” began Raymond Stevens, Provost Professor of Biological Sciences and Chemistry. “Although da Vinci originally created the painting for the sake of art, he was one of the first to create a map of the human body and started a path toward deciphering everything we are made up of.”

“The connection between the ‘everything’ Ray just referred to—biology, chemistry, engineering, medicine—has long since frayed,” added Peter Kuhn, Dean’s Professor of Biological Sciences. “This approach has been replaced by modes of inquiry characterized by highly individualized research and specializations. Scholars often work in isolation.”

Since da Vinci’s time, the sciences in particular have diverged into myriad subdisciplines.

“While this splintered approach has led to significant advances in our fundamental understanding of the world,” explained Scott Fraser, Provost Professor of Biological Sciences, “it has also resulted in silos of expertise that run deep and often aren’t adequate in addressing the complex challenges we now face, especially those in human health.”

Inspired by da Vinci and the spirit of the Renaissance, USC Dornsife researchers are combining the best minds from the arts and sciences to create a virtual model of the human body—from the molecules up. But their vision extends further, as The Bridge@USC aims to catalyze a new era of biotech leadership in the Los Angeles area.

By Emily Cavalcanti and Lynell George
USC Dornsife has established The Bridge@USC as an antidote to this silo culture.

Stevens, Kuhn and Fraser are among a founding group of top USC scientists who have joined forces to set a new paradigm for how 21st-century research is conducted and applied.

In launching The Bridge@USC, they are uniting outstanding minds in chemistry, biology, medicine, mathematics, physics, engineering and nanoscience — as well as experts in such areas as animation and cinematography — to build the first atomic-resolution model of man.

The creation of this dynamic, virtual model, USC Dornsife Dean Steve Kay asserted, will accelerate the development and implementation of innovative therapies and cures for a host of intractable diseases and conditions such as cancer, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and diabetes.

“We are forging partnerships with schools across the university to create a bridge among different types of researchers: engineers, scientists, artists, medical doctors,” Kay said. “Everybody wants to work together, but it’s often difficult for a variety of reasons ranging from funding to different scientific languages and data types. So we are helping to provide the unifying framework that makes this possible.”

The university’s support of such entrepreneurial endeavors is exactly what attracted this cluster of pioneering scientists to USC.

Stevens, who earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from USC Dornsife in 1988, returned in Fall 2014 and serves as founding director of The Bridge@USC. He is joined by associate directors Kuhn and Vadim Cherezov, both of whom were his former colleagues at The Scripps Research Institute, along with Vsevolod “Seva” Katritch, assistant professor of biological sciences, and former Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory collaborator James Hicks, professor (research) of biological sciences. This August, Valery Fokin, who was also previously at Scripps and earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from USC Dornsife in 1998, arrives as professor of chemistry.

“A group of like-minded faculty, supportive and dynamic administrators, and visionary and generous supporters — it is a sine qua non for that to happen,” Fokin said. “A combination of all three is a rarity, and USC is at this unique point now.”

Together their laboratories bring a cohort of approximately 70 researchers to the university.

In addition, Kay and Fraser have joined the initial Bridge@USC founding team, which will grow to include eight additional faculty hires over the next three years. They will also continue to forge partnerships with collaborators from across USC Dornsife, the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, Keck School of Medicine of USC and USC School of Cinematic Arts.

**SPANNING DISCIPLINES**

Centuries since da Vinci’s detailed rendering of the human form, we remain fascinated by the body — how it works and how it fails. And while we have categorized most of the elements of man at the genetic, molecular and cellular levels, Kuhn pointed out, we have yet to integrate the different scales of data together.
“Until those gaps are spanned,” he said, “the most effective and efficient ways to develop new drugs and understand diseases will continue to confound and outpace us.”

This work, however, isn’t occurring in a vacuum. The European Commission has launched the Human Brain Project, which aims to deliver a “scaffold” model of the human brain in the next decade, and President Barack Obama has created the BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) Initiative. Google recently announced that it has embarked on a quest to create a more complete picture of the human brain, hoping to pinpoint how diseases might be prevented rather than merely treated. While theirs is a “top down” approach, The Bridge@USC aims to do the opposite, working up from the molecule to the cell to the entire human body.

“I think our uniqueness is that we combine structure on the human, cellular and molecular scales. Both static and dynamic structure tools are available at all levels and the time is now right to pull this together,” said Stevens, who holds joint appointments at USC Viterbi and the Keck School.

“What is incredibly exciting is the opportunity to work with the digital arts faculty in the USC School of Cinematic Arts who are ranked No. 1 in the world, and the USC Institute of Creative Technologies. Furthermore, we are excited to work with and enable our colleagues at USC Viterbi and the Keck School with the breakthrough information that comes out of this endeavor.”

The team’s first step, though, has been to determine how their areas of expertise best correspond to the targeted layers of the bottom-up study, which will ultimately allow doctors to better detect and treat human disease.

Construction of The Bridge@USC’s virtual model of the human body needs to be approached from three different levels simultaneously — molecules, cells and whole body — while connecting the different scales together, Stevens explained.

**LEVEL 1: MOLECULES**

Molecules are formed when two or more atoms join together chemically. Stevens and Cherezov, professor of chemistry, image molecules, particularly the proteins in the lipid membrane involved in cellular communication, to see how individual proteins bind with signaling molecules or drug candidates. Katritch’s expertise is in developing and applying computational tools to study key biological phenomena — including virtual drug screening and understanding the molecular basis of drug action. Katritch then uses computer modeling to infuse potential drug treatments into those protein-binding sites that Stevens and Cherezov have observed.

To next synthesize new compounds that most effectively target specific diseases, all three benefit from Fokin’s click chemistry methodology that allows them to develop new chemical probes — substances that alter specific protein function — and better understand receptors in the human body. This chemistry work is complemented beautifully by that of USC Dornsife chemists Charles McKenna, Surya Prakash and Nicos Petasis.

Stevens, Cherezov and their research teams have already unlocked the biomedical potential of several G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) by determining their structure. GPCRs serve as the cell’s gatekeepers and messengers, receiving and sending information in the form of light energy, peptides, lipids, sugars, and proteins. Their signals mediate practically every essential physiological process, from immune system function to taste and smell to cognition to heartbeat.

With nearly 1,000 members, GPCRs constitute the largest protein family in the human genome — and a key avenue to medical progress. These receptors are responsible for 80 percent of cell membrane signaling; some 40 percent of all pharmaceuticals act by binding to GPCRs.

The techniques developed by Cherezov have enhanced the biophysical characterization and crystallization of membrane proteins fostering a revolution in structural studies of GPCRs, whose malfunctions often result in a range of diseases and conditions. He likens his approach to that of Eadweard Muybridge, whose experiments with motion photography in the late 1880s proved that contrary to popular belief all four of a horse’s hooves do leave the ground at once when it gallops. Cherezov has developed numerous novel instruments and technologies that should...
eventually allow scientists to see molecules in motion and observe changes in proteins as they occur.

Cherezov sees the magnitude of The Bridge@USC’s goal to create an atomic-resolution model of man as more complex compared to the ambitious Human Genome Project in the 1990s.

“With the scientific field moving so fast, although it sounds absurdly ambitious, it is now feasible for us, with all of the tools and data available, to visualize the structure and dynamics of individual molecules, to build blocks of the cell, and then to start assembling them together in space and time,” Cherezov said.

Utilizing structural bioinformatics and integrative molecular modeling approaches to decipher the intricate mechanisms of GPCR signaling, Katritch identifies new venues to precisely modulate GPCRs by ions and small molecules, leading to better treatment.

“What we are trying to do,” Katritch said, “is apply a systemic approach to study the whole GPCR family, to compare them and to figure out how they work based on combining and bridging structural, biochemical and biophysical knowledge. There are at least 826 receptors, making up a significant chunk of the human genome, and each has its own character and a distinct role in human biology and disease.”

The therapeutic potential for patients with immune and metabolic diseases is vast. Stevens expects the immediate impact of this work to be in diabetes, heart disease, cancer, embryonic development, and neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

For example, he constructs microscopes that allow scientists to watch as cells interact with one another to form the heart muscle and valves. Understanding this process — how cells give off signals, respond and collaborate to build an embryonic heart — may offer keys to rebuilding heart valves in vitro.

“With USC’s recruitment of Arthur Toga and Paul Thompson from UCLA to image the brain, Andrew McMahon from Harvard University to focus on stem cells, and Stevens, Fokin, Kuhn, Cherezov, and Katritch from Scripps, I am in a perfect situation to realize a scientific dream of connecting molecules to man at the atomic level,” said Fraser, who holds joint appointments at USC Viterbi and the Keck School.

LEVEL 3: BODY

Made up of 78 organs and networks including the brain, heart, lungs and gastrointestinal tract, the body — the intricate physical structure of the human form — is where Kay, Kuhn and Hicks are focused.

There has been a wellspring of research about how circadian rhythms affect health and overall well-being, but Kay’s research homes in on how the body’s timing of the day/night cycle can influence the onset of diabetes and obesity. His laboratory deploys advanced imaging techniques, uses computational approaches to understanding the dynamics of physiological networks, and takes full advantage of an array of next-generation sequencing and chemical biology tools to illuminate the complexities of metabolic regulation.

He found that a key protein, cryptochrome — which regulates the biological clocks of plants, insects and mammals — also regulates glucose production in the liver. Kay and his collaborators observed that altering the levels of this protein could improve the health of diabetic mice. Like mice and
“[T]he is now feasible for us, with all of the tools and data available, to visualize the structure and dynamics of individual molecules, to build blocks of the cell, and then to start assembling them together in space and time.”

other animals, humans have evolved complex biochemical mechanisms to keep a steady supply of glucose flowing to the brain at night, when we’re not eating or active.

More recently, Kay and his team used high throughput screening to discover a novel small molecule, KL001, which controls the intricate molecular cogs or timekeeping mechanisms of cryptochrome in a way that can repress the production of glucose. This finding opens potentially groundbreaking avenues for the development of drugs to treat diabetes and other metabolic disorders. The serendipitous discovery occurred during a parallel effort in Kay’s laboratory to identify molecules that regulate the periodicity of the biological clock in predictable ways.

“Our next aim is to understand how KL001, and similar molecules that affect cryptochrome, function in whole animals,” said Kay, who holds joint appointments at USC Dornsife and the Keck School. “We are going to investigate how such compounds affect other processes besides the liver as we believe our work holds promise not only for diabetes, but also for diseases such as asthma and some cancers.”

By examining the circulatory system and detecting how molecules traverse the body, both Kuhn and Hicks are zeroing in on a better understanding of how unwanted molecules or single cells might cause diseases such as cancer, particularly with the power of single cell genomics. And they point to the distinct advantage they have at USC because of the strength of its computational genomics program — led by University Professor Michael Waterman and Andrew Smith, associate professor of biological sciences.

“The beauty of the bloodstream is that it’s a super highway that connects the entire body,” said Kuhn, who holds joint appointments at USC Viterbi and the Keck School. “A cancer cell that breaks away from the primary tumor gets exposed to the whole body through the circulatory system in just one minute — the time it takes for blood to circulate.” Kuhn decided to exploit that super highway, believing that analysis of cancer cells in the blood can be a complement to traditional imaging techniques that provide information about the tissue parts of tumors.

How cancerous cells gain the ability to exit tumors and populate distant organs is a fascinating yet poorly understood biological question of immense clinical importance. Kuhn has set out to find that “needle in a haystack” by working with oncologists, a mathematics modeling group, and a single-cell genomics group led by Hicks.

Their subsequent method for detecting cancer cells with just a blood sample has yielded a minimally invasive, inexpensive test that differentiates circulating tumor cells (CTCs) — which break away from the primary tumor to metastasize to other parts of the body — from ordinary blood cells using a digital microscope and image-processing algorithm. This advance is expected to achieve...
A CONVERGENCE NOT SEEN SINCE THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD PROMISES TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE TREATMENT OF HUMAN DISEASE.

1400–1600 | Emerging from centuries of intellectual darkness, the Renaissance saw humankind’s eyes again opened to the wonders of the physical, natural and artistic worlds. More important, it brought those worlds together in a convergence that fueled extraordinary scientific and technological innovation.

Artistic masters both informed and drew from lessons in human biology and structure. Engineers combined aesthetics with physics to create architectural masterpieces. Humanity reached an unprecedented peak of innovation.

1600–1950+ | As the Renaissance period gave way to the industrial and scientific revolution, engineering, science, medicine and the arts began to diverge. This led to greater specialization, which deepened understanding within each discipline, but curtailed collaboration. Innovation waned; however, deeper scientific study led to a new revolution that would impact health profoundly.

1953–1980 | The molecular and cellular biology period stemmed from the elucidation of the structure of DNA and greater understanding of the basic molecules of life. Genes became the focus of intense scrutiny; scientists began to manipulate the very code of life. These explorations opened avenues of discovery leading to powerful and targeted new therapies.

1990–2010 | While the molecular and cellular biology period made clear the benefits of understanding individual genes, it also granted a new view on how cells operate. Individual genes are but pieces of a greater whole that controls delicately balanced life processes. A larger view of the genes controlling this system was crucial, so scientists set about sequencing the human genome.

To achieve this lofty goal, biomedical researchers needed new technologies. Engineers combined advanced chemistry and physics with a deep knowledge of biology. Their work opened doors to previously undreamed of health benefits — and in the process pointed the way to a new convergence of fields not seen since the Renaissance period.

2015– | Humankind is now poised to revolutionize the way disease is detected, treated and even prevented. Building upon the university’s Convergent Bioscience Initiative, The Bridge@USC researchers are forging a new methodology for collaboration that combines the best from the sciences and arts to make this vision a reality.

“Science has really changed; many projects are now more team-oriented,” said Raymond Stevens, director of The Bridge@USC. “Each of us has distinct strengths and weaknesses or perspectives so when gaps in technology or dead-ends in thinking emerge, we can link our knowledge to expedite problem-solving and advance breakthroughs.”

As the arts and sciences again join forces in this new age of convergence, innovation will again flourish, this time creating a future of better health.
results comparable to surgical biopsies without having to submit patients to the operating table. It also significantly enhances doctors’ abilities to detect, monitor and predict cancer progression at an earlier, more treatable stage.

Kuhn and Hicks already are using technology developed in their labs to build a complete high-content model of cells, cellular content and non-cellular content using genomics, proteomics and large-scale computing with their colleagues Paul Newton at USC Viterbi and Jorge Nieva at the Keck School. This breakthrough enables them to identify clinically useful biomarkers and to advance the use of a noninvasive fluid biopsy, which can help inform a doctor and patient’s treatment decisions.

**A LARGER PURPOSE**

While Stevens and his colleagues are carefully assembling The Bridge@USC’s team, just as crucial is the design of their workspace.

The Bridge@USC will be located in the new 190,000-square-foot USC Michelson Center for Convergent Bioscience, which will support up to 24 principal investigators with laboratories employing hundreds of researchers and students. A bold new collaboration between USC Dornsife and USC Viterbi, the center will feature state-of-the-art, flexible labs that accommodate the spectrum of scientific activities within the broad area of molecular science and engineering and can be reconfigured as needed to adapt to future discoveries. The floorplans are designed with flow and synergy in mind: There are meeting spaces, common areas, even a literal bridge connecting wings.

Mirroring the body’s busy interconnected network, The Bridge@USC will be the kinetic hub that encourages unexpected opportunities for the researchers within the Michelson Center and across USC’s University Park and Health Sciences campuses to cross, even collide. The team believes this possibility for serendipity — stumbling upon unforeseen breakthroughs by accident — is at the heart of scientific inquiry.

Consequently, The Bridge@USC’s goals include fostering unexpected yet promising partnerships through its catalyst program, start-up incubator, venture fund, and academe and industry collaborations.

Stevens, Kay and Fraser have studied the handful of great research institutes and have designed The Bridge@USC to build upon those previous successes while avoiding their pitfalls.

“Ensuring freedom to think out of the box, funding high-risk research, and lowering barriers to catalyze collaborations and creativity are critical,” Kay said.

The Catalyst Program will provide seed funding enabling campus teams to collaborate and pursue high-reward, breakthrough research not yet viable to compete for external and government support; a start-up incubator will be developed concurrently with biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry partners; a venture fund will generate new intellectual property and technology transfers; and finally an academe/industry alliance will combine expertise across disciplines to increase and translate the resulting knowledge of the human body.

Led by Stevens, USC has already formed an academe/industry open-source consortium that is generating high-resolution images of at least 200 of the most important GPCRs and investigating the pharmacology of drug interactions. The consortium is creating yet another bridge, this time between USC and the pharmaceutical industry to understand the complete human body.

In addition, The Bridge@USC is committed to providing opportunities for students at the high school, undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral levels through internships and one-on-one mentoring, and by creating a space where they see themselves not just as scientists, engineers or artists, but as in-the-moment problem solvers. In June, the first Bridge Undergraduate Student program will launch with college and high school students working in The Bridge@USC faculty’s laboratories.

“The sum is bigger than its parts,” Stevens said. “Collaboration and communication — that’s something that has to be a fundamental core value of the institute. That loner approach to cracking age-old problems is an outdated way of doing science. This is something at universities that has to change because community is key.”

And by community, Stevens means Los Angeles.

While it is too early to predict scientific outcomes, that hasn’t hindered Stevens and his colleagues from thinking broadly, envisioning a larger purpose. The Bridge@USC is only the start — the beginning of a larger plan to build greater Los Angeles into a biotech leader. They have already begun looking beyond the borders of the campus, at the region as whole.

“In terms of biotech and L.A.: Amgen is here and there have been a few recent successes in the L.A. area, but we can do a lot better,” Stevens said. “L.A. is such an ideal place for biotech with large and diverse patient populations, integrated hospital networks and several leading universities. We want to build a stronger biotech ecosystem here to help translate discoveries. The opportunity is just too big from multiple perspectives.”

In other words, The Bridge@USC is not just building an atomic-resolution model of man, but a conversation.

“We’ve designed this to be a nexus, where people throughout the USC campuses can generate a lot of data and can help one another understand their meaning,” Fraser said. “We want to do this in a collaborative, complementary way. A project of this scale requires the cooperation of many different types of scientists, engineers, artists, industries, and governmental agencies. And it’s in such partnerships that the most fruitful advances can occur. That’s critical. It’s all about bridges. It’s coming to the understanding that we’re not going to figure it out by ourselves.”

“The USC Convergent Bioscience Initiative is the modality,” Kay added. “The Michelson Center is the bricks and mortar. And it is the people brought together by The Bridge@USC who will implement the dream — edging us nearer to closing the gaps in knowledge that will help us to better understand the human body. This unique effort includes not only Bridge@USC and affiliated faculty, but our alumni and donors, whose visionary investment will fuel our progress.”

The confluence of expertise, support and location positions USC to be a leader in a modern-day renaissance of scientific inquiry and application — ushering in a new era for L.A.

“Los Angeles should become to medical research what Silicon Valley is to information and technology,” philanthropist and retired orthopedic spinal surgeon Gary K. Michelson, remarked at the center’s groundbreaking last Fall. “We owe it to the world; we owe it to Los Angeles. We need to invest in this.”

Writer Susan L. Wampler contributed to this report.
As domestic box office returns plateau, Hollywood is setting its sights on China — the second largest film market in the world. USC Dornsife professors Stanley Rosen and Brian Bernards explain what it will take for the U.S. film industry to break into China’s notoriously complicated movie market. By Michelle Salzman Boston

Marketing rule No. 1: When trying to make a buck, don’t alienate one of your largest audiences.

Case in point, in 2012, when MGM planned a remake of the 1984 Cold War film Red Dawn, in which a midwestern town is invaded by Soviet forces, they decided to recast the enemy with a more contemporary antagonist — China. Critics rushed to point out the flaws in MGM’s thinking. Among them was the fact that China has the second largest film market after North America, and getting the picture — or any films made by MGM — into the country would be impossible if China was cast as the adversary.
The People's Republic of China, in a process overseen by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT), maintains a complicated quota system that allows only 34 foreign films into the country per year. Of those, 14 must be either IMAX or 3-D. Each film permitted to play in Chinese cinemas must also meet a certain set of standards, including casting the country in a positive light when there is a Chinese component.

In an effort to claim a foothold in China, MGM made an unprecedented move. In post-production, the studio replaced China with North Korea as the foe.

“The studio spent a considerable amount of money to digitally alter the film,” said Stanley Rosen, professor of political science. “But with North Korea as the enemy there was no challenge since there’s really no market for U.S. films there.”

For the U.S. movie industry, China is a critical market to crack. Domestic box office numbers have been floundering in recent years and engaging Chinese audiences may be the key to keeping the U.S. market afloat.

“It used to be that as much as 50 percent of the total box office for a film would come from the U.S. and Canada, but it’s not the case anymore,” said Rosen, an expert in Chinese politics and the relationship between Hollywood and China. “Now, a blockbuster film will make as much as 70 percent of its return outside of North America.”

China jumped ahead of Japan as the second-largest film market after North America in 2012. The following year, China’s box office receipts tallied $3.6 billion, and 2014 saw that figure increase 34 percent to $4.8 billion — making China the first international market to exceed $4 billion at the box office.

In February 2015, thanks to a movie-going boom during the Lunar New Year, Chinese box-office revenues exceeded those of the United States for the first time ever — $650 million versus $640 million, respectively, according to data from research firm EntGroup. Experts estimate that China will overtake North America as the top annual movie market within five years.

For now, North America’s box office is still leading the charge with a $10.3 billion payout last year — though that figure is down from $10.9 billion in 2013. To maintain its lead, the North American market will need fresh revenue sources.

HOLLYWOOD’S NEXT MOVE

So, how can the U.S. film industry make headway in China?

First off, filmmakers must consider how SAPPRFT will respond to the movies they submit for approval in China, explained Brian Bernards, assistant professor of East Asian languages and cultures.

“For instance, films cannot include negative images of the Communist Party of China. They also have to limit depictions of corrupt officials or superstitious representations, such as ghosts. There’s also the idea that anyone who is breaking the law should be punished by the end of the film.”

However, Bernards noted there are no hard and fast rules. Each film is judged on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, leeway would be granted to Hollywood as long as it was clear to Chinese audiences that corrupt or superstitious practices would never succeed in China.

Some filmmakers are going one step further and tailoring their content to engage Chinese audiences.

There’s no better example than Transformers: Age of Extinction, which brought in $320 million in China, breaking box office records and in 2014 edging out Avatar as the highest-grossing film of all time in that market. In the U.S., Transformers: Age of Extinction earned about $245 million.

Much of the film’s popularity in China has been attributed to how it was crafted to cater to Chinese audiences. Unlike Red Dawn, the fourth installment of the Transformers franchise purposefully incorporated Chinese elements from the outset. For instance, a portion of the film was shot in Beijing and Hong Kong, and well-known Chinese actors were included in the cast.

In his course “Politics and Film in the People’s Republic of China,” Rosen plays film clips that illustrate how movies cater to Chinese audiences. Many clips feature the use of product placement. In one, Stanley Tucci’s character takes a drink of Yili, a popular Chinese brand of milk. In another, Mark Wahlberg’s character uses a China Construction Bank ATM — in Texas.

Some films will also include scenes seen only by audiences in China, Rosen said.

“In Looper, for example, there are longer scenes that take place in modern Shanghai,” Rosen said. The filmmakers also included favorable mentions of China in the narrative. Jeff Daniels’ character in Looper tells Joseph Gordon-Levitt’s character to reconsider his decision to retire in France. “I’m from the future,” Daniels says. “You should go to China.”
Transformers Attack the Red Dragon

The United States lodges a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding barriers to exhibiting films in China.

2007

The United States lodges a complaint with the WTO regarding barriers to exhibiting films in China.

2012

As part of an agreement with the WTO, China’s President Xi Jinping expands the quota of overseas movies from around 20 to 34 per year on a revenue-share basis.

2014

Foreign titles that made the 34-film quota set by the Chinese government grossed $1.81 billion.

2017

Chinese officials are expected to re-evaluate the quota agreement and may expand it to 44 films in order to include more prestige and art-house movies.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Never underestimate the power of Transformers. The action-figure robots, best known for shape-shifting into a myriad of guises in the toy realm, now can also boast super powers in revamping the international film trade. For decades, the U.S. tried to crack China’s tightly restricted film market, to no avail. But a 2012 revenue-sharing agreement changed China’s profile — from peripheral player to powerhouse in the global market. For the first time, in 2014, the country’s robust box-office revenues broke foreign-market records. Transformers: Age of Extinction ranked as China’s overall top-grossing film, prompting insiders to speculate what’s next in China’s superhero evolution.

4.8 BILLION

China’s box office receipts in 2014, the year it became the first foreign market to cross the $4 billion threshold.

TRANSFORMERS: AGE OF EXTINCTION GROSSES

$1.09 Billion Worldwide
$545 Million Foreign
$320 Million China
$245 Million United States

In 2014, box-office receipts in China were up 34 percent over the previous year; in the U.S., receipts dipped 5 percent.

Transformers: Age of Extinction was the top-grossing film of 2014 in mainland China.

TOP FIVE CINEMA MARKETS OUTSIDE NORTH AMERICA IN 2014

China
$4.8 B
Japan
$2.0 B
France
$1.8 B
U.K.
$1.7 B
India
$1.7 B

SOURCES: MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA’S THEATRICAL MARKET STATISTICS 2014; THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER; BOXOFFICEMOJO.COM; STATISTICA.COM

GLOBAL CINEMA SCREENS

47,349 Asia Pacific screens (23,600 in China)
43,265 U.S./Canada screens
40,424 Europe, Middle East & Africa screens
11,177 Latin America screens

142,000 SCREENS WORLDWIDE

Cinema screens increased by 670% worldwide in 2014 to more than 142,000, due in large part to continued double-digit growth — more than 15 percent — in the Asia Pacific region.

1/3

Approximate fraction of China’s 2014 total box office tally attributed to the 34 foreign titles exhibited.
When it comes to the types of film that do well in China, big blockbusters are typically the most successful. “Blockbusters are the big hits all over the world and China is no different,” Rosen said. “But, there’s a lot of piracy in China and people can get films online or in very high-quality hard copies.”

So when it comes to enticing theatregoers, splashy visuals get them to shell out cash for a movie ticket. “With a blockbuster that’s 3-D or IMAX, or has a lot of special effects, viewing it in a theatre makes a big difference,” Rosen said. “People are going to want to watch it in the best quality presentation, not on an iPhone or on a home device.”

**TO CASH-IN, CO-PRODUCE**

Another option for gaining traction in the Chinese film market is for Hollywood studios to co-produce films with Chinese production companies. To placate SAPPRFT, those films must include a certain amount of Chinese content, but there are perks.

“One of the benefits of a co-production is that Hollywood studios can get as much as 43 percent of the box office receipts, whereas films that are solely American enterprises only take away 25 percent,” Rosen said. “That’s much less than anywhere else in the world for Hollywood, but in China they can still do very well and make money.”

Recently *Kung Fu Panda 3* (2016), a joint venture between DreamWorks Animation, its Chinese unit Oriental DreamWorks and their Chinese partners, was granted co-production status by SAPPRFT.

Bernards, an expert in modern Chinese and Southeast Asian literature and cinema, met with DreamWorks Animation last year to speak about Chinese cinema and culture. He touched on how films, such as *Kung Fu Panda 3*, which target younger audiences, are a winning strategy for the Chinese market. Not many Chinese films are geared toward children.

“Using such animation techniques to transform China’s national animal icon into an anthropomorphic good-natured clown who dreams bigger for himself than being a noodle vendor hit home on different levels for many young Chinese viewers,” Bernards said. “What was remarkable about *Kung Fu Panda* was that it combined such a story with high quality animation and directed it toward children.”

The two elements of content and co-production status may be a winning combination for the third film in the franchise. “*Kung Fu Panda 3*’s status as a co-production should allow it to circumvent some of the restrictions in terms of screening and increase its share of the domestic box office in China. It will also have greater access to the domestic Chinese market.”

“Of course, because it’s a sequel it still needs to bring something novel to the table to attract the audiences,” Bernards added.

**BREAKING INTO HOLLYWOOD**

Meanwhile, as China’s film market continues to grow, Chinese filmmakers are attempting to gain more market share in Hollywood. However, China faces an uphill battle to gain a foothold in the U.S.

“There’s investment in both directions, but it doesn’t change the fact that Chinese films don’t really have a market outside of China and some Asian territories,” Rosen said.

It’s hard for Chinese films to get into theatres aside from those considered art-house, which are a small fraction of the market, he said. “Almost no foreign language films are successful in the U.S. market. Not just Chinese films, but French films or anything else. It’s a niche market. Anything that’s foreign language is arthouse by definition.”

One way that Chinese investors are making inroads is by buying their way into the North American market so they can put their films in front of American audiences. The Dalian Wanda Group, China’s largest entertainment group, purchased the AMC Theatres chain in 2012 for more than $2.6 billion.

So far the theatre chain, which shows films on more than 4,900 screens in the U.S., has successfully climbed on the New York Stock Exchange. However, it has experimented with bringing Chinese films to American audiences with little success.

“They took the film *Lost in Thailand*, which broke all box office records in China and put it on select screens at AMC Theatres,” Bernards said. “In the movie, three Chinese men tour Thailand and all of this wacky stuff happens. They advertised it as China’s version of *The Hangover*. No one came.”

Box Office Mojo reported that *Lost in Thailand* made only about $57,000 in the U.S.

However, there has been some headway in stimulating business interests between the U.S. and China. In November 2014, President Obama announced that both countries would begin granting each other’s citizens longer visas.

For the film industry, it might not have much of an immediate impact, Rosen noted. Most major movie studio offices in Beijing or Shanghai tend to be headed by Chinese nationals who hold green cards with a lot of experience in the U.S.

But, he added, the new visa regulations are an important step forward. “It promotes a sense of sustainability and permanence in the relationship, and should be valuable for Americans who, for business reasons, will be based in China for a considerable period of time,” he said. “With more Chinese investment coming in to the U.S., it should help on that end as well.”
Wonder of the West
The rugged beauty of Big Sur. The innovative spirit of Silicon Valley. The hotbed of creativity that is the Hollywood dream machine. The Golden State is endowed with an iconic, almost mythical stature. Unlocking the mystique is The Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West. By Susan Bell
A sepia Los Angeles carnival image reveals an early 20th-century settlement on the brink of metamorphosis into a cityscape. Country store nostalgia still takes center stage, but encroaching urbanization and ubiquitous utility poles announce the advent of a burgeoning metropolis.

The journey from California’s early mining era to the state’s dramatic urban and suburban explosion occurred within just three generations. California exuberantly exercised its increasing clout on the national political scene and emerged as a dynamic global economic power.

Building on the success of its first 10 years, The Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West (ICW) continues to document the myriad aspects of that compelling journey through its richly fertile collaboration between USC faculty and students and the historical archives and curatorial expertise at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. By utilizing its archival sources to weave our histories, the ICW apprentices young scholars, transforming them into the nation’s leaders in furthering our collective understanding of how the history of California and the American West shapes the present, and, in turn, all of our futures.

“Making sense of the remarkable history of the American West requires us to think big: about landscapes, demographic change, challenges and conflicts.”

—WILLIAM DEVERELL
professor and chair of history, director of The Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West
While Southern California Edison's photographers recorded power generation and distribution, from monumental dams to tall transmission lines, they also illustrated electricity's myriad uses, from bold neon advertisements and signage, to the domestic comfort and convenience of the gleaming modern home.
Providing a unique opportunity to explore the birth of a modern metropolis, the innovative 2013 digital exhibition *Form and Landscape: Southern California Edison and the Los Angeles Basin, 1940 – 1990* was an ICW project and part of *Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in L.A.*, an initiative of the J. Paul Getty Trust. Artists, authors, critics and scholars were invited each to curate an exhibit on a chosen theme using photographs drawn from The Huntington’s Southern California Edison archive. ICW Director William Deverell, professor and chair of history, described the 70,000-image archive as a “historical gold mine.” The exhibition was organized by Deverell and history scholar Greg Hise.

“The history of the West is electrifying. Harnessing electricity to our cultural values and expectations changed the West forever.”

—WILLIAM DEVERELL
SOARING
Southern California’s historical trajectory has been shaped and transformed by its dynamic aerospace industry. This phenomenon attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention, however, until the ICW launched the Aerospace History Project in 2006. Directed by award-winning science historian Peter Westwick, assistant professor (research) of history, this multi-faceted research, curatorial, pedagogical and publishing effort is dedicated to creating an archive of documents, photographs and oral histories of key institutions and personalities. It traces the remarkable velocity of the region’s aerospace revolution, from post-Civil War ballooning that inspired early aviation technology, to the Southern California aerospace industry’s role in winning World War II and the Cold War, to its jet engine ambitions and beyond to the next frontier — space travel.
An excerpt from alumna Laila Lalami’s new book, *The Moor’s Account*, offers a fresh perspective on the ill-fated 16th-century de Narváez expedition through the eyes of the first black explorer in America.
Imagine what it was like for the first African to explore the New World in the 16th century. For Estebanico, a Moroccan slave, arriving from Spain in 1527 to what is now the United States’ Gulf Coast was bittersweet. Laila Lalami’s historical novel, *The Moor’s Account* (Pantheon, 2014), documents how Estebanico, a voyager with the famed Pánfilo de Narváez expedition, bears witness to the atrocities of conquistadors claiming land for the Spanish crown.

Within a year, the 600 members of the initial crew had been whittled down to four survivors, including Estebanico. From the coast, the small band made its way west across America’s vast interior to Mexico, pretending to be faith healers to survive.

Originally, the group’s experiences were chronicled by one of the survivors, a Spanish nobleman, who made no mention of women and little of Native Americans. Lalami, who earned her Ph.D. in linguistics from USC Dornsife in 1997, recasts the expedition through Estebanico’s eyes.

“The facts are the same, but the truth is different because you’re looking at it from a different perspective,” Lalami said.

In this first chapter of *The Moor’s Account*, Estebanico chronicles his initial encounter with the lush, sandy shores of “La Florida” and its peoples, after sailing for months through treacherous conditions.
The landing itself was restricted to a small group of officers and soldiers from each ship. As captain of the Gracia de Dios, Señor Dorantes had chosen twenty men, among whom this servant of God, Mustafa ibn Muhammad, to be taken on one of the rowboats to the beach. My master stood at the fore of the vessel, one hand on his hip, the other resting on the pomme\_l of his sword; the posture seemed to me so perfect an expression of his eagerness to claim the treasures of the new world that he might have been posing for an unseen sculptor.

It was a fine morning in spring; the sky was an indifferent blue and the water was clear. From the beach, we slowly made our way to a fishing village one of the sailors had sighted from the height of the foremast, and which was located about a crossbow shot from the shore. My first impression was of the silence all around us. No, silence is not the right word. There was the sound of waves, after all, and a soft breeze rustled the leaves of the palm trees. Along the path, curious seagulls came to watch us and departed again in a flutter of wings. But I felt a great absence.

In the village were a dozen huts, built with wooden poles and covered with palm fronds. They were arranged in a wide circle, with space enough in between each pair of homes to allow for the cooking and storing of food. The fire pits that dotted the perimeter of the clearing contained fresh logs, and there were three skinned deer hanging from a rail, their blood still dripping onto the earth, but the village was deserted. Still, the governor ordered a complete search. The huts turned up tools for cooking and cleaning, in addition to animal hides and furs, dried fish and meat, and great quantities of sunflower seeds, nuts, and fruit. At once the soldiers took possession of whatever they could; each one jealously clutched what he had stolen and traded it for the things he wanted. I took nothing and I had nothing to barter, but I felt ashamed, because I had been made a witness to these acts of theft and, unable to stop them, an accomplice to them as well.

As I stood with my master outside one of the huts, I noticed a pile of fishing nets. It was while lifting one up to look at its peculiar threading that I found an odd little pebble. At first, it seemed to me that it was a weight, but the nets had smooth stone anchors, quite unlike this one, which was yellow and rough-edged. Then I thought it might be a child’s toy, for it looked like it could be part of a set of marbles or that it could fit inside a rattle; it might have been left on the fishing nets by mistake. I held it up to the light to get a better look, but Señor Dorantes saw it.
Estebanico, my master said. What did you find?

Estebanico was the name the Castilians had given me when they bought me from Portuguese traders — a string of sounds whose foreignness still grated on my ears. When I fell into slavery, I was forced to give up not just my freedom, but also the name that my mother and father had chosen for me. A name is precious; it carries inside it a language, a history, a set of traditions, a particular way of looking at the world. Losing it meant losing my ties to all those things too. So I had never been able to shake the feeling that this Estebanico was a man conceived by the storytellers in the souqs of Barbary.

Only in the appearance, yet he was also capable of the same coarseness as the lowest of his soldiers. I had once seen him plug one nostril with a finger and send out a long string of snot shooting out of the other, all while discussing shipping supplies with one of his captains.

Señor Narváez received the pebble with greedy fingers. There was some more holding up to the light, some more scratching. This is gold, he said solemnly. The pebble sat like an offering in his palm. When he spoke again, his voice was hoarse. Good work, Capitán Dorantes. Good work.

The officers gathered excitedly around the governor, while a soldier ran back to the beach to tell the others about the gold. I stood behind Señor Dorantes, shaded from the sun by his shadow and, although I could not see his face, I knew that it was full of pride. I had been sold to him a year earlier, in Seville, and since then I had learnt how to read him, how to tell whether he was happy or only satisfied, angry or mildly annoyed, worried or barely concerned — gradations of feelings that could translate into actions toward me. Now, for instance, he was pleased with my discovery, but his vanity prevented him from saying that it was I who had found the gold. I had to remain quiet, make myself unnoticed for a while, let him bask, alone, in the glory of the find.

Moments later, the governor ordered the rest of the armada to disembark. It took three days to shuttle all the people, horses, and supplies to the white, sandy beach. As more and more people arrived, they somehow huddled around the familiar company of those closest to them in station: the governor usually stood with his captains, in their armor and plumed helmets; the commissary conversed with the four friars, all wearing identical brown robes; the horsemen gathered with the men of arms, each of them carrying his weapon — a musket, an arquebus, a crossbow, a sword, a steel-pointed lance, a dagger, or even a butcher’s hatchet. Then there were the settlers, among whom carpenters, metalworkers, cobblers, bakers, farmers, merchants, and many others whose occupations I never determined or quickly forgot. There were also ten women and thirteen children, standing in throngs beside their wooden chests. But the fifty or so slaves, including this servant of God, Mustafa ibn Muhammad, were scattered, each one standing near the man who owned him, carrying his luggage or watching his belongings.

By the time everyone had congregated on the beach, it was late afternoon on the third day, and the tide was low. The waves were small, and a dark strip of shoreline was exposed. The weather had cooled; now the sand was cold and sticky under my feet. High clouds had gathered in the sky, turning the sun into a faint, distant orb. A thick fog drifted in from the ocean, slowly washing the color out of the world around us, rendering it in various shades of white and gray. It was very quiet.

The notary of the armada, a stocky man with owlish eyes by the name of Jerónimo de Albaniz, stepped forward. Facing Señor Narváez, he unrolled a scroll and began to read in a toneless voice. On behalf of the King and Queen, he said, we wish to make it known that this land belongs to God our Lord, Living and Eternal. God has appointed one man, the successor of St. Peter, to be the governor of all the men in the world, wherever they should live, and under whatever law, sect, or belief they should be. The successor of St. Peter in this role is our Holy Father, the Pope, who has made a donation of this terra firma to the King and Queen. Therefore, we ask and require that you acknowledge the Church as the ruler of this world, and the priest whom we call Pope, and the King and Queen, as lords of this territory.

“This land had become for me not just a destination, but a place of complete fantasy, a place that could have existed only in the imagination of itinerant storytellers in the souqs of Barbary.”
Señor Albaniz stopped speaking now and, without asking for permission or offering an apology, he took a sip of water from a flask hanging from his shoulder.

I watched the governor’s face. He seemed annoyed with the interruption, but he held back from saying anything, as it would only delay the proceedings further. Or maybe he did not want to upset the notary. After all, without notaries and record-keepers, no one would know what governors did. A measure of patience and respect, however small, was required.

Unhurriedly Señor Albaniz wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and resumed speaking. If you do as we say, you will do well and we shall receive you in all love and charity. But if you refuse to comply, or maliciously delay in it, we inform you that we will make war against you in all manners that we can, and shall take your wives and children, and shall make slaves of them, and shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can. And if this should happen, we protest that the deaths and losses will be your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or of the cavaliers here present. Now that we have said this to you, we request the notary to give us his testimony in writing and the rest who are present to be witnesses of this Requisition.

Until Señor Albaniz had arrived at the promises and threats, I had not known that this speech was meant for the Indians. Nor could I understand why it was given here, on this beach, if its intended recipients had already fled their village. How strange, I remember thinking, how utterly strange were the ways of the Castilians — just by saying that something was so, they believed that it was. I know now that these conquerors, like many others before them, and no doubt like others after, gave speeches not to voice the truth, but to create it.

At last, Señor Albaniz fell silent. He presented the scroll and waited, head bowed, while Señor Narváez signed his name on the requisition. Facing the crowd, the governor announced that this village would henceforth be known as Portillo. The captains inclined their heads and a soldier raised the standard, a green piece of fabric with a red shield in its center. I was reminded of the moment, many years earlier, when the flag of the Portuguese king was hoisted over the fortress tower in Azemmur. I had been only a young boy then, but I still lived with the humiliation of that day, for it had changed my family’s fate, disrupted our lives, and cast me out of my home. Now, halfway across the world, the scene was repeating itself on a different stage, with different people.

So I could not help feeling a sense of dread at what was yet to come.

HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

While writing The Moor’s Account, Lalami found that the Narváez expedition served as the inspiration for a number of paintings. However, as shown here in Alfred Russell’s depiction, these did not always include Estebanico.
These alumni are bona fide pioneers, either venturing into gender-imbalanced professional territories — and excelling — or forgoing a secure gig to find a true calling. By Laura Paisley

Score one, make that two, for women in the workforce. Although born generations apart, Virginia Carter and Alexia Tsotsis let their passions be their guide and broke through in male-dominated fields. Carter earned her wings in the aerospace industry before taking an unexpected turn into television entertainment in the ’60s. Tsotsis has traversed the digital frontier and is thriving in the startup capital of the world. Rodney Swan is another intrepid alumnus who wasn’t afraid to go out on a limb — he bade farewell to a job as an office-bound chief financial officer to run his own farm.
In my creative stories, I would often write in the social scene or the park. When it was always fascinating. I love you.
One of Alexia Tsotsis’s favorite books as an undergraduate at USC Dornsife was William Gibson’s postmodern science fiction novel *Pattern Recognition*.

She was drawn to the story’s heroine, Cayce Pollard, a brand consultant who chronicles tech trends and explores the burgeoning social media culture of the early 2000s. It sparked her fascination with technology and the digital age.

“In my creative writing classes at USC, I would turn in science fiction stories about social networks,” she said. “I was already writing about tech and the Internet back in the day when it was still unusual.”

It’s not unusual anymore. A decade later, the alumna is firmly entrenched in the tech media scene. She has made *Forbes* magazine’s 30 Under 30: Rising Stars of Media list and she just won a Women 2.0 Award for Media Impact.

Tsotsis is co-editor in chief at TechCrunch, a highly respected website and blog devoted to breaking international tech news. Headquartered in San Francisco, the company was acquired by AOL for nearly $30 million in 2010. In her current position at TechCrunch, Tsotsis, along with co-editor Matthew Panzarino, manages an editorial team of more than 30 people who produce news content on a constant basis, and organizes annual conferences.

“We watch the tech news cycle every day, from the moment we wake up until the moment we go to bed, because tech news around the world doesn’t sleep.”

In her job, she interviews the likes of Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal and the first investor in Facebook; Travis Kalanick, co-founder of Uber; and Kevin Systrom, co-founder and CEO of Instagram.

“Part of the job is getting access to so many brilliant minds. I’ve been in close proximity to some of the most intelligent people of our time. Getting to be around these world-changing ideas every day is a gift.”

It may seem like a stretch to go from fine arts and creative writing major to tech maven, but Tsotsis likes to push herself.

“When I got into painting and drawing, I wanted to study something that was difficult for me — something I was really interested in but never tried. I wanted the challenge. I like having things be difficult.”

Tsotsis says her liberal arts background gives her tech writing an edge.

“I tend to include cultural allusions and references to postmodernism in my tech writing, which is rare. I love quoting. That knowledge comes directly from the creative writing program at USC Dornsife. Sometimes tech news can be a hamster wheel, and inserting the rich history of English literature makes it better.”

One of her posts on the TechCrunch blog references both Albert Camus and the Greek myth of Sisyphus as they relate to the task of keeping abreast of one’s e-mail. Another post refers to Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” in the context of tech/San Francisco culture.

“Using literary references in tech writing helps further underscore how technology has become another form of self-expression, literature even.”

Tsotsis recalled arriving at TechCrunch five years ago and finding that the ratio of men to women was staggering.

“I thought, ‘Wow, I’m not represented here.’ But I firmly believe that all different kinds of people should have a voice, so I made a pact with myself that I would not leave this job.”

Eventually she began to see other women in the industry talking about these issues. The 2013 book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* by Sheryl Sandberg, chief operating officer of Facebook, became her road map.

“We are in debt to Sandberg because she has given us a framework for conversations around gender — not only in tech, but across industries. In the last five years I’ve watched being a woman in tech go from something you don’t want to talk about to an ongoing conversation. And that’s huge.”

“Sometimes tech news can be a hamster wheel, and inserting the rich history of English literature makes it better.”

Right now, one of Tsotsis’s most exciting projects at TechCrunch is expanding diversity in her industry through an initiative called Include. She, along with TechCrunch’s Startup Battlefield Editor Samantha O’Keefe, are committed to broadening today’s tech landscape, dominated by affluent, white males — dubbed “brogrammers” by some. According to Google’s 2014 statistics, for example, 30 percent of the company’s 46,170 employees worldwide are women. Within its tech sector, the number drops to 17 percent.

“We wanted to take a lead in making the tech scene more diverse,” Tsotsis said.

For the past two years, Include has supported organizations that are committed to making tech more inclusive, such as Girls Who Code and Black Girls Code.

“I think that’s one legacy [former co-editor Eric Eldon and I] will leave at TechCrunch. Because once we launched Include, other groups started similar initiatives.”

When it comes to tech trendspotting, Tsotsis has had her eye on the Apple Watch, which hit the market in April.

“I can’t wait to see the ecosystem around that new platform evolve. The watch is going to change messaging. It’s part of the whole wearable tech space, which is a huge opportunity right now.”

What makes for a successful venture, in her experience?

“Luck,” she responded immediately.

Ninety percent of startups fail, she said, so it’s partially luck in connecting with the zeitgeist. For example, the Hot or Not online dating app, which does the same thing as the hugely successful Tinder app, wilted on the vine.

“Hot or Not just wasn’t at the right intersection of mobile and social. The idea of Tinder wasn’t new, but that implementation on the iPhone caused a global phenomenon.

“So luck, timing and then of course the passion of the founder is huge,” she said. “You need someone with drive and tenacity.”

Tsotsis said USC Dornsife prepared her well for success.

“I have not loved USC more than in the past few years. Three people with USC ties were on the *Business Insider*’s 2014 “The Most Powerful Millennials in Technology” list: Aaron Levie, co-founder and CEO of Box; Sean Rad, co-founder of Tinder; and me.”

Both Levie and Rad attended USC Marshall School of Business.

“I really think the university is making the right moves toward educating the next generation of digital leaders,” she added.
Rodney Swan is most comfortable in jeans and a T-shirt. Raised on his family’s small cotton farm near Blythe, California, he worked in the fields of several local farms as a young man.

But for years he donned a suit every day as the chief financial officer for Cigna Healthcare of California, a career he pursued after earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in economics from USC Dornsife in 1989.

Despite the success, something was missing.

“Over the years, I came to feel that I wanted to do something more with my life,” Swan said. “So nine years ago, I bought a farm.”

The reality is, there is a finite amount of water, and California’s population is growing. So we’ll just have to get more efficient in using it.”

Dipping into his life savings, he started to build up his farm while still working at Cigna Healthcare. After a few years of doing both jobs, his investment and hard work paid off. He’d built up a thriving, profitable farm, and at the age of 41, he shifted his focus to that business full time.

He is now president of Swan Farms, which operates 4,000 acres of agricultural production plus another 3,000 acres of restoration land. The farms are located along the Colorado River in the vicinity of Blythe, in Riverside County. His crops include alfalfa, cotton, wheat and corn.

As a Southern California farmer, Swan is concerned about water management. For many areas of California, 2014 was the driest year on record. But from the perspective of an economist, every challenge also presents an opportunity.

Swan has contracts with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), a consortium of 26 cities and water districts that provides drinking water to nearly 19 million people in parts of Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties.

MWD pays him in exchange for putting aside portions of his land that won’t be irrigated or farmed — nearly 25 percent of his acreage in 2014. The water he doesn’t use is routed westward.

He believes such contracts are beneficial for both farmers and urbanites. Cities get what they need: water during the drought years, and during wetter years the water is stored in Lake Mead and other locations. Farmers can set aside their least productive ground, maximizing efficiency and productivity.

Swan has spent extensive time studying the results of conversion of arid farm land to drip irrigation systems, which employ a network of narrow tubes and valves to efficiently deliver water to the base of each plant. The resulting decrease in water use as well as production and quality improvements are applicable in numerous climates, he said.

“Almost every type of crop in California, with the exception of rice, could use a change in water delivery.

There’s just going to be a significant financial investment. So, a fundamental shift is needed in how we think about and share water.”

Swan advocates water conservation while he oversees land restorations on behalf of the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation. The bureau’s Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program was created to balance the use of Colorado River water resources with the preservation of native and endangered species — plants, birds, mammals and other wildlife — and their surrounding habitats.

Though the restoration projects aren’t profit-generating, he takes them on as a way to help out. He works with biologists to review their scientific reports and plans, and together, they come up with feasible ways to restore habitats. To date, he has overseen the planting of thousands of trees and native plants as part of this process.

“Now we’ve got thousands of acres operating efficiently even within this current environment of minimal water, which is pretty cool.”

Swan recently became chair of USC Dornsife’s Economic Leadership Council, made up of alumni who mentor students interested in their professions. He knows the value of an economics degree.

Without the economic lessons learned at USC Dornsife, he said, he couldn’t do his job.

“The basic economic tenet of supply and demand is, every single day, the basis of what I deal with,” he said. “Strategizing, planning and all the things I learned are fundamental not only to what I do for my work, but also to my sitting on charitable, corporate or government boards.

“No matter where you are or what situation you’re in, you always find yourself using these fundamental skills learned in the classroom.”

Swan entered USC on a scholarship through the Resident Honors Program. Not sure what he wanted to study, Swan took an economics class his first semester. It immediately clicked.

As a sophomore, he enrolled in the progressive master’s degree program in economics, allowing him to earn both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in 4 1/2 years.

Swan has come full circle in his life’s work, from the fields to sitting behind a desk and back again. But wherever he’s been, the strategic and analytical tools he gained as part of a liberal arts education have proven paramount.

“On the farm there are all these moving parts, and I spend a tremendous amount of time planning and mapping it all out, making sure we hit our targets.”

Creating the highest-quality product is the end goal, he said.

“With agriculture and land restorations, you’re always trying to improve and enhance your production, looking at what works, doing more of that, trying new things and getting rid of the things that don’t work.”

Just as efficiency is crucial in his work on the farm, so it must be for the future of water use in the state.

“I think public and private policy companies need to work together to try and develop new technology and recycling methods. I look forward to what’s ahead five or 10 years from now — there are so many enhancements that can be made.

“The reality is, there is a finite amount of water, and California’s population is growing. So we’ll just have to get more efficient in using it.”
A CUT ABOVE

Sara Bigelow left a career in culinary public relations to experience the food world hands on. Now she's a trained butcher working in Brooklyn.
STANDOUT STUDENT

Armed with her 1963 master’s in physics from USC Dornsife, Virginia Carter became one of the few female physicists of her time. Then she changed careers, working as a TV executive for Norman Lear.
Beginning in 1972, Barbara Myerhoff — an up-and-coming anthropologist at USC Dornsife — collaborated with the USC Andrus Gerontology Center on a grant from the National Science Foundation to document the lives of elderly Jews. Myerhoff's work didn't take her to Israel, Poland or Germany. Instead, she found the focus of her fieldwork in her own backyard: Venice, California.

Myerhoff spent years interviewing and interacting with members of the Israel Levin Senior Adult Center, exploring topics of careers, sexuality, continuity and religious ritual. By the time she became a full professor and chair in USC Dornsife's anthropology department in 1976, she had expanded the scope of her research and embarked upon the project that would define her career: the ethnographic study *Number Our Days*.

Myerhoff collaborated with director Lynne Littman on a documentary film that drew upon her ongoing research. The result, *Number Our Days*, received widespread critical acclaim and won an Academy Award for best documentary short in 1977. The documentary was adapted into a book (Simon & Schuster, 1979) and then a play that ran at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum in 1982.

In her book, Myerhoff succinctly captures how, despite their daily struggles, these aging immigrants from Eastern Europe made everyday life meaningful, surviving amidst invisibility and poverty in Southern California. Basha, one of the "Jewish old people in an urban ghetto," as Myerhoff described their existence, recalled:

"Every morning I wake up in pain. I wiggle my toes. Good. They still obey. I open my eyes. Good. I can see. Everything hurts but I get dressed. I walk down to the ocean. Good. It's still there. Now my day can start. About tomorrow, I never know. After all, I'm 89. I can't live forever."

Myerhoff went on to harness departmental support to start the master's degree program in visual anthropology. Working with the USC School of Cinematic Arts, she helped develop a curriculum that offered courses in film production along with anthropological theory.

Myerhoff's final project was the film *In Her Own Time*, in which she turned the camera on herself after a diagnosis of terminal lung cancer, and traced her search for miracles in Orthodox Jewish practices. Although she died on Jan. 7, 1985, at age 49, Myerhoff's groundbreaking work in reflexivity and narrative ethnography still resonates with scholars and the general public. —D.K.

Barbara Myerhoff's ethnographic study *Number Our Days* documents the lives of Eastern European Jews who immigrated to Southern California.

**SEND YOUR MEMORIES TO**
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Los Angeles, CA 90089-8206 or
magazine@dornsife.usc.edu
A Hollywood-based Jewish spy ring is the subject of one of three USC Dornsife faculty research projects honored with a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant for 2015–16.

Steven Ross, professor of history, received the award for his book *Hitler in Los Angeles: How Jews and their Spies Foiled Nazi Plots Against Hollywood and America*, which reveals how 1930s and ‘40s Hollywood studio bosses — long derided for their capitulation to Hitler through their censorship of movies critical of the Nazi regime — were privately funding a Jewish spy operation.

Ross is joined as an NEH awardee by Jacques Hymans, associate professor of international relations, and John Pollini, professor of art history and history.

“To achieve their goal of American conquest, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels adopted a two-prong strategy,” said Ross, co-director of the Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life. “Keep America neutral by controlling Hollywood and establish a ‘fifth column’ along the West Coast.”

Working covertly to infiltrate fascist groups in Los Angeles, the Jewish spy ring uncovered a series of Nazi plots to kill the city’s Jews and sabotage the nation’s military installations.

“Since U.S. law enforcement agencies were not paying close attention — preferring to monitor Reds rather than Nazis — there was only one thing that stood in their way,” Ross said. “Jewish ingenuity.”

Pollini was honored for his book *Destruction, Mutilation, and Repurposing of Classical Images in Late Antiquity*, which examines archaeological evidence for Christian destruction and desecration of the images of the polytheistic peoples of the former Roman Empire.

“This phenomenon, and the extent of damage caused as a result of religious intolerance and lack of respect for others’ belief systems, is something we are only too familiar with today due to contemporary examples of religious extremism,” he said.

Pollini’s research brings a new dimension to our understanding of how human beings conceive of images as substitutes for what is represented, as objects for adornment or defacement, depending on time and circumstances in a changing religious, political and societal milieu.

“This study will appeal to those intellectually curious about the interrelation of art, politics and religion, as well as those concerned with the power of images, the destruction of cultural property and the psychology of violence,” he said.

Hymans received the NEH Fellowship for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan for his project “The International Politics of Sovereign Recognition: The West and Meiji-era Japan.” His research aims to contribute to a historical understanding of the recognition of Japan’s sovereignty by Western states in the late 19th century and to a broader theoretical understanding of the dynamics of recognition in the modern state system.

Hymans’s research shows Western recognition of Japan reflected the decline of traditional aristocratic conceptions of international society.

“This, coupled with Japan’s successful efforts to develop a bureaucracy able to provide Western states with the consistency and predictability they craved, may well provide fundamental answers to why the West finally granted Japan sovereign recognition,” he said. —S.B.
Grotesque yet Beloved

Richard Fox’s new book explores Abraham Lincoln’s impact via his looks, his accessibility and his sacrifice.

Addressing an 1856 convention of newspaper editors, Abraham Lincoln told this tale — thought to be a personal reminiscence. Riding a horse, a man Lincoln described as “not possessed of features the ladies would call handsome” stopped to let a woman rider pass.

She stopped in turn and said, “Well, for land sake, you are the homeliest man I ever saw.”

“Yes, madam, but I cannot help it.”

“No, I suppose not,” she said, “but you might stay at home.”


“Millions were inspired by Lincoln’s knowing how to use humor to overcome the unfortunate hand nature had dealt him,” Fox said, referring to Lincoln’s appearance.

Examining images, speeches, monuments and movies, Fox charts the ways Americans have remembered and imagined Lincoln, using his physical presence as a vehicle for evaluating Lincoln’s continuing impact on American culture.

“Lincoln made people care about [his body] by tying it to their national saga,” Fox writes. “Only in America was a man like him — of such unprepossessing origins, in appearance and social standing — able to rise to such heights of power and respect.” —S.B.

Watch a video on Lincoln’s Body at dornsife.usc.edu/lincolnbody

Michael A. Messner, co-writing with doctoral students Tal Peretz and Max A. Greenberg, explores the experiences of men who join with women as allies in preventing sexual assault and domestic violence.

SOME MEN: Feminist Allies and the Movement to End Violence Against Women

Oxford University Press / Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies

THE SYMPATHIZER

Grove Press / Associate Professor of English, and American Studies and Ethnicity Viet Thanh Nguyen’s debut novel explores the Vietnam War through the lens of his conflicted protagonist, an American-educated spy for the Viet Cong.
Visionary Experience

Lisa Bitel and Matt Gainer’s new book explores a contemporary visionary ritual devoted to the Virgin Mary in California’s Mojave Desert, using it as a model to understand the long history of spiritual looking.

Amid the desolate beauty of the California desert, hundreds of people raise instamatic cameras to snap pictures of a cloudless, cerulean sky. Gathered at this remote spot in the Mojave Desert north of Los Angeles, these modern-day pilgrims have followed self-proclaimed visionary Maria Paula Acuña to watch her see what they cannot — the Virgin Mary, who Acuña claims appears in the sky here on the 13th of each month.

While Acuña sees and speaks with the Virgin, onlookers scan the horizon for signs from heaven, watching for what they believe are subtle clues to Mary’s presence, such as the unexpected scent of roses or a cloud in the shape of an angel.

Our Lady of the Rock: Vision and Pilgrimage in the Mojave Desert (Cornell University Press, 2015), the culmination of six years of observing this phenomenon, combines more than 60 evocative photos by USC alumnus Matt Gainer, a research associate at USC Dornsife’s Center for Religion and Civic Culture, with textual analysis by Lisa Bitel, professor of history and religion.

Bitel once thought visions were more frequent in the Middle Ages. Now she is not so sure. “Visions are thriving online,” she said. “With a little research you can find one happening near you.” —S.B.
MARJORIE PERLOFF, Florence R. Scott Professor of English Emerita, received Washington University’s 2014 International Humanities Medal.

MATTHEW PRATT, assistant professor of chemistry, was awarded a Susan G. Komen Career Catalyst Research Grant and an American Cancer Society Research Scholar Award. Pratt also received the David Y. Gin New Investigator Award from the carbohydrate division of the American Chemical Society.

REMO ROHS, assistant professor of biological sciences, chemistry, physics and astronomy, and computer science, and three of his students received two of 2014’s Top-10 Paper Awards from the RECOMB/ISCB Conference on Regulatory and Systems Genomics.

GEORGE SANCHEZ, professor of American studies and ethnicity, and history, and vice dean for diversity and strategic initiatives, received a Diversity Visionary Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine for having made “an indelible mark” in broadening diversity and inclusion at USC Dornsife.

NORBERT SCHWARZ, Provost Professor of Psychology and Marketing, received the Society for Personality and Social Psychology’s 2014 Donald T. Campbell Award.

ROBERT SHRUM, Carmen H. and Louis Warschaw Chair in Practical Politics, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Political Consultants.

BRANDON SOM, a lecturer in the Writing Program, was honored with the $10,000 Kate Tufts Discovery Award for his first book, The Tribute Horse.

LARRY SWANSON, University Professor and Appleman Professor of Biological Sciences, Neurology and Psychology, was named secretary general-elect of the International Brain Research Organization.

SHANG-HUA TENG, Seeley G. Mudd Professor of Computer Science and professor of mathematics, was named a Simons Investigator by the Simons Foundation.

MARK THOMPSON, professor of chemistry and materials science, was elected a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors.

WENDY WOOD, Provost Professor of Psychology and Business, and vice dean for social sciences, was elected 2016 president of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

DON ARNOLD, professor of biological sciences, and SCOTT FRASER, Provost Professor of Biological Sciences and Biomedical Engineering, have received a National Institutes of Health Transformative Research Award to map the neurons in the living brain of a zebrafish, allowing them to study brain changes as the animal forms new memories.

IAN EHRENREICH, assistant professor of biological sciences, and PETER RALPH, assistant professor of biological sciences, were named 2015 Sloan Research Fellows.

IAN EHRENREICH, assistant professor of biological sciences, ANDREW HIRES, assistant professor of biological sciences, and NAOMI LEVINE, Gabian Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences and Earth Sciences, received Rose Hills Foundation Research Fellowships.

A TASTE OF HONEY Rosquete Press / Rocky Barilla’s (B.A., natural sciences and math, ’70; J.D., ’75) protagonist explores a Central American jungle, where he encounters an indigenous tribe and a mysterious order of nuns in his efforts to survive.

CONQUERING THE ELECTRON: The Geniuses, Visionaries, Egomanics, and S horrendrels Who Built Our Electronic Age Rowman & Littlefield / Co-writing with Derek Cheung, Eric Brach (MPW, ’10) explores the creation of the electronic age we inhabit today while pulling back the curtain on the visionaries whose ideas shaped our world.

THE GOLEM OF HOLLYWOOD Putnam Adult / Co-writing with son Jesse Kellerman, Jonathan Kellerman (Ph.D., psychology, ’74) takes lead character Det. Jacob Lev deep into Old World mysteries involving a creature fashioned by a 16th-century rabbi to protect his congregation. Also by Jonathan Kellerman

MOTIVE / Ballantine Books

LONG BEACH’S LOS CERRITOS Little Feather Books / In the latest fiction by bestselling author Patrick Montes DeOca, K. Scot Macdonald (Ph.D., international relations, ’97) probes the true story of arson, murder and Mafia behind the Chippendales male exotic dance troupe.

THE WIZARD AND THE WHITE HOUSE Little Feather Books / Mike Maggio (M.A., linguistics, ’80) takes on the clash of cultures in contemporary American life, leaving the reader to wonder if today’s political climate could be improved through a good dose of magic.

THE LAST PLACES ON EARTH: Journeys in Our Disappearing Great Lands Publishing Co. / Gary Mancuso (M.A., international relations, ’95) documents his six-year journey to see the Earth’s remaining wildernesses.
GOING HOME Sunbury Press, Inc. / Sharon Marchisello (MPW, ’82) explores the challenge of solving a murder mystery when a potential witness cannot rely on her memory.

DAMASCENA: The Tale of Roses and Rumi Skywriter Books / Holly Lynn Payne (MPW, ’97) unravels the mystery surrounding a gifted orphaned girl who encounters the Persian poet and mystic Rumi in the 13th century.

SPIRITS OF ASH AND FOAM St. Martin’s Griffin / In the second installment of the Rain of the Ghosts series by Greg Weisman (MPW, ’89), Rain tries to uncover a hidden world of mystery and adventure while juggling homework, babysitting duties and a vampire with a tribal twist.

ATHENIAN TRAGEDY IN PERFORMANCE: A Guide to Contemporary Studies and Historical Debates University of Iowa Press / Melinda Powers (M.A., classics, ’03) examines key issues about 5th-century Greek theatrical space, including audience, chorus, performance style and costuming.

DEGENERATION, DECADENCE AND DISEASE IN THE RUSSIAN FIN DE SIÈCLE: Neurasthenia in the Life and Work of Leonid Andreev Manchester University Press / Frederick H. White (Ph.D., Slavic languages and literatures, ’02) reflects on the life and works of Leonid Andreev.

THE KIDNEY HYPOTHETICAL: or How to Ruin Your Life in Seven Days Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic / In the 11th novel by Lisa Yee (B.A., humanities and English, ’81), a teen who is caught cheating on his Harvard application has seven days to sort out his life.

THE PAN AMERICAN IMAGINATION: Contested Visions of the Hemisphere in Twentieth-Century Literature University of Virginia Press / Stephen M. Park (M.A., English, ’06; Ph.D., English, ’11) explores the work of several Pan American modernists who challenged the body of knowledge being produced about Latin America.


After an injury that ended his NFL career, Thomas Williams ’08 raised himself up to launch a successful new profession as a motivational speaker and author.

Permission to Dream

Alumnus and former linebacker Thomas Williams’ new book encourages people to pursue their dreams.

At Thomas Williams’ sixth grade parent-teacher conference, his teacher told Williams’ mother that, by the time her son was 16, he would be a gang leader, a drug dealer or dead. “You might as well give up on him,” the teacher said.

By his own admission, Williams was a troubled child who misbehaved at school. But that evening, when he saw the tears welling up in his mother’s eyes, he vowed he would prove his teacher wrong and make his mother proud.

Seventeen years later, Williams, who earned a bachelor’s in sociology in 2008, can rest assured he has achieved both those goals. A former USC Trojans linebacker who helped win two national championships and four Rose Bowls, Williams was drafted to the NFL by the Jacksonville Jaguars in 2008. He went on to play with the Seattle Seahawks, New England Patriots, Buffalo Bills and Carolina Panthers before a neck injury ended his professional football career in 2011. Williams turned a devastating setback into a victory. His new career as a motivational speaker and author has blossomed.

Williams has also designed a development program to help student-athletes focus on success after sports, long before that transition becomes a reality.

Williams has also designed a development program to help student-athletes focus on success after sports, long before that transition becomes a reality.

His recently published autobiography, Permission to Dream (Thomas R. Williams, Inc., 2014), traces his path to success and the obstacles he overcame to get there. “I want to inspire the entire world to feel the sense of accomplishment I felt on draft day,” Williams said. —S.B.
Kickflipping the Story

With her training in narrative studies, alumna Amelia Brodka ’12 exposes the real story behind women in skateboarding.

A professional skateboarder since age 16, Amelia Brodka was invited to compete as an alternate in the 2010 X Games’ skateboarding competition for women. Although the then-sophomore at USC Dornsife didn’t participate that year, she hoped to compete the following year. But it was too late. When the time came, the X Games announced it was cutting the women’s skating competition. There just weren’t enough women to compete, officials said.

At first heartbroken, Brodka became inspired. “It got me thinking about how I could convey the message to a greater audience that women’s skateboarding was actually growing,” said Brodka, who earned her bachelor’s in narrative studies and communication in 2012.

Her major in narrative studies helped her send a powerful message. For her senior project, she made a feature-length documentary uncovering the thriving community of female skateboarders.

“I applied what I learned in narrative studies in terms of story structure and film, as well as what I was learning in communication about media representation and its effects on culture,” she said. “One of the few skills that translates across the board is the ability to write. And the ability to write persuasively is the ability to reach other people where they live.”

This is exactly what Brodka did.

In Underexposed: A Women’s Skateboarding Documentary, produced by fellow skater Brian Lynch, Brodka spoke with heavy hitters in skateboarding. After graduation, she screened Underexposed to audiences all over the world.

“It opened up a ton of doors for me to be able to continue to create platforms for women in skateboarding,” Brodka said.

Recently, Brodka launched the nonprofit Exposure Skate with partner Lesli Cohen. The program empowers and educates women through skateboarding.

“Storytelling applies to so many different areas of running a nonprofit,” Brodka said. “You have to think about how you frame the story behind your cause, event or brand in a way that will resonate with the specific audience you are trying to reach.” —M.S.B.
PHOTO COURTESY OF SAM JAMMAL

in California.

Riverside County Superior Court was appointed to a judgeship in

Council of State Tourism Directors.

U.S. Travel Association’s National Tourism Director of the Year by the

science, ’91)

JIM HAGEN

(B.A., political

South Dakota Secretary of Tourism

Washington Senate by its

second term as secretary of the

history, ’92)

SAHAR FATHI

(B.A., interna-

ional relations and French, ’04), a policy analyst for the

Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, was honored as a Rising Star by the nonprofit

Women of Color Empowered. She was named one of the “Smartest People in Seattle Politics” by The

Stranger in 2013 and one of “Seattle’s Smartest Global Women” by The Seattle Globalist in 2014.

STEPHANIE KATZ (B.A., psy-

chology, ’07) was appointed legis-

lative assistant to the staff of U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.) for the

4th Congressional District in Washington, D.C.

MARC KORMAN (B.A., history, ’02) was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, representing

District 16.

LANA SHEA (WALLING) (B.A., international relations, ’08; theater, ’08) independently

released an EP of her songs. The single “Shut Ya Face” was fea-

tured on ESPN’s First Take, in the movie trailer for Walk Of Shame, in the PBS documentary Shelter Me and in MTV’s The Challenge.

HANSDEEP SINGH (B.A., his-

tory, ’02) co-founded in 2012 the International Center for Ad-

vocates Against Discrimination, a nonprofit organization working to

combat structural discrimina-

tion against women and minority communities globally.

JENNY WU (B.A., political sci-

ence, ’03; J.D., ’07) appeared on the 26th season of the popular reality television competition The

Amazing Race.

Stephanie Katz ’07 was appointed legislative assistant to the staff of U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.) for the 4th Congressional District in Washinton, D.C.

The Huffington View from the Hill

View from the Hill

Sam Jammal ’04 is named one of The Huffington Post’s “40 Under 40: Latinos in American Politics.”

One of a handful of Latinos in American history to serve

as a chief of staff on Capitol Hill, alumnus and lawyer

Sam Jammal, who is also of Arab-American descent, is
determined to help increase diversity in government while
giving minority groups a greater political voice.

“One of my core goals is to advocate for these communities

and help them achieve greater representation,” said

Jammal, who earned a bachelor’s in political science from USC Dornsife in 2004 and now serves as chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-Calif).

“By ensuring we have more voices in the political process, we all win,” he added.

Jammal participated in the Dornsife in Washington, D.C. Program, completing an internship in the U.S. Senate with the Democratic Leadership Office. In his senior year, he joined John Kerry’s presidential campaign, creating Students for Kerry at USC and running as a delegate to the 2004 Democratic Convention. As a law student, Jammal was active in President Obama’s 2008 campaign, serving as a delegate at the Democratic Convention that year.

His career has given him the opportunity to work in advocacy, experience how Congressional offices work and understand how policy is formulated.

His proudest moment? Getting his parents into the White House for an Independence Day event in 2012.

“My parents came to this country with very little, but their kids have been able to realize the American dream,” Jammal said. “I want to give back and ensure others have the same opportunities to succeed.” —S.B.
In Memoriam

YVONNE SPALDING BANTA (B.A., sociology, '49) Los Angeles, CA (7/18/14) at age 86, devoted mother and Trojan, avid golfer.

RICHARD BARCA (M.A., geology, '61) Jackson, MI (7/31/15) at age 79, field geologist in Ethiopia, then worked for an American oil company in the Libyan Sahara for three years, followed by other oil and gas exploration positions in the U.S. and Canada; worked for Michigan Oil and Gas Co.; then as an environmental consulting geologist after retirement; served as adjunct professor of geology at Jackson College, MI.

GERALD JAMES “GERRY” BUSH (B.A., geology, '52) Houston, TX (1/17/15) at age 88; during WWII, served in the U.S. Army, becoming military governor of Sangju, Korea (63rd Military Government); served as an Army reservist in the California National Guard, as master sergeant of Headquarters and Service Company, 223rd Armored Infantry Division; career in oil and gas spanned more than 50 years, with posts at Superior Oil Company and Gulf Oil Corporation.

STAN CHAMBERS (B.A., international relations, '44) Los Angeles, CA (7/13/15) at age 91; one of the most enduring and recognizable faces in local television news, his Emmy- and Golden Mike-awarded career at KTLA spanned 63 years; served in the U.S. Navy; attended USC on GI Bill; joined KTLA as production assistant in 1947, retiring in 2010 on his 87th birthday after covering more than 22,000 stories; awarded star on Hollywood Walk of Fame.

JOHN LEONARD CONNOLLY JR. (M.A., fine arts, '62) Baltimore, MD (1/21/14) at age 80; at 10 days old he became the youngest person to fly via
seaplane to Catalina Island, CA, where his father’s company, Con-colly Pacific, operated the quarry; merchant mariner in youth, then became an art historian, teaching at SUNY Binghamton, Reed, Dartmouth, Duke, Wake Forest, Notre Dame, Johns Hopkins and MICA.

TED EHRING (B.S., geologi-cal sciences, ’55; M.S., ’57) Pismo Beach, CA (9/3/14) at age 84; served on local council from 2006-12; served in the U.S. Air Force Reserve in the Korean War and was stationed in North Africa; worked as a geologist, manager and vice president over-seeing oil exploration or develop-ment for oil and gas companies in California and Texas.

RUDOLPH (RUDY) E. FANSKA (B.S., clinical technology, ’52) Titusville, FL (4/4/14) at age 90; served in First Marines Division, 3rd Battalion in the South Pacific during WWII; awarded Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry in combat and two Purple Hearts; for conspicuous gallantry in action recognized to U.S. when her father

PHILIP KITCHIN (B.A., biologi-cal sciences, ’51) Palmdale, CA (6/23/14) at age 85; an NROTC scholar at USC; served in Korean War; practiced dentistry in Cov-ington, LA, for 25 years, retiring first to California, then to St. Petersburg, FL.

JAMES S. LAWSHE (B.S., naval science, ’45) Kailaheo, HI (8/30/14) at age 89; joined the U.S. Navy in 1944; worked in opti-cal and electronic data collection for range operations; worked for Land-Air (Dynamite) in New Mexico, Redstone Laboratories in California and SRS Technologies at Barking Sands on Kauai, HI.

CLIFFORD MELIKIAN (B.A., international relations, ’50) Walnut Creek, CA (1/13/15) at age 94; served in the U.S. Army during WWII; awarded Purple Heart; served as Federal Bureau of Narcotics agent in Washington, D.C.; served as arson and fraud investigator in California, for several years at aerospace firm TRW.

MAX OPPENHEIMER JR. (Ph.D., comparative literature, ’47) Sun City, NV (5/23/14) at age 96; enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942; worked in military intelligence in Europe, serving as a translator in French and German, interrogating Germans and broadcasting surrender terms; wrote several books and served as a foreign language professor at five universities; wrote a column for the Daily News-Sun.

JAY VAYRA (Ph.D., chemistry, ’98) San Diego, CA (10/22/14) at age 59; conducted research at McMurdo Sound in Antarctica and at Hopkins Marine Station in Monterey, CA; did archaeological field work in Skourta, Greece; directed a bushmeat identification workshop in Tanzania; worked in Mozambique to help re-establish the Gorongosa National Park; taught at Point Loma’s High Tech High School since 2002; among his many teaching awards was the Quiksilver-USC Formal Teaching Excellence Award in 2012.

NIEN-LING WACKER (M.S., chemistry, ’73) Long Beach, CA (10/19/14) at age 70; began her career as a systems analyst and programmer; taught in USC computer science department; founder, president and chief executive officer of Laserfiche; recognition included Association for Information and Image Management Pioneer of the Year Award, and the USC Depart-ment of Chemistry Distinguished Alumna Award.

MELBA LACAYO FIGGE (B.A., linguistics, ’45) Corona del Mar, CA (1/21/15) at age 92; born in Managua, Nicaragua; immi-grated to U.S. when her father was appointed vice consul to the U.S. from Nicaragua; awarded a master’s of photography from the Professional Photographers of America; she co-founded Figge Photography with her husband, photographed 47 Playmate centerfolds for Playboy magazine.

SAVADOR JESUS GAYTAN (B.A., Spanish, ’58) Lynwood, CA (11/30/14) at age 80; lost right hand in an accident at age 7 but excelled at youth sports, becoming first one-handed player to play major college basketball, real estate agent and high school basketball coach, winning many league championships and coach-of-the-year awards; later developed passion for golf; served as a motivational high school speaker.

GRAEME WILSON (M.A., international relations, ’81) Pretoria, South Africa (9/2/14) at age 60; a senior career officer with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; was appointed Australian High Com-missioner to South Africa after previously serving as ambassador to Mexico and consul general in New Caledonia.

JAMES YOUNG (B.A., history, ’66; M.A., American studies, ’68; Ph.D., history, ’71) Los Angeles, CA (12/19/14) at age 71; served more than 30 years as a U.S. Air Force historian; became chief historian at Edwards Air Force Base in 1986, produced 23 full-length documentaries and more than 250 shorter videos; in 2000, was honored as “Friend of the Society” by the Society of Experimental Test Pilots.

In 1975, when Viet Luong was 9 years old, he escaped wartorn Vietnam aboard a U.S. aircraft carrier, along with his parents and seven sisters. The following day, Saigon fell.

“We barely escaped,” Luong said. “We were scared to death. Our father told us we were on a U.S. carrier. We said, ‘What does that mean?’ He replied, ‘It means nothing in the world can harm you now.’”

Luong realized then that he wanted to serve in order to give back to the nation that had saved him and his family from almost certain death.

Thirty-nine years later, Brig. Gen. Viet Luong pinned on his first star during a ceremony held on Aug. 6 at Fort Hood, Texas, becoming the first Vietnamese-born general officer in the U.S. military.

Luong is the 1st Cavalry Division’s deputy commanding general for maneuver. The infantry officer commanded a battalion of 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers in Iraq from 2007-08 and led the 101st Airborne Division’s 3rd Brigade Combat Team, the storied Rakkasans, into combat in Afghanistan from 2010-11.

A biological sciences major, Luong graduated from USC Dornsife in 1987.

“Being a science major taught me to think critically,” he said. “I can cut through fluff and get to the root of the prob-lem and that has been one of my greatest strengths in my career.” —S.B.
Professor Emerita of Physics and Astronomy Harriet Herta Forster, an internationally known figure in the field of experimental nuclear physics, died on Sept. 28, 2014. She was 97.

Hans Bozler, professor and chair of physics and astronomy, said Forster’s subatomic particle research garnered the physics department international acclaim. She arrived in 1948 as an accomplished physicist specializing in nuclear physics and later focused on undergraduate teaching and her duties as the department’s director of undergraduate affairs. She retired in 1987.

One of few women physicists of her time, Forster published more than 62 papers on nuclear physics and mentored 16 doctoral candidates. In 1988, she received the USC Faculty Lifetime Achievement Award.

Professor Emeritus Gerald “Gerry” Larue, a 23-year faculty member in the USC Dornsife School of Religion and founder of USC’s Archaeological Research Collection, died on Sept. 17, 2014. He was 98.

Larue joined USC in 1958 as a professor of biblical history and archaeology, bringing the study of material culture to USC Dornsife long before the field entered mainstream academia.

“The archaeological collection Gerry created was the foundation for generations of USC Trojans to gain a direct experience of the ancient past,” said Lynn Dodd, associate professor of the study of religion and director of the interdisciplinary archaeology undergraduate major.

A self-proclaimed agnostic, Larue was known as a subversive biblical scholar who used the Bible to provoke thought and improve people’s lives.

Andrew Manning, an alumnus and faculty member at USC Dornsife’s School of International Relations, died on Dec. 25, 2014. He was 42.

Studying international relations, Manning earned his bachelor’s in 1994 and Ph.D. in 2001. He had taught courses on such topics as peace and conflict resolution, and terrorism and democracy, since 2002. Manning also directed the Peace and Conflict Studies program at USC.

“He really cared for his students and developed several innovative methods for teaching U.S. foreign policy and theories of war,” said Steven Lamy, professor of international relations and vice dean for academic programs.

Intraterrestrial Investigator

A geomicrobiology innovator, the professor of biological sciences and earth sciences pioneered explorations to understand the subseafloor biosphere.

Katrina J. Edwards, professor of biological sciences and earth sciences at USC Dornsife, a leader in the field of geomicrobiology, died on Oct. 26, 2014. She was 46.

Edwards made significant advances in understanding “intraterrestrials” — microbes living miles below the ocean’s crust and sediment. Her trailblazing research illuminated the reciprocal interactions among microbes, rocks and minerals in the ocean’s crust and how these interactions influence global biogeochemical processes.

“A gifted scientist, Katrina was bright, vibrant and at the helm of her chosen field,” said her brother Ben Edwards and sisters Nina and Melanie Edwards in a statement on behalf of the family. “We, along with many friends and colleagues, loved her spontaneity and sense of humor, and respected her undeniable genius.”

In 2012, Edwards received the Royal Society of Canada’s A.G. Huntsman Award for Excellence in Marine Science.

“If you think about the bottom of the ocean, and that is a big if, you probably think of one of two settings: abyssal, wafting plains of sediments, or smoking hot hydrothermal vents,” Edwards said in a 2010 interview with USC Dornsife Magazine. “What lies in-between — hundreds of square kilometers in aerial extent, kilometers down below the ocean bottom — is an active, living, intraterrestrial ecosystem. This is what I think about almost all of the time.”
University Professor Emeritus Richard F. Thompson, William M. Keck Chair Emeritus in Psychology and Biological Sciences at USC Dornsife, a pioneer in the field of neuroscience, died on Sept. 16, 2014. He was 84.

Thompson was the first neuroscientist to identify and map the neural circuits responsible for classical conditioning — Pavlovian learning. His work showed that the brain saves memories by strengthening the synapses, or connections between neurons. Neurons also create new synapses during the learning process, which Thompson defined as the creation of memory.

“Dick Thompson was a pioneer in physiological psychology, which he helped to transform into the field of neuroscience,” said Margaret Gatz, professor of psychology, gerontology and preventive medicine. “At USC, he essentially created the neuroscience program, where he recruited eminent faculty and was visionary in integrating computer science with psychology and neurobiology.”

At USC Dornsife, Thompson served as director of the Neural, Informational and Behavioral Sciences Program from 1989 to 2001, then as senior scientific adviser to the Neuroscience Research Institute.

“He enjoyed working with students immensely,” said his wife, Judith K. Thompson. “His office was always open for consultations, and he talked with students regularly about their projects.”
Two years ago, I stood on the easternmost section of China’s Great Wall looking across a narrow sliver of the Yalu River. There it was: North Korea — an empty landscape of white-capped mountains and snow-covered fields. A border I couldn’t cross. My sole companion on the journey was a middle-aged woman I called Teacher Fang. I had met her days earlier at a lunch with local writers from this frontier city — Dandong, China. I had come here to rectify a long-lost love: China wasn’t what I’d known her to be nearly two decades earlier. She’d changed. We’d grown apart.

As if hearing my thoughts, Teacher Fang placed a gloved hand atop mine and said: “It looks like the world in its natural state, before mankind arrived and ruined it.”

The first time I visited China I was 16. The year was 1996. Beijing was in the throes of a prepubescent industrialization but the city still clung to its older roots. There was only one skyscraper (China World Trade Center Number One) and the streets were full of bicycles. Cars were reserved only for the very wealthy or elite. Families were still deeply rooted, sharing communal one-story courtyard homes.

Without the Internet or mobile phones, living in China then felt as distant from my life in the United States as the moon. Having grown up in rural New England, there was something deeply appealing about immersing myself in such a foreign, far-off culture.

So I studied as much as I could about China, taking language, culture and history courses in high school and then college. I traveled alone throughout northeast China for a summer when I was 18, researching and writing for the travel guide *Let’s Go: China* in a pre-Google age when travelers actually had to go to a place to know if the hotel was still in existence.

I visited Dandong that summer, stood on the Yalu’s shores and looked across at the same border I would revisit a decade later. Safe within China’s borders, there was something fascinatingly appealing about North Korea: a forbidden country. It was a place I knew so little about, so closed off from the rapid modernization occurring just a stone’s throw from its shores.

A few years later, when I enrolled in the master’s program in East Asian area studies at USC, all I knew was that I was still obsessed with all things China. Some people call us “China hands” (中国通). I didn’t know what I wanted to do with my knowledge. At USC, I took classes in everything from Chinese political theory and urban design to Taoist literature. The brilliant thing about a degree like East Asian area studies is you can learn the foundations of several different disciplinary approaches to a topic as complex and amorphous as “China.”

Professor Stanley Rosen schooled me with his perfectly fluent Mandarin and knowledge of every Chinese film produced; Professor Gene Cooper pressed me to examine the veracity of my ethnographic sources. Everyone in the program supported my pursuits, even if this meant I’d write a master’s thesis on the failures of Chinese baseball and soon leave academia and the East Asian studies world behind.

As China had grown up, so had I. No longer were my flights to Beijing via four stopovers, but non-stops. When I landed, familiar faces greeted me. My WeChat filled with messages. I Skyped with friends and family back home. The gap between East and West was rapidly narrowing — where did that place me?

“Not till we are lost, in other words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations,” Henry David Thoreau writes in *Walden*.

Despite China feeling so much closer to home, I was more lost in the country than I had ever been. I couldn’t do anything but write about the experience of losing a home that was never technically mine to begin with. So that’s what I did.

Based in Singapore, Kaitlin Solimine splits her time between running the online academic magazine Hippo Reads and finishing her first novel based on the history of the host family she lived with in Beijing during her high school years. Solimine earned her master’s in East Asian area studies from USC Dornsife in 2006.
ASCENDING THOUGHTS

Dr. Verna and Peter Dauterive Hall, USC’s first interdisciplinary social sciences building, houses programs and researchers from across the university focused on developing solutions to pressing social challenges. Home to USC Dornsife’s Center for Economic and Social Research, and Mind and Society Center, the 98,000-square-foot building contains research laboratories, classrooms and a five-story atrium, which serves as the centerpiece of the collaborative workspace. “Ascending Thoughts,” a 60-foot tall sculpture, hangs from the center skylight and changes color as the sun shines on it throughout the day.
Life Moment

TAYLOR BOWER ’15

WATCH A VIDEO ON THE DORNSIFE IN D.C. PROGRAM, INCLUDING TAYLOR’S EXPERIENCE, AT DORNSIFE.USC.EDU/DCPROGRAM