

Laurie Buehler '80: Behind the Seams

Spiritual Healing: Dr. Roland Griffiths '68

OCCIDENTAL

SPRING 2009



RETURN OF THE NATIVE

President-elect
Jonathan Veitch
comes home to L.A.

OCCIDENTAL

OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE MAGAZINE

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 2 SPRING 2009

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Cover photo © 2009 Bob Handelman.

Page 8: Photo by Marc Campos.

Page 10: Jonathan Veitch © 2009 Bob Handelman.

Page 56: Photo courtesy Occidental College Special Collections.

Oxy Wear photo by Marc Campos.

The Torch Is Passed

Abraham Lincoln. John F. Kennedy. Martin Luther King Jr. These men have been enshrined in American history; however, on Jan. 20, their spirits were summoned as the United States celebrated the inauguration of its 44th president. The dreams and ideals for which these men stood, and sacrificed their lives, came to fruition with the election of Barack Obama '83.

As I left my office a week before the inauguration, San Francisco was enjoying an unusually balmy January afternoon. The temperature was in the high 60s and people on the street exhibited very little evidence of winter. The Bay Area had been rocked by protests, anger, and violence for several weeks following a New Year's Day shooting. A young African-American man, unarmed and lying face down at an Oakland BART station, had been fatally shot by a white BART police officer. Protests had turned violent on the streets of Oakland and San Francisco at the apparently unjustified killing. And once again the match of racial strife was lit.

As I exited the BART station in San Francisco's Mission District, I looked around at the faces crowding the street. Many were working-class immigrant families recently arrived in this country. Their brown skin and black hair contrasted with my fellow colleagues—attorneys—with whom I work on a daily basis. I thought of the statistics in California and my heart sank at realizing the small number of racial minorities practicing in the legal profession (less than 12 percent) in a state in which 53 percent of the total population is comprised of people of color. As someone whose maternal Mexican-American grandparents lived and raised their children in the Mission District, I am acutely aware of how racial prejudice had denied opportunities to them based on their ethnicity.

On Nov. 4, 43 percent of white America voted for Obama—not a majority, but with African-Americans, Latinos, and other minority groups voting overwhelmingly for him, enough to ensure his victory. White hegemony over the presidency ended as America recognized the reality of its multiracial society.

Photo courtesy John I. Kennedy '89



Two emotions spurred me to travel to Washington, D.C., for the inauguration: passion and hope. I wanted to bear witness with my fellow Americans to the historic day. I was not alone. As I stood before the Lincoln Memorial for the Sunday concert before the inauguration, reconciliation between the races appeared to occur. Many performances featured duets with white and black singers. The audience heard the story of Marian Anderson as told by Queen Latifah. The Daughters of the American Revolution had refused her entry into Constitution Hall to sing to an integrated audience in 1939. Undeterred, Anderson sought the assistance of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Anderson prevailed and as a result sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee" in stoic dignity on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Seventy years later, Aretha Franklin stood on the steps of the U.S. Capitol and sang the same song. Anderson's story and so many others were on display during the inaugural weekend as unprecedented numbers of Americans descended on the nation's capital. African-Americans stood with pride at seeing the images of the president-elect. White Americans stood and cheered a man who had inspired a new generation to partake in public service. Indeed, as Kennedy represented the passing of a torch to a new generation, Obama represents the transfer of political power across racial lines. Americans now have a president who bridges both worlds—white and black. The American president presents a new face of America to the rest of the world.

As I rose on inauguration day for the early-morning trek to Capitol Hill, the day seemed like any other. But America was about to fundamentally change. As a multiracial person myself—Irish and Mexican-

American—I noted how the crowd reflected Americans of every creed and color, but for the first time in our nation's history, our president reflected this diversity. Yes, indeed, I thought, anything is possible in America. Lincoln, Kennedy, and King would be proud.

JOHN I. KENNEDY '89,
San Francisco

Obama and Oxy

I enjoyed very much reading the Winter 2009 issue about Barack Obama '83. I was interested in the reference to Crossroads Africa. I think that program was started in my junior year. Is it still offered today?

I wish President Obama the very best. It is nice to think that he walked the same campus at Oxy that I enjoyed attending for four years in the 1950s.

PATRICIA ANNE OLIVER '58
Mariposa

A founding member of Crossroads Africa in 1957, Occidental sent students annually from summer 1958 until the early 1990s.

This note is to tell you how proud I am to have been a student at Occidental—all the more since Obama was also a student at Oxy! Thanks for preparing our new president so well, as I had no doubt you did.

KRISTIN STURDEVANT '70
Solon, Iowa

Payton Jordan Remembered

The news about the death of legendary coach Payton Jordan (Appreciation, page 56) revived many personal memories. As the first foreign student sponsored by Occidental, I attended Oxy from 1949 to 1952. This coincided with the best years of Oxy's track history, when Coach Jordan produced outstanding track teams and sent two athletes (Bob McMillen '53 and Johnny Barnes '52) to the 1952 Olympics. I had been a track athlete in Estonia and Germany before arriving in the United States in 1949, but had stopped training to devote my time and energy to academic pursuits. However, when I found that Occidental had one of the best college track teams in the country, I could not resist the temptation to try to revive my track career.

I approached Coach Jordan, discussed my track history with him, and asked to join the team. He not only accepted me, but since

I had no track shoes, gave me a pair of shoes he himself had used in the past. His friendliness and generosity impressed and touched me, since I was not a star athlete and not likely to add much to his already outstanding team. To me, his attitude opened the opportunity to be coached by a high-quality mentor and to train and compete with some of the best athletes in the world, an experience I had never had before. I have fond memories of Coach Jordan and my teammates, who also accepted me with open arms.

At age 82, I still cherish those golden years in Occidental's track history and will always remember Coach Jordan as a quality person and architect of the outstanding teams he helped to develop.

AARE TRUUMAA '51 M'52

San Diego

"Family Matters" Revisited

Last issue, *Occidental* published a letter by an Oxy classmate of mine complaining about the magazine's feature on the same-sex marriage of Oxy alumni ("Family Matters") in the Fall 2008 issue. I was disheartened to read Mike Malouf '82 contend that Oxy alumni are "not ready to read about their union as a cover story."

My experience at Occidental from 1978 to 1982 was that the invisibility of gay people made the College a challenging place. A gay student was bashed in his dorm, and flyers advertising meetings for gay and lesbian students were defaced with epithets and torn down. As a result, I did not feel comfortable coming out until after graduating from Oxy, and lacked support during a challenging time that included the Briggs Initiative, the assassination of Harvey Milk, and the start of the AIDS epidemic. At the time, it would have been very meaningful to me to read about gay people in Oxy publications, but the College was "not ready" then.

In the intervening 25-plus years, Oxy has made great progress as a supportive place for LGBT students, and my fellow Oxy alumni have been very accepting of me as an out gay man. Thank you for the visibility of LGBT students and alumni in *Occidental Magazine*. We are part of the Oxy community, too. I look forward to our continued presence on the pages of our alumni magazine.

DAN KARASIC '82

San Francisco

I'm taken aback by a couple of letters criticizing the magazine for its "Family Matters" article. Mike Malouf '82 suggests that the editors have "poor judgment" and are "insensitive" to people who aren't fully supportive of same-sex marriage, and Burt Zillgitt '52 sniffs that he "cannot imagine a dumber subject to feature," sarcastically noting that he's "sure it will do wonders for alumni contributions in the coming year."

Did I miss something? The article was entirely matter-of-fact in tone, and was reporting on how a timely issue affects Occidental alumni (and lots of them).

It's unbecoming of Malouf to feel victimized by an article that portrays the Waters-Voecks family in a sympathetic light. After all, Malouf's and Zillgitt's marriages will be unaffected, and will remain legally recognized in all 50 states, regardless of how the same-sex marriage issue in California is resolved. Not so for Waters and Voecks.

I have yet to see a single well-reasoned argument against same-sex civil marriage, untainted by exaggerated claims, hysterical speculation, and ancient prejudice. Malouf and Zillgitt, after receiving a world-class undergraduate education at Oxy, should be well-equipped to think more seriously about this topic before complaining about the magazine's editors, who have done a fine job.

PAT WICTOR '89

Brooklyn

After reading last issue's letters to the editor, it occurred to us that Mike Malouf '82 may well be correct. There probably are a number of alumni willing to withhold donations to the school because you dared to celebrate the marriages of gay couples in our community.

I'm afraid we're "just not ready" to cede any influence to intolerance on this subject, regardless of its rationale. My wife and I are sending in a contribution double the size of our largest previous donation. There's no reason Oxy should suffer for doing right. We will continue to fight for equal rights under the law for all couples, and we hope that Oxy will be beside us in the fight.

GLENN MAR '84 & JULIE MINOFF '86

San Francisco

Correction

Due to an editing error, Keith Malone '85 was misidentified in "Wesley & Me" last issue.

OCCIDENTAL

Volume 31, Number 2, Spring 2009

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OCCIDENTAL MAGAZINE

Published quarterly by Occidental College
Los Angeles CA 90041-3314
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All letters should include the author's name, address, and daytime telephone number. Letters selected for publication may be edited for length, content, and style.

Nothing But Net

Led by SCIAC Player of the Year Brianne Brown '09, first-year coach Heidi VanDerveer's Tigers win a school-record 22 games and make their first-ever postseason appearance in the Division III playoffs



Asha Jordan '09 takes her turn cutting down a piece of the net in Rush Gymnasium on Feb. 28, following the Tigers' SCIAC Postseason Tournament Championship victory over La Verne. Jordan offered solid numbers off the bench all season, averaging 5.1 points per game.

By JIM TRANQUADA
Photos by MARC CAMPOS

Competitiveness. Character. Consistency. According to head coach Heidi VanDerveer, those were the keys to the success of this year's women's basketball team, which made history in March by becoming the first to go to the NCAA playoffs in Occidental history.

In doing so, the Tigers won the SCIAC championship for the second straight year—Oxy's first back-to-back crowns since the 1978-79 and 1979-80 squads managed the same feat. "It was a great season," VanDerveer says. "We began with the goal of winning conference and a berth in the NCAA tournament, and worked hard to realize those dreams. We built on last year's success, set a high standard for the future, and took a giant step toward establishing a championship culture. We are very proud of our team."

The turning point for the Tigers (12-2 SCIAC, 22-5 overall) came early in the season, after a lopsided 73-46 loss on the road to Redlands. "We woke up and smelled the coffee," VanDerveer says. "After Redlands,

we focused on very specific things we needed to do to win. We worked on the same things every day. And it paid off." Led by senior and 2009 SCIAC Player of the Year Brianne Brown '09, the Tigers buckled down, losing only once in the next 15 games. Oxy's stingy defense, tops in the conference, limited opponents to an average of 49 points per game. "Our goal was to keep our opponents to 60 or fewer points," VanDerveer explains. "This was a very goal-oriented team, just like most Oxy students."

That defense was on display when the Tigers downed the University of La Verne 51-37 to clinch the SCIAC Postseason Tournament Championship and advance to the NCAAs. The game served as a rematch, not only of the regular season finale that Oxy won by a narrow three-point margin, but of last year's inaugural SCIAC Tournament Championship. After seeing their hopes of moving to the postseason slip away in a 79-51 loss to La Verne in 2008, the Tigers were determined not to experience a repeat. "This year, we had a combination of talent, hard

LEFT: Two-time SCIAAC Player of the Year Brianne Brown '09 averaged a team-high 15.4 points per game in conference play, adding 11 blocks and 5 rebounds per game. **RIGHT:** Players and coaches cut down the nets after Oxy earned its first-ever post-season berth with a 51-37 victory over La Verne.

BELOW: Britinee Yasukochi '10 started in all 27 games for the Tigers this season, leading the team in assists per game (3.4) and hitting a season-high 13 points against Claremont-Mudd-Scripps on Jan. 17.



work, and people determined to play as a team,” VanDerveer says. “They were willing to commit to doing what needed to be done, and they executed.”

Although Oxy fell to Chapman University in the first round, 70-65, in a heartbreaker when Brown’s last-second three-pointer was ruled a second too late, pushing the game into overtime, the Tigers are already looking forward to next season. Losing Brown, the team’s leading scorer and two-time conference Player of the Year, to graduation is a blow, but sophomores Stephanie Babij and Dior Williams, both of whom repeated as All-SCIAAC selections this spring, will take leadership roles.

With Britinee Yasukochi '10, Gillian Nugent '10, and Madeline Rose '11 set to return, Samantha Rossi '10 and Zoe Walsh '11 expected to be off the disabled list, and what promises to be a strong recruiting class, the future looks bright—even if VanDerveer sees room for improvement. “This is a very competitive conference,” she says. “We will have to get better.”



LEFT: After a 59-49 loss Nov. 25 to NAIA foe Westmont College, the Tigers won six of their next eight games before starting conference play. **BELOW:** Heidi VanDerveer inherited an Oxy squad that went 21-6 last year.



Williams and Huddle Photos by Kirby Lee



Stephanie Babij '11, *above*, was named First Team All-SCIAAC for a second year, while Dior Williams '11, *right*, stepped up from Second Team to First Team.



Looking for Balance

Between an uneasy endowment, an uncertain development outlook, and an unpredictable applicant pool, Occidental takes measures to avoid any budgetary pitfalls



Illustration by
Patrick Carlson

AMID CONTINUING ECONOMIC uncertainty, the Board of Trustees approved an austere yet balanced \$78.6 million budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year at its February meeting, taking what President Bob Skotheim called a “cooperative, cautious, and conservative approach.”

In coping with the budget impacts of the recession, Occidental finds itself somewhere in the middle among American educational institutions. On one side are those schools “that cater primarily to affluent families, are tuition dependent, and consequently little affected by the recession,” Skotheim said, while on the other side are “those heavily endowed research universities reliant on government support whose response to the downturn has been immediate and dramatic.”

The market value of Occidental’s endowment now stands at about \$252 million, down 34 percent from its October 2007 peak of \$395 million. “Relative to what could have happened, it could have been much worse,” investment committee chair Ian McKinnon ’89 told the board. Even with that decline, the value of the endowment is almost 13 percent higher than it was five years ago, he

pointed out. Each year, the endowment produces about 18 percent of Occidental’s operating funds, as compared with 33 percent at Harvard and 45 percent at Princeton, where the immediate impact of the recession has triggered layoffs and significant budget cuts.

Still, it’s clear that challenging times are ahead: The College’s investment management firm, Cambridge Associates, is forecasting a 0 percent return from endowment over the next two years, before a modest return resurfaces in 2011-12. If the absolute value of the endowment should continue to drop significantly, the board may have to reexamine its assumptions as to how much annual budget support it can realistically provide, according to Mike Groener, Occidental’s vice president for administration and finance.

With returns from the endowment lagging, giving to the College’s Annual Fund is more important than ever, said John Farmer, chair of the institutional advancement committee. Because the Annual Fund provides unrestricted dollars for the operating budget that can be spent wherever the need is greatest, “If there was ever a time that Occidental needed the generous support of its alumni, that time is now,” Farmer said. “Tuition cov-

ers only 60 percent of the cost of an Oxy education. Gifts built Occidental, and gifts will perpetuate the College we all value so highly.”

With the exception of those professors receiving promotions, faculty and staff will receive no raises next year. Seven faculty searches currently under way will continue, five of which will fill existing positions, but a freeze has been placed on all new staff positions, and new hires for existing positions are being closely scrutinized. Plans to move ahead with a proposed \$17-million renovation of Swan Hall will likely be delayed.

The black ink in next year’s budget relies on successfully enrolling 465 freshmen and 55 transfers this fall, increasing occupancy rates in residence halls, and focusing fundraising efforts on bolstering the Annual Fund. “We have never failed to meet our targets in the 11 years I have been at Occidental, and we will not start now,” Bill Tingley, vice president for admission and financial aid, told the board. With application numbers at an all-time high (*sidebar*), the current admission cycle is off to a strong start, Tingley added.

While \$27.3 million is budgeted for financial aid next year—an increase of 10 percent over 2008-09—many more families

are writing personal letters explaining their financial situation to accompany the standard financial aid forms. “We’re hearing from parents who did the right thing—who had invested and saved \$200,000 for their child’s education, and today that has shrunk to \$100,000,” said Maureen McRae, director of financial aid.

The Board also approved several measures to increase the number of students living on campus, including a new, lower-cost meal plan; refurbishment of Norris and Chilcott halls over the summer; adjusting financial aid policies to reflect the difference in the average costs of living on and off campus; and most significantly, a three-year on-campus residency requirement to take effect with the incoming Class of 2013. (A two-year residency requirement is now in place.)

“This last measure reflects the board’s commitment to Occidental’s mission as a residential liberal arts college and brings us more closely in line with housing policies at peer institutions,” Skotheim said. At the same time, the student life committee is expected to report back to the board on ways in which the on-campus residential experience can be enhanced.

—JIM TRANQUADA

Applications Hit New High

And now for some good news: Applications for admission to Occidental have topped 6,000 for the first time ever, setting a new record for the 11th time in 12 years. It’s difficult to know whether this year’s numbers were influenced by an “Obama effect,” says dean of admission Vince Cuseo. President Barack Obama ’83 has publicly acknowledged the important role his two years at Occidental played in steering him toward a career in public service, and his campaign provided a new level of national and international visibility for the College.

Some 6,007 students submitted applications for one of 465 spaces in the Class of 2013, an increase of 4 percent over last year. “In a year when a number of other top liberal arts colleges have experienced a decline in applications, it’s extremely gratifying to see record numbers,” Cuseo says. “What we find even more impressive than the sheer numbers is the quality of our applicants.”

The drop in applications at some of Occidental’s peer institutions follows what were for many record-setting numbers last year. The declines this spring range from 1 percent at Amherst to a 20 percent drop at Williams. Applications rose 2 percent at both Wellesley and Princeton.



NEW MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS include (top row, l-r) John Garner ’71, Casey Clow ’75, Raymond Yen ’82, and Jeff Dennis ’94; (bottom row, l-r) Jennifer Freemon ’97, Amber Thompson ’00, Erin Englert ’02, and Kathie Bradley ’03. Each new BOG member has been elected to a four-year term starting July 1. For biographical information and to vote for alumni trustee, visit alumni.oxy.edu/alumnielections.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS ADDS EIGHT

EIGHT NEW MEMBERS have been named to the Alumni Board of Governors in uncontested elections—but your help is still needed to elect an alumni trustee to the Board of Trustees. Please vote online at alumni.oxy.edu/alumnielections by May 18.

Please vote for alumni trustee by choosing among these two candidates:



Julie (Dees) Johnson ’61 of Torrance is a licensed marriage and family therapist. She majored in education and music and received her master’s in clinical psychology from Pepperdine in 1994. Asked about challenges facing the College, she replies:

“Maintaining those strengths even when faced with a compromised economy, security issues, and aging physical structures. However, with our new president, and developing leadership, I am confident these challenges will be considered in ways that will keep the Oxygen in Oxy.”



Bob Cody ’68 of Pasadena is assistant dean, computing services, at Pasadena City College. He majored in history and political science and has master’s degrees in both history (1970) and education (1980) from Cal State L.A., as well as a doctorate in education (1995) from UCLA. “One of the greatest challenges facing the College is the development of a clear vision for what it means to be a liberal arts leader in the 21st century,” he says. “Included in this vision is a need to develop a focused understanding of the roles of all members of the Oxy community, particularly the alumni.”

“Maintaining those strengths even when faced with a compromised economy, security issues, and aging physical structures. However, with our new president, and developing leadership, I am confident these challenges will be considered in ways that will keep the Oxygen in Oxy.”

Here are the eight new members of the Alumni Board of Governors:

John Garner ’71 of Pasadena is an employee benefits specialist and principal with Garner Consulting. He majored in business at Oxy.

Casey Clow ’75 of Oakland is a partner with Craigie, McCarthy & Clow. A history major at Oxy, he received his J.D. from Hastings College of the Law in 1982.

Raymond Yen ’82 of Pasadena is a cardiologist at Foothill Cardiology. An economics major at Oxy, he completed his M.D. from the University of Chicago in 1986.

Jeffrey Dennis ’94 of Costa Mesa is an attorney and partner with Newmeyer & Dillion. He majored in economics and diplomacy and world affairs at Oxy and completed his J.D. from USC in 1997.

Jennifer Freemon ’97 of Glendale is a stay-at-home mom. She majored in history and completed her master’s in teaching in 1999. She is a board member and past president of Alumni of Occidental in Education.

Amber Thompson ’00 of Pasadena is a corporate relations specialist with Parsons Corp. She majored in English and comparative literary studies at Oxy and completed her master’s in mass communication from Cal State Northridge in 2005.

Erin Englert ’02 of Torrance is an aerospace/calibration engineer with Northrop Grumman. She majored in physics at Oxy and completed her master’s in physics from UCLA last year.

Kathie Bradley ’03 of Pasadena is regional marketing manager for the Pacific region with Right Management. She graduated with honors in anthropology.

Photo by Marc Campos



D.C. photos by David Brody



Inauguration Fanfare Bicoastal Celebrations Laud President Obama

It was standing-room only in 400-seat Keck Theater as students, staff, and faculty gathered on campus to watch the inauguration of President Barack Obama '83 on Jan. 20. Students began lining up outside the venue hours before the swearing-in ceremony, which was slated to begin at 8 a.m. Pacific time. Several students even spent the night outside the theater to ensure a seat inside.

The flag-festooned facility was also swarmed with media, including more than a dozen English-, Spanish-, Korean-, and Japanese-language TV crews, wire service and radio reporters, and journalists from as far away as Australia.

Students received free T-shirts with Obama's image and commemorative buttons that declared "Barry Was Here" next to a morphed image of Obama's Occidental application headshot and a current photograph. (Obama, then known as Barry, arrived from Hawaii to attend Oxy from 1979 to 1981.) Outside the theater, they also snapped photos with a life-sized photographic cutout of Obama below a large banner reading "Congratulations President Obama '83."

Inside the bunting-draped theater—which displayed a banner that read "Barack Rocks!"—students cheered, clapped, and rose to their feet several times during the ceremony, shown on a theater-sized TV screen.

Erik Quezada, a senior international relations major from Azusa, spoke of Obama to *Los Angeles Times* reporter Larry Gordon: "He walked the same halls I did. He ate the



same food I did. He breathed the same air I did. It's cathartic almost, but I love it."

Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez sat in the theater with senior Lindsay Washington, an African-American student from Washington, D.C. He devoted his entire column the next day to the inauguration-watching party at Occidental, concluding: "Washington left the auditorium a citizen of California and a child of Washington, where an African American lives in the White House and anything seems possible."

On the East Coast, more than 300 students and alumni crowded the DACOR Bacon House in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the inauguration of Obama at a pair of receptions held Jan. 19. Two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Steve Coll '80 spoke to the capacity crowds on the topic "What to Expect From the Obama Administration."

Added together, the talks attracted the largest crowd to an off-campus alumni event in the history of the College, according to Jim Jacobs, director of alumni relations.

TOP LEFT: Oxy students sign a banner commemorating Obama's journey from 1600 Campus Road to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. **TOP RIGHT:** Michael Butler '80, Lou Hook '80, and Richard Casey '80 raise a glass in Washington. **ABOVE:** Keynote speaker Steve Coll '80 sizes up the prospects for the Obama administration.

National Honors for Oxy Community Engagement, Learning Programs Cited

Occidental's extensive outreach efforts and its distinctive community-based learning program received two forms of national recognition this winter that place it in elite company. In being selected as a community engagement institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Occidental becomes one of a handful of liberal arts colleges to be so designated for its commitment to mutually beneficial collaboration with its surrounding communities.

Unlike other Carnegie classifications—the acknowledged standard for categorizing

U.S. colleges and universities—community engagement is a voluntary category, for which colleges and universities must apply. In this, the second year of the new classification, only 195 applicants have been selected, 17 of them liberal arts colleges. Occidental garnered a dual classification that recognizes both curricular engagement and outreach and community partnerships, in line with its mission that includes “a deeply rooted commitment to the public good.”

Occidental also was again named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, this time for exemplary efforts in service to disadvantaged youth. In 2008, nearly 900 Oxy students—almost half of the student population—contributed more than 5,800 hours of service in areas including math and reading tutoring, disaster relief, and art appreciation. Occidental has been named to the Honor Roll each year since the program was launched in 2006.

“Being recognized is tremendously rewarding for our efforts as a civically engaged institution,” says Maria Avila, director of the Center for Community-Based Learning. “The recognition goes to all of the faculty, students, and community partners who participated in the ever-growing number of classes and student projects connecting with Los Angeles.”

Undergraduate Research

34 Students Take Their Projects to National Confab

For the second straight year, 34 Occidental students have been invited to the National Undergraduate Research Conference. The group of invited students, matching last year’s record for the largest in Oxy history, will present their research in a wide range of disciplines. Faculty-mentored undergraduate research projects have been an important component in the education of Oxy students for decades, and undergraduate research has become a signature program for the College, one that has drawn national recognition.

Student researchers will present research on topics ranging from an analysis of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and a study of U.S.-Syrian relations to tissue regeneration in predatory cone snails and mathematical models for traffic lights. The 2009 conference will be held at

the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse from April 16-18. The NCUR hosts more than 2,000 students, presenting research through visual arts, oral presentations, posters, and performances.

Winter Sports Wrap-up

Swimmers Break Records, Men’s Hoops Foul Out Early

Thirteen school records were broken as the Tiger women finished fourth and the men placed fifth in the 2009 SCIAAC Swimming and Diving Championships, held Feb. 12-14 at the Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool in Long Beach. Seniors Eliza Callwood and Eileen McMillan joined forces with freshmen Karie Nickle and Mallory Ryan to set a new Oxy record in the 400 free relay. They swam a combined 3:39.38, breaking the mark set in 2006. All totaled, Ryan and Callwood each broke six school records.

Oxy’s men’s basketball squad struggled through the second half of the 2008-09 campaign to finish 7-7 in the SCIAAC and 11-14 overall—its first losing season since 1997-98. With the Tigers’ two top scorers, Sean Anderson ’10 (15.7 points per game, First Team All-SCIAAC) and Jack Hanley ’12 (14.7 ppg, Second Team All-SCIAAC), returning next year, coach Brian Newhall ’83’s team is expected to quickly rebound.

Oxy Dance Team

Return to Orlando Improves by Leaps and Bounds

One year after they came out of nowhere to reach the semifinals of the Universal Dance Association/ESPN national dance team championship at Disney World, the 12-member Oxy Dance Team was back with a vengeance. At this year’s nationals, the team placed 13th, well ahead of last year’s 27th-place finish.

“We have made substantial progress, and are starting to become one of the more prominent dance teams in the country,” says Allison Truscheit ’08, a member of last year’s team who stayed on to coach. The Tigers came in second at a local competition in Irvine, and were invited to perform at a showcase hosted by Cal State Fullerton, whose team won at the nationals last year.

Occidental in Brief

Terry Gilliam ’62 received the BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award in recognition of his contributions to cinema at the British Academy Film Awards, presented Feb. 8 at London’s Royal Opera House. “I’m amazed to be humbled by a piece of metal,” said the iconoclastic director, whose movies include *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975), *Time Bandits* (1981), *Brazil* (1985), *The Fisher King* (1991), and *Twelve Monkeys* (1995). Gilliam has lived in England since 1968.

□ Pixar producer Lindsey Collins ’94 was a member of the team that won the Oscar for best animated feature for *WALL-E* at the 81st Academy Awards on Feb. 22. A diplomacy and world affairs major at Oxy, she first collaborated with *WALL-E* writer-director Andrew Stanton on *Finding Nemo*.

□ Building on previous success with schoolchildren nationwide, a \$395,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation will make it possible for the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute to extend healthy food and wellness programs to preschool children. The new effort will establish pilot programs in El Monte, West Hollywood, South Los Angeles, and San Bernardino County that will seek to improve early childhood eating habits.

Photo by Marc Campos



Assistant professor of physics Adrian Hightower pilots a solar-powered boat on a test run in Taylor Pool on Jan. 31. Students, teachers, and parents from 35 Southern California high schools converged on campus to learn about electric boats and solar energy from seven Oxy student instructors as part of the 2009 Solar Cup, a program sponsored by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California focused on electrical and mechanical engineering and problem solving.



LEFT: Veitch wheels through the streets of New York City's Greenwich Village on a chilly day in March. **RIGHT:** Touring the campus as a finalist in January with President Bob Skotheim, Board of Trustees chair Dennis Collins, and search committee chair John Farmer. "He's a smart guy," Farmer says of Veitch, 50. "He knows what the job is."



Man in Motion

From movie extra to tugboat deckhand to Holstein handler, **Jonathan Veitch** has frequently taken the road less traveled. How will he navigate the landscape as Occidental's next president?

By Samantha B. Bonar '90

Photos by Bob Handelman & Marc Campos

JONATHAN VEITCH is no stranger to the audition process. He was born into a Hollywood family—his grandfather, Alan Ladd, was best known as the title character in the 1953 Western *Shane*, and his father was a Columbia Pictures executive—which led to Veitch's youthful work as an extra in television and film. His resume includes "Charlie's Angels" and "The Love Boat," miniseries such as *From Here to Eternity* and *Harold Robbins' The Pirate*, and the Oscar-winning 1978 disco classic *Thank God It's Friday* (in which the gold-vested Veitch gets down to the Commodores).

"I had no career aspirations, other than to make a little money for college," Veitch says. "And it was fun. I mean, who has a summer job where one day you're on Pearl Harbor dodging Japanese Zeros, the next day you're in a discotheque, and the next day you're jumping in a pool? People think it's glamorous, but movie sets are very dull, actually. It's very slow. The thing I liked about it was I could read all day long."


All that reading paid off, as Veitch has enjoyed a distinguished academic career that most recently found him as associate professor of literature and history and dean of

Eugene Lang College: The New School for Liberal Arts in New York City. A veteran of many administrative searches, Veitch recently endured the biggest audition of his career: a casting call for Occidental's next president. When he spoke to the Oxy community Jan. 26, he called the search process here "a model of thoughtfulness. They've done everything but inspect my hooves and teeth."

Veitch emerged from the process with a ticket to Hollywood. By unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees, he was offered the job Jan. 29. "Occidental was looking for someone with proven leadership skills, a deep commitment to and understanding of the liberal arts and sciences, and a talent for attracting support for higher education," says Board chair Dennis Collins. "Jonathan

emerged from a very strong field of candidates as the ideal person to lead Occidental from strength to strength."

"Jonathan has the potential to be one of Occidental's great presidents," says Robert A. Skotheim, who came out of retirement last year to serve an 18-month appointment as Oxy's president and will remain engaged with the College as a trustee after July 1. "He exemplifies the intellectual and academic excellence that have always been at the heart of Occidental's identity; he understands Occidental's role as a college of the liberal arts and sciences and thus its historic significance to the larger society; and he is able to articulate the College's narrative in a way that reconciles its continuities with the changes it has experienced over the years."



"It is not enough to claim Barack Obama as Oxy's own simply because he studied here," Veitch says. "If the College is to be true to what he represents, it must build on his example."

Former President Ted Mitchell (1999-2005), a contemporary of Veitch's at Stanford University, shares Skotheim's assessment. "Jonathan will be a powerful advocate for Occidental's mission and its aspirations and a great success as president. His is a first-rate mind that cuts to the heart of any problem or question while also seeing the broader context. ... I've been a deep admirer of Jonathan since our undergraduate days at Stanford. He was a star then and still is."

The 6'4" Veitch—who will handily claim the mantle of tallest president in Oxy history in addition to being the first native Angeleno in the post—is excited about coming to Occidental and returning to Los Angeles. "When the job became available I couldn't imagine a better fit for me," he says. "It isn't hard to see right off why the College inspires such love and dedication."

AFTER GRADUATING from Stanford in 1981 with a degree in English and American literature, Veitch decided to spend a year discovering America, working jobs that were emblematic of each area in which he lived. He unloaded fish on the docks of Gloucester, Mass.; worked on a dairy farm in Nebraska, where he memorably shaved a prize Holstein cow in 90-degree weather; and hauled grain on the towboats of the Mississippi. "That year convinced me that the United States was as complicated and fascinating as any other place or time that one might study," he says, and inspired his return to graduate school.

Veitch completed his doctorate in the History of American Civilization from Harvard, writing his dissertation and first book, *American Superrealism* (1997), on novelist Nathanael West and the literary avant-garde of the 1930s. He then took a position teaching American literature and cultural history at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (he later did a stint as a visiting professor at Doshisha University in Japan). After four years at Wisconsin, he joined the faculty of the New School in 1996, becoming associate provost for the university in 2002 and dean of Lang the following year.

When Veitch took over the undergraduate college five years ago, the school had just 25 full-time faculty, 50 adjuncts, and 600 students. "Morale was low, academic quality was uneven, fundraising was almost nonexistent, and the school's relationship

with Eugene Lang (the philanthropist for whom the school was renamed in 1985) was not everything that one might hope,” Veitch observed in January. “Like many small schools it had become a bit too satisfied with its limitations and was somewhat reluctant to change.”

On his watch, Veitch and his team developed a strategic plan for Lang, hired more than 60 full-time faculty members, introduced tenure to the College, doubled the enrollment to more than 1,350, and established a fundraising operation that went from raising about \$40,000 to close to \$2 million in less than five years. “Most importantly to me, we won back the confidence of Gene Lang,” Veitch says.

Programmatically, Lang created partnerships with major museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art; developed civic-engagement programs addressing such issues as prison reform, homelessness, and public education; and started study abroad programs in Sri Lanka, Poland, South Africa, and Mexico. Veitch describes Lang as “an urban liberal arts college that shares many of the same aspirations that Occidental has. We did a lot of great things there, and I thought that one could do the same here at Oxy.”

At the New School, “I plucked Jonathan out of the ranks of the faculty to help establish some campus-wide programs for the provost’s office,” recalls his friend and mentor Jackson Kytte, a former deputy provost of the New School (now vice president for academic affairs at the College of Pastoral Care, HealthCare Chaplaincy, in New York City). “When the dean’s job came open, I thought he was ideal for that.”

Noting that Veitch came to the job not as a trained administrator, but as a tenured professor, “There was never a question about his authenticity as an academic leader,” Kytte adds. “The New School is fraught with politics—the fact that Jonathan survived and in fact thrived is a testimony to his judgment and hard work. He inherited a very difficult college that had a number of sensitive personnel issues, and he handled them all with grace. ... Occidental should consider itself extremely fortunate.”

“The dean of Eugene Lang is more than a typical dean’s position,” says John Farmer, chair of the presidential search committee



Veitch meets members of the Oxy community during his initial visit to campus in January. “The first task of any new president,” he says, “is to listen a lot to the stakeholders involved—faculty, trustees, administrators, students, alumni—to find out what their experience has been, what they value most about Oxy, and what they wish might be better.”



and vice chair of the Occidental Board of Trustees. “Jonathan had all of the leadership responsibilities that are consistent with the president of a small liberal arts college. His experience and his appreciation and understanding of a college of liberal arts and sci-

“Oxy’s future is assured,” Veitch says. “The only question is what kind of future it wants for itself.”

ences were crucial in our deciding that he was the best choice.”

When Farmer and Collins met Veitch for lunch in Short Hills, N.J., in November, “We were very impressed with his credentials and his obvious capabilities,” Farmer says. “The first thing we noticed is that he’s a very affable, really nice human being. It was obvious how bright he is in the first few minutes of conversation, and that he was very serious about this opportunity.”

By January, the search committee had narrowed the field to eight semifinalists. The committee met with them individually off

campus in the first week of that month. From there they narrowed it down to two—Veitch and Carleton College dean Scott Bierman, both of whom visited campus and spoke to faculty, staff, students, and alumni in late January. “I don’t know that there was any one particular thing that tipped the board in favor of Jonathan,” Farmer says. “It just was apparent that Jonathan was the best fit for Occidental.” (Bierman was subsequently named president of Beloit College in Wisconsin.)

“Jonathan will be a president who can clearly articulate what we offer, and what makes us special, with a great deal of charm and charisma,” says Movindri Reddy, associate professor of diplomacy and world affairs, chair of the faculty council, and a faculty representative on the search committee. “I think he will energize the campus, bringing a new perspective to our everyday activities. He will also be a fine representative for the College, and given the dismal economic environment, I think Jonathan can establish the essential groundwork for dynamic fundraising when the times are more conducive.”



Veitch would like to teach a small seminar at Oxy once he settles in to his new job: “I’d welcome the contact with students,” he says. “And nothing keeps you quite so sharp as preparing for a class.”

VEITCH’S FIRST PRIORITY when he takes office in July will be to get to know Occidental—“to find out who’s here and what they’re interested in and what can—and can’t—be realized with the kinds of financial resources available,” he says. “I think fundraising will be the first and last thing I think about every day because that’s so important to the future of the College.”

Academically, he plans to inventory Occidental’s priorities and do some strategic planning about its future. “I have the sense, although it’s only superficial, that the core curriculum could use a little bit of rethinking,” says Veitch. “I would hope there would be groups of faculty that would come together around certain intellectual aspirations, certain things that they believe in strongly as essential to a liberal arts education. There might be two or three or four different tracks that an undergraduate could take—some more traditional, some less traditional.”

Another goal involves connecting Occidental students with local cultural institutions much like he did at Lang, such as the Southwest Museum, as well as with the entertainment industry. “Getting students out into the city in thoughtful ways could be a tremendous opportunity,” Veitch says.

“One of the things I hope to do is put Occidental at the center of a national conversation about liberal arts education.”

In the longer term, Veitch would like to see Oxy expand its vision of itself and what it can accomplish. “Often with schools you get an interesting mission and a fairly conventional institution underneath,” he says. “I’m interested in the ways in which one can ensure that that mission tracks down into the DNA of the institution and matters, so that people come out really stamped by their experience here. So one of the things that interests me is to make sure that there is something that distinguishes an Oxy graduate—certain qualities of mind, certain kinds of experiences, certain kinds of emphases.”

Pursuing those goals will take time—time that Veitch says he is willing to commit. “If you go back and look at the history of Occidental, you see that the presidents who have made the biggest difference have been here for a couple of decades. I’m not proposing that anybody at Occidental should have to live with me that long—except perhaps my wife, she’s very brave about that—but I’d say it may take at least a decade before you

could really step back and say, ‘This is what I’ve wanted to accomplish.’”

Before coming to campus in January, Veitch had only visited the College once before—a nighttime party when he was 20. “I think it has to be one of the most beautiful college campuses in the United States,” he now says. And while Oxy’s lack of name recognition back east has been a sore spot for many, Veitch believes that Barack Obama ’83’s connection to the College creates an opportunity to “put Occidental at the center of a national conversation about liberal arts education.

“In just so many ways, he has all the kinds of classic habits of mind that great 19th-century thinkers like John Henry Newman talked about when they were talking about what a liberal education does. It produces curiosity, eloquence, thoughtfulness, a respect for evidence and scientific thinking—an ability to take complex ideas and make them clear without simplifying

them to the point that they lose their meaning. If one can ensure that Oxy graduates have those qualities, then I think that will in and of itself take Occidental’s reputation a long way.”

The job of a college president “requires a thousand decisions that make an institution better,” Veitch adds. “So aside from fundraising, you have to make smart decisions about personnel, academic programming, partnerships, and any number of other things. ... Occidental’s future is assured; the only real question is what kind of future it wants for itself.”

VEITCH COMES TO OXY after a year-long sabbatical to work on his second book, *Colossus in Ruins*, about how once-important American sites such as maritime New England, the industrial Rust Belt, and the Cold War West are struggling to memorialize their history through museums, historic preservation, and monuments. “These places are plot points in a national story,” he observes, “and they’ve largely been forgotten.” Veitch also is working on a book on higher education in the United States that will use case studies of colleges and universities to explore contemporary issues. “The landscape of American higher education is changing dramatically,” he says.

With the move to Los Angeles, his personal landscape will be changing as well. In his old position, Veitch rode his bike 12 miles to work every day from the Bronx to Lang, through Manhattan traffic, even in the dead of winter. “My commute to work was the only place that I could fit exercise into my schedule,” he says. Since that’s no longer necessary, “It’s been suggested I could ride around the campus 16 times.”

Accompanying Veitch to campus will be his wife Sarah, a former fashion industry executive; children Margaret, 14, Alexander, 12, and Eleanor, 5; as well as “a very friendly

11-year-old retriever named Alice and a very mean bunny named Winnie,” Veitch says. (Elaborating on the latter, he explains, “I’d like nothing better than to ‘liberate’ Winnie so we don’t have to clean her cage out every week and get bitten in the process, but I’m being kept on close watch by my children.”)

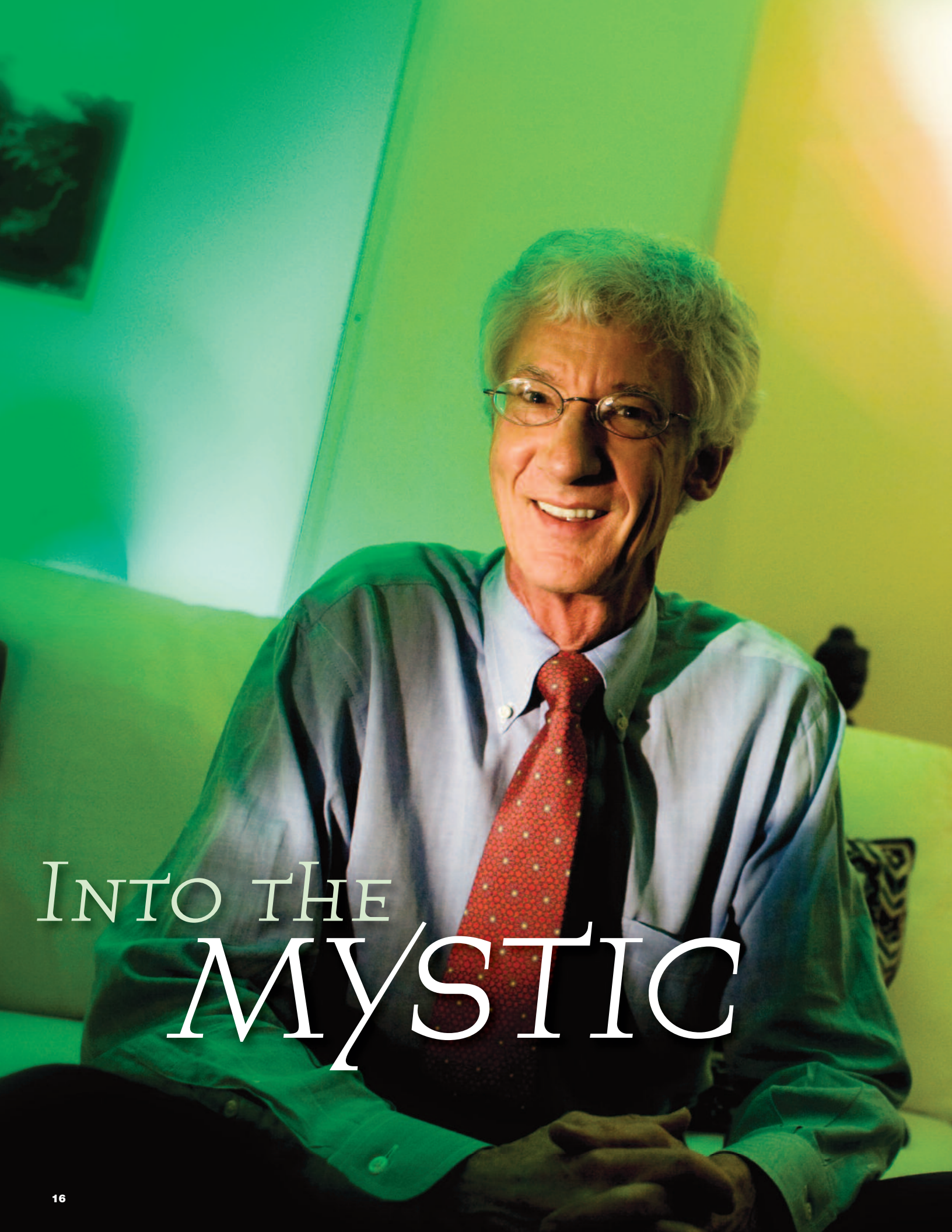
Angry bunny notwithstanding, “Since Jonathan received the offer, he’s really thought about nothing else but Occidental—when he’s on the subway, when he’s on his bike, when we’re having dinner,” says Sarah, who met her husband on a blind date in Boston (“We were the tallest friends that each

of the two friends had”). “He’s excited and totally committed to this opportunity. He’s good at working with people, he has excellent ideas, he’s pragmatic, and he’ll pull all these things together and help the College wherever he can.”


All that time spent as a Hollywood extra could reap dividends in his new position. Noting that there are divas in academia as well as in the cinema, working on film sets “may be good preparation for a college president—I’m not sure,” Veitch told the Oxy community during his January visit. Come July, he’ll be ready for his close-up. □



The Veitch family visits the Annenberg President’s House, their future home: daughter Margaret, 14; wife Sarah; daughter Eleanor, 5; son Alexander, 12; and Jonathan.



INTO THE
MYSTIC



After a lifetime of rigorous research
on the effects of drugs on animals and humans,
neuroscientist **Roland Griffiths '68** meditates on
the spiritual powers of hallucinogens

BY CHRISTINE STUTZ
PHOTOS BY DENNIS DRENNER

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HEN IT COMES TO HIS RESEARCH, Roland R. Griffiths '68 leaves no detail to chance. Harriet de Wit, director of the Human Behavioral Pharmacology Laboratory at the University of Chicago, recalls Griffiths checking inside subjects' mouths to be certain they had swallowed pills given them as part of a drug study on which the scientists had collaborated. Very few researchers, she says, would be quite as thorough.

After a lifetime of rigorous research into the effects of drugs on animals and humans, Griffiths is applying the methodologies he has developed—and the credibility he has earned—to the often-controversial study of hallucinogens. A professor in the departments of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Johns Hopkins University, Griffiths is leading a series of studies indicating that the drug psilocybin—“shrooms,” if you will—can, under controlled circumstances, induce powerful mystical experiences in users.

Griffiths was drawn to the idea of exploring psilocybin's potential to enhance spirituality because of his own practice of meditation, which he began 14 years ago. “The hallucinogen work speaks broadly to my interest in issues of transcendence, self-exploration, and spirituality,” says Griffiths, kneeling on a backless yoga chair in his Baltimore office. His experience with meditation, he says, “opened

In a follow-up study published last July to his landmark 2006 research on psilocybin, Griffiths recounted that the experiences of the study's 36 “hallucinogen-naïve adults” triggered by a controlled psilocybin dose were considered “to be among the most personally meaningful and spiritually significant of their lives,” even 14 months later.

up an interest in spirituality that had been latent prior to that time.”

Most of the 36 participants in the study described their journey with psilocybin as among the most meaningful experiences of their lives. Even 14 months after taking the drug, most users continued to rank the experience alongside the births of their children.

Now Griffiths and his colleagues are recruiting cancer patients for a study to determine whether the psilocybin experience reduces their anxiety or sorrow about their illness. Research into the effects of hallucinogenic drugs began half a century ago, with some promising results, Griffiths says. But laws enacted in response to the excesses of the “psychedelic ’60s” halted the work. The Hopkins study was one of the first to resume research into psychedelics, largely because it was Griffiths who sought permission to do so.

Using animals, he and his colleagues developed techniques to assess the abuse potential of numerous drugs. They verified their conclusions, when it was safe to do so, with human subjects. “Our methods are the gold standard in both animal and human research,” he says.

But Griffiths didn’t start out intending to be a research scientist. He enrolled at Oxy with plans to major in engineering. But an Introduction to Psychology course changed everything. “I became fascinated and got pulled into psychology,” he recalls.

The New York native chose Occidental because of its reputation as a great liberal arts school. His father, a psychologist who worked as a public health educator, was a member of the faculty at UC Berkeley, but Griffiths knew he did not want to go to such a huge school. “I was looking for a more intimate type of experience,” he says.

new understanding of human drug abuse and addiction, and form the foundation of his work for the next 40 years.

The research method was developed by Joseph V. Brady, a Johns Hopkins researcher widely acknowledged as the father of behavioral pharmacology. Brady’s work demonstrated that animals, given free access to certain drugs, will become addicted to them. This finding led to the understanding that drug addiction has a significant biological component and is not merely a result of weakness or bad character, as had been previously thought.

After completing his doctoral studies in 1972, Griffiths came to Johns Hopkins to work directly with Brady. He joined his friend and colleague from Minnesota, George Bigelow. Together they broke new ground studying the effects of alcohol,

After working closely with professor Luther Jennings ’49, Griffiths and roommate Barry Sears ’68 vowed to devote their lives to research—primarily in the area of the brain—“so that at age 40 neither of us would ever have to say, ‘I wish I had only given it the effort,’” Sears recalls.

Griffiths’s colleagues agree that few researchers could successfully design a study of this nature, which attempts to quantify such a subjective experience. And even fewer have the credibility to get it published in a prestigious journal such as *Psychopharmacology*, which reported the findings in July 2006.

“The psilocybin work is the most rigorous clinical pharmacology work that has ever been done,” says George Bigelow, professor of behavioral biology at Johns Hopkins and a longtime colleague of Griffiths. Knowing the scientific community might be skeptical of the psilocybin research, Griffiths “laid low,” Bigelow says, and did not talk about the study until he had solid data.

“It’s fortunate that someone as careful and methodical as he is doing this,” says de Wit. “I would say Roland is among the most highly regarded and most rigorous researchers in our area. In the design, the writing, and the data analysis, he’s flawless.”

With more than 300 published papers and book chapters, Griffiths has provided much of the knowledge and many of the tools used by behavioral pharmacologists.

After studying with professors David Cole M’47 and Luther Jennings ’49, Griffiths’s career path became clearer. “I was immediately drawn to experimental psychology,” he says. “I had always been interested in the physical sciences and figuring out how things work.” He published his first research paper in 1969, reporting results of a rat-brain study he conducted in his senior year with Jennings and Barry Sears ’68, his roommate who went on to create the Zone diet.

“In many ways, Roland and I are still joined at the hip academically and spiritually,” says Sears, who met Griffiths when both were freshmen and pledge brothers at Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. “One of my most cherished published articles remains our brain study at Oxy.”

Like many of his generation, Griffiths applied to the Peace Corps after finishing college, but he also was recruited by the University of Minnesota to pursue graduate studies in psychopharmacology. Griffiths ended up going to Minnesota, where he learned a methodology for animal drug self-administration that would pave the way for a

nicotine, and numerous other drugs, both legal and illegal.

In the 1980s, building on some of what he learned in Brady’s lab, Griffiths perfected a method of training baboons to distinguish one drug from another based on their physical responses to them. This methodology has proven extremely useful in assessing new drugs in development, and detecting subtle but important differences in similar compounds.

Colleagues describe Griffiths as a rigorous and persistent researcher, who asks intelligent questions and designs experiments that yield unquestionably solid data.

As a postdoctoral fellow in Griffiths’s lab in the 1970s, Jack Henningfield knew he was learning from a pioneer and a master. “Even then, his reputation was established as someone who worked to achieve the highest level of excellence,” says Henningfield, vice president for research and health policy at Pinney Associates, consultants to the pharmaceutical industry. “A paper published with his name on it is equivalent to the *Good Housekeeping* stamp of approval in science.”

“He brings excellent quality science to his work,” says Bigelow. At the same time, because of Griffiths’s high standards, “He can be very controlling,” Bigelow notes. “He can be very insistent on doing things his way.”

Griffiths consults for the pharmaceutical industry and government agencies, and he serves on the World Health Organization’s Expert Advisory Panel on Drug Dependence. He is considered a leading authority on caffeine, as well as on hallucinogens and sedative hypnotics, the class of drugs that includes tranquilizers and sleeping pills. It is largely as a result of his research that caffeine came to be recognized as an addictive drug.

After a quarter-century of investigating caffeine dependency, Griffiths has riled many in the beverage and soft drink industries. He has been dubbed an “anti-caffeine crusader” and attacked for conducting “fizzy research.”

Undaunted by this criticism, he has more recently turned his attention to the \$5.4-billion-a-year energy-drink industry. These beverages, containing anywhere from 50 to 500 milligrams of caffeine, are marketed to adolescents who might be unaware of the risks associated with high consumption. In the September 2008 issue of the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, Griffiths presented scientific evidence suggesting young adults who consume energy drinks are at higher risk for abusing other drugs.

In October, Griffiths wrote a letter to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration calling for federal regulation of the labeling and content of energy drinks. The letter was signed by 97 other experts on drug abuse and addiction.

The kind of gravitas that enables Griffiths to take on the soft drink industry and challenge federal agencies is exactly

what his colleagues are counting on to bring credibility to the study of hallucinogens for therapeutic use. “This area of behavioral pharmacology is such a hot potato that few in recent decades have seriously investigated it,” Henningfield says. “His imprimatur on the research is causing it to be taken seriously.”

Ever the hard-nosed researcher, Griffiths considers his ongoing work with psilocybin one of the most significant endeavors of his 40-year career. “I can’t think of anything more important to be doing,” he says.

As Barry Sears sees it, “Roland is one of the great examples that you can be a great researcher, but never lose sight of the truly important things in life such as understanding yourself and your place in the world. All of that ultimately comes from understanding the mind-body connection.” □

Christine Stutz is a Baltimore writer.



Last September, Griffiths warned of the dangers of consuming high volumes of popular energy drinks such as Red Bull, calling caffeine intoxication a “well-recognized psychiatric diagnosis with well-described symptoms.”

Whether it's crafting 200 pairs of pajamas for the denizens of Whoville or taking last-minute measurements of an elusive Russell Crowe, seamstress and tailor Laurie Buehler '80 answers the call as one of Hollywood's top costumers.

Material Girl



In 1979, Buehler served as costume designer on shows including *Brigadoon* and *H.M.S. Pinafore* for Oxy's Summer Drama Festival.

Photos courtesy Occidental College Special Collections

BY KRISTINA BROOKS
PHOTOS BY DENNIS DRENNER

GROWING UP, Laurie Buehler '80's passion for performing was complicated by her fear of auditioning. Thrown into Santa Barbara Youth Theatre by her mother when she was 11, she danced, sang, and acted her way through high school despite her anxiety over public speaking. "I wanted to be a Broadway singer, but I looked like a character actor," she recalls, "so that wasn't going to happen."

Lacking the profile of a chanteuse or the chutzpah for casting calls, Buehler instead found her niche in the costume shop. That set her on the path to a career as a seamstress, tailor, and costumer, fashioning a résumé that includes *American Gangster*, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, and *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2*.

If sewing beads on a gown or strapping some padding on an actor sounds simple, now imagine that the woman in the gown is Angelina Jolie or the actor being padded is Matt Damon (in *The Good Shepherd*). "You can be the world's best seamstress, but you also have to be able to walk into a fitting with a big star and be on your game," Buehler says. "You can't hold up a set, and often you don't get a second fitting. It's a craft, but it's also an art."

Buehler enrolled at Oxy as a prospective music major and sang with the Glee Club as a soprano. A work-study gig became her entrée into the theater department: She was soon given free rein over the costume shop in large part, she says, because "Nobody else wanted to do it." By her junior year, Buehler was working on every theater production as well as being costume manager for the

"Laurie's the most hard-working person I've ever met," says designer and frequent collaborator Rita Ryack. "She's dedicated and has a very delicate hand."





BELOW: Kevin James looks like he's late for a fitting in this scene from *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*, one of six 2009 releases on which Buehler worked. **BOTTOM:** Russell Crowe shows a bit of leg in *A Beautiful Mind*.



"If the designer [on a movie] can find someone who can fit the actors well, and who can be poised and speak to actors, that person can save the day," Buehler says.

Paul Blart: Mall Cop photo © Sony Pictures, *A Beautiful Mind* photo © Universal Pictures

Summer Drama Festival, prompting professor Alan Freeman '66 M'67 to suggest she add a theater major.

"I remember Laurie sewing in the middle of the night up in the attic of Thorne Hall," recalls long-time friend Jayne Dutra '80, who had a successful career in theatrical lighting design after graduation. "Now, looking back at the extremely ambitious shows we did, I think we were nuts. I remember staging *Peer Gynt* by Ibsen—12 scenes with everything but the kitchen sink."

Buehler's graduation recital was no less ambitious: the history of the ingénue in U.S. musical theater from the 1830s to *Pippin*, involving historically specific costumes for the 20-odd numbers she sang. With no formal training in costume design, "I had to figure things out for myself," she says. "I can do things a lot of people can't and can solve problems others can't. Put me in a real costume shop situation with rules, and I falter."

When she enrolled in a graduate program in theater at New York University, however, her shortcomings at the drawing board became an obstacle. "Grad schools really based grades on sketching, and I just didn't want to draw," says Buehler, who left NYU after her first semester. "For me, it took all the fun and creativity away. The joke was that I dropped out and became successful."

Indeed, a work-study position in NYU's costume shop became a full-time job, where Buehler stayed busy sewing period costumes

really hard." She subsequently got a job in the costume shop for Playwrights Horizons, tailoring future stars including William H. Macy, Kevin Spacey, and Allison Janney. After Buehler's first production, the head costumer quit, and Buehler subsequently ran the shop.

By 1991, Buehler decided to return to Los Angeles—just in time for the 1992 riots. She soon retreated to New York, reconnecting with Playwrights Horizons designer Rita Ryack on Buehler's first movie, *A Bronx Tale*. The pair set up shop in Tribeca, then moved to the basement of a funeral home in Queens, from there to an abandoned fruit store, and, finally, to a flea-infested, ramshackle house in Sheepshead Bay.

In better environs, the duo have since reteamed on three more films. But whether it's cranking out 200 pairs of pajamas for *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (2000), taking last-minute measurements of Russell Crowe—who refused to do fittings in advance—for *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), or dying fabric in a toilet on the set of *The Human Stain* (2003), "The pace on a film is absolutely mad," Ryack says. "It's always a four-minute mile, and the costume shop is the port in the storm. It's reassuring to have Laurie around."

for the New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and a number of dance companies. "I'd like to say I was really, really lucky," she says, "but I worked really,

After pursuing her career for nearly three decades, Buehler escaped to a cabin on a New Hampshire lake, became engaged, and indulged her passion for fabric by starting a home business—sewing a line of fine quilts and pillows with film connotations. Eleventh-hour calls from costumers still come in, but Buehler says she has learned to "say no a little more. If someone calls me at 10 p.m. to have a dress in the morning, I have to say no."

Despite her new lifestyle and mantra, Buehler has credits on six 2009 film releases, from the recent sleeper hit *Paul Blart: Mall Cop* to the Matthew McConaughey comedy *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past*. Yet for someone whose passion for theater was first ignited by acting, isn't the thankless work of a seamstress and tailor a letdown? "The goal of all supporting workers in theater or film is to make their work not show," says Freeman. "So much of the artistry of theater or film is about not showing difficulties, not competing with the story. People in those jobs must have humility and must be in it for personal fulfillment more than public approval."

"I just wanted to be a part of it, no matter whether I was out front or backstage," says Buehler. "If I didn't get into a show, I did costumes. At first I rebelled, but then I discovered how beautiful fabric is. Now, fabric is my 'bad thing,' the thing I see in a store and can't resist. And, of course, I always go for the \$165-a-yard fabric." □

Freelancer Kristina Brooks profiled Mieke Hart '91 ("Fiscally Fit") in the Fall 2007 issue.



**ROLLER DERBY ROOKIE
KATY LIM '01 MUSCLES
HER WAY INTO THE
L.A. DERBY DOLLS**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARC CAMPOS

WELCOME TO THE

DOLLHOUSE

K

ATY LIM '01 is no wimp. Her bruises and scars are a testament to the hard work she has put into becoming one of the newest members of the Varsity Brawlers, one of four teams in the L.A. Derby Dolls banked track roller derby league.

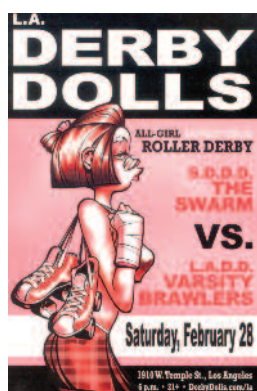
Lim—who maintains her day job as a director at a leading advertising firm in Los Angeles—saw her first bout in 2007 and was instantly hooked. “I rounded up a group of my friends and saw a Fight Crew versus Sirens bout,” she recalls. “I didn’t know the rules at all. I grabbed a program and was yelling, ‘Hit ‘em! Hit ‘em!’”

After that, Lim didn’t think of joining until she talked with a co-worker. Even though she didn’t consider herself athletic and hadn’t laced up a pair of skates in 10 years, she decided that she had to try. “I looked up everything I could online,” says Lim, who practiced for two months at World on Wheels, an old-school skating rink in midtown Los Angeles, before contacting the league. “I’m a fast learner.”

For the uninitiated (or those too young to remember Raquel Welch in the 1972 film *Kansas City Bomber*), roller derby burst onto the cultural landscape in the 1930s, when promoter Leo Seltzer (who trademarked the name) founded a league to capitalize on the

popularity of roller-skating and the spectacle of watching women chase each other around a banked track.

After a rough-and-tumble beginning, roller derby crested in popularity in the 1970s and then all but disappeared from the landscape. The current revival began in Austin, Texas, in 2001, in do-it-yourself fashion, with a new emphasis on athleticism and feminism, minus the staged theatricality of its predecessor. “It’s cheeky and funny. I don’t think it’s campy,” says Lim, whose derby name—“Tae Kwon Ho”—is, like all good derby names, self-referential and playfully tough. (Other Dolls members include Eva Destruction, Juana Beat’n, and Paris Killton.)



“IT’S CHEEKY AND FUNNY. I DON’T THINK IT’S CAMPY,” SAYS LIM—WHOSE DERBY HANDLE, TAE KWON HO, FITS COMFORTABLY ALONG SUCH TEAMMATES AS JANIS CHOPLIN, GORI SPELLING, AND VENUS DE MAUL’R.



TOP: Lim laces up for action with fellow members of the Varsity Brawlers. The L.A. Derby Dolls are divided into four teams and train four times per week. **ABOVE:** Lim takes a spill while wearing the white helmet of the jammer, the game’s only scoring position. **RIGHT:** Lim and a teammate vie for position as blockers, which set the pace of the jam. In less than eight years, more than 340 women’s roller derby leagues have sprung up worldwide.





ABOVE: “Skating on the banked track is such an experience. It’s exhilarating!” says Lim (taking a break in the infield). **RIGHT:** Lim at home in West L.A.

The L.A. Derby Dolls were formed in 2003 by artists Rebecca Ninburg and Wendy Templeton, who discovered a common love of skating and childhood memories of televised roller derby. With the time, talent, and resources of skaters, friends, and family, they built a 100-by-60-foot track out of wood, steel, and masonite. The Dolls skated their first match in 2004, and now typically draw capacity crowds of 1,700 to their monthly bouts at the Doll Factory, a converted ice-cream-cone factory in historic Filipinotown.

After Lim got her groove back on the roller rink, she sized up her abilities compared to other aspiring Dolls at one of the open practice sessions for new skaters—or “fresh meat,” as they are called. An avid goal-setter, Lim set up a tough schedule for herself, which she exceeded. She skated her first game with the Dolls last October as a subpooler, or alternate, with Fight Crew.

Lim’s organizational skills also helped her out while at Occidental. An English and comparative literary studies major and first-generation Korean-American from Sacramento, she made a name for herself as an activist at college, founding the Progressive Student Alliance and rallying students to a variety of causes. “It was the greatest four years of my life,” she recalls. “The diversity of Oxy was mind-blowing. I met so many different people, from the professors to the administrators, and they opened my eyes to everything.”



Kim is active with the Dolls behind the scenes as well as on the track, co-chairing the public relations committee and working with girls aged 8 to 17 on the fundamentals of a less aggressive version of roller derby with the Junior Derby Dolls. “I get to play a small part in their lives, to help them learn new skills and gain confidence,” says Lim, who also volunteered with the Junior Roller Derby Camp last summer.

The visibility of roller derby is expected to reach new heights later this year with the release of *Whip It!*, a coming-of-age tale on wheels based on a 2007 novel by ex-Derby Dolls skater Shauna Cross and starring Ellen Page (*Juno*). The film marks the directorial debut of Drew Barrymore and has an Oxy

connection in executive producer Kirsten “Kiwi” Smith ’92 (*10 Things I Hate About You*, *Legally Blonde*, and most recently, *The House Bunny*). Smith believes that much of the appeal of roller derby is “The burlesque badass edge—watching these girls is empowering!” she says. “The Derby Dolls are living out their superhero alter-ego fantasies, and we get to go on that ride with them.”

Transcendental meditation it’s not, but roller derby seems to have a calming effect for those that choose to outfit themselves with the prerequisite helmet, mouth guard, knee pads, elbow pads, and wrist guards. “What better way to get aggression out than at roller derby?” Lim asks.


Who are we to disagree? 

Photo courtesy Madeline Wander '08

Since joining the Karamazovs part-time last June, Bent has performed with the Brothers in Orange County; San Diego; Chicago; St. Louis; Austin and Fort Worth, Texas; New York City; Washington, D.C.; and Tampa.



HANDLE WITH

KARAMAZOV

Stephen Bent '09 knows how to juggle more than schoolwork and his social life. He also can juggle knives, bottles, frying pans, and flaming torches. But balancing his senior year with a professional career is another matter entirely.

JUGGLER STEPHEN BENT '09
FULFILLS A CHILDHOOD DREAM
BY JOINING HIS IDOLS—
THE FLYING KARAMAZOV BROTHERS

What began as a childhood hobby and morphed into a teenage obsession has now become a dream come true. Last summer, Bent was chosen to join the Flying Karamazov Brothers, who have been winning over audiences with their unabashedly vaudevillian blend of comedy, theater, music, and juggling since the troupe's founding at UC Santa Cruz in 1973.

Photo courtesy Joshua Sage



BY САМАНТА В. ВОПАР '90 | PHOTOS BY MAX S. GERBER



KEEP CLEAR



A popular Karamazov bit is when the Brothers agree to juggle any three things the audience brings, as long as each item weighs less than 10 pounds. In St. Louis in December, some wise guy offered up a metal box, welded shut and coated with butter, with a 9-pound weight rolling around inside.

Bent—who possesses “the juggling power of 8.5 regular men,” according to his biography on the Flying Karamazov Brothers website—can balance a flaming torch on his nose. “I’m young and stupid,” he explains. “This is the time to set things on fire.”



The knives have it: Bent as a freshman at Oxy, demonstrating his prowess in 2005.

NAMED FOR THE 1880 Fyodor Dostoyevsky novel, the Karamazovs—who perform in black jackets, kilts bedazzled with silver buttons, white tuxedo shirts, and bow ties—have opened for everyone from Frank Sinatra to the Grateful Dead, and taken their act from “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood” to a memorable 1996 turn on “Seinfeld” (where, as the Flying Sandos Brothers, they made Jerry’s borrowed Friars Club jacket disappear—with comedically dire consequences).

Bent—who with his sandy hair, goatee, and lanky 6’4” frame resembles Canadian comic Tom Green more than Seinfeld—first began toying with juggling at age 8, taught by his father, a software engineer who juggles to relieve stress. (Curiously enough, Bent’s parents’ first date, way back in 1982, was a Flying Karamazov Brothers performance in Madison, Wis.)

But the big turning point in his life was seeing the Brothers perform when he was 13. Founding member Howard Jay Patterson recalls meeting Bent at that performance: “We did a piece where we would teach audience members to juggle. I found Stephen in the audience juggling five balls, brought

him up on stage, and told everyone I’d just taught him how to do it.”

Returning to his home in Bellevue, Wash., after the performance, Bent wrote a letter to Patterson, asking what it would take to become a Flying Karamazov Brother. Patterson sent him a list. Among other things, Patterson urged Bent to keep playing the trombone, an instrument he’d picked up in elementary school, because the Brothers are all musicians as well as jugglers.

One year later, young Bent, then 14, responded to an ad in *The Seattle Times* looking for a new Karamazov, “but was rejected on the grounds of child labor,” according to Brothers lore. Undeterred, Bent began hanging out with professional jugglers in Seattle, who passed along secrets of their craft. By age 16, he could juggle five clubs and was adding more and more difficult props, practicing three to four hours a day and performing at school events and birthday parties. “I was really obsessed then,” he recalls. “I don’t practice as much now. I focus more on performance stuff.”

Bent came to Oxy as a freshman lugging a duffel bag stuffed with more than 70 props that he used for different acts, from a

juggling gangsta rap to a Shakespearean recitation of *Hamlet's* "To be or not to be..." soliloquy while tossing knives. The self-described "showoff" credits juggling with making him "a lot more outgoing."

A music major with an emphasis in trombone performance, Bent can even blow his horn while juggling. When Patterson suggested he learn to sing, Bent not only joined the Oxy Glee Club, he formed his own a cappella group, which won Apollo Night, the annual Black Student Alliance-sponsored talent show, last year. (He tried winning the year before by juggling flaming torches in the Cooler, but was shut down in more ways than one. "Fortunately the campus safety guy on duty that night was a friend of mine," Bent says. "That's the only way I avoided serious trouble.")

When Patterson, now 53, decided to leave the Brothers to pursue a master's in environmental science at Portland State University two years ago, he let Bent know there was an opening with the Karamazovs. "Stephen is my protégé and hand-picked successor," Patterson says. "I've been hand training him to take over my position for half his life."

So Bent flew to New York and auditioned—but wasn't selected, despite Patterson's endorsement. The troupe opted for an Australian actor with great stage presence, Patterson says, but who "never got his skills to the appropriate level." When the Brothers realized their newest member wasn't going to work out, they called Bent and offered him the spot last June.

He immediately accepted, adopting the Russian stage name "Zossima" and joining Brothers Mark "Alexei" Ettinger, 38; Rod "Pavel" Kimball, 45; and Paul "Dmitri" Magid, 54. "We've since learned that he would have been the right guy to start with," Kimball says. "Stephen is an excellent musician—a quality highly prized in Karamazov land. He is also a great juggler, which is absolutely essential. In addition, we also just really like him. You can't tour with somebody you can't live with."

There was just one small problem: Bent was about to start his senior year at Oxy. But he has been able to work around his class schedule, he says, and has only missed seven or eight days of classes this semester. "My professors have all been really supportive," he says. "That's one advantage Oxy has over the larger schools—if there are only seven of you in the class, the professor knows you and knows you're not just skipping class."



His German teacher, Uta Schorlemmer, even brought her whole family to see Bent perform with the Brothers in Orange County in January. "They ended up selling merchandise for us during intermission in exchange for tickets," says Bent, who juggled at Schorlemmer's daughter's birthday party a couple of days later.

One of his favorite bits in the Brothers' act is when the troupe members agree to juggle any three things the audience brings, as long as each item weighs less than 10 pounds. (Bent's family once brought his All-

State Band plaque to embarrass him, and a "friend" brought a metal tube filled with corn syrup and smeared with bicycle grease.) For each show's finale, three of the Brothers juggle a fish, meat cleaver, ukulele, torch, egg, salt shaker, block of dry ice, bottle of champagne, and frying pan between them. At the end they cook the fish and egg in the pan using the torch and pop the champagne. (Bent handles the fish, the ukulele, and the egg.)

As for pay, Bent receives a percentage of what the troupe brings in: "It's a lot more than I make in the Music Library," where he works nine to 10 hours a week. After graduation, he plans to move to New York City to live and train with the Brothers full time, perhaps teaching trombone on the side.

But that side gig probably won't be necessary. "He is the future of the group," Patterson says of Bent. "He's imperturbably calm, grateful, and cheerful. And very tall." □

Photo courtesy Stephen Bent '09



When he's not got his hands full with work, Bent juggles choir, Frisbees, music theory, and of course, Facebook. **ABOVE:** Showing promise at an early age.

Coach of Champions



LEFT: Jordan (with steeplechase and 5,000-meter competitor Giorgio Papavassiliou) worked with the Greek national team preparing for the Olympics in 1955. BELOW: Jordan (bottom right) offers pointers in 1949 to (top, l-r) John Barnes '52, Marvin Miller '51, Ted Ruprecht '51, Don Oleson '52, Neil Bradley '52, Gene Doty '51, and Jack Strom '51 (crouched).



Photos courtesy Occidental College Special Collections

Payton Jordan produced a track and field dynasty in a decade at Oxy—and a legion of devoted athletes

The Occidental track and field teams coached by Payton Jordan had a knack for turning heads while blazing their way through the record books between 1946 and 1956. And the way they looked doing it won notice as well. “Jordan deserves everlasting praise for his new track innovation—placing the name of the athlete on the back of his shirt—which is a boon to the spectator,” then-*Pasadena Star-News* sportswriter Shav Glick observed in 1950. “Jordan’s Oxy track team is the best dressed in the country.”

Jordan, who died Feb. 5 at his home in Laguna Hills at age 91, earned the nickname “Captain of Champions” as a track star at USC in the 1930s and added the moniker “Coach of Champions” at Oxy. In his decade with the Tigers, Jordan produced one of track and field’s greatest dynasties, competing against the country’s top teams to win 10 consecutive conference championships, an NAIA national title in 1956, and top-five finishes in the NCAA championships in 1951 and 1952. His athletes set a world record in the distance medley relay, won four individual NCAA championships, and competed in the 1952 Olympics.

The Whittier native’s winning touch wasn’t confined to the track. Jordan also coached Oxy’s freshman football team, notching nine conference titles outright and tying for a 10th. Among his disciples: future pro quarterback Jack Kemp ’57, who played for 13 years in the National, American, and Canadian football leagues; and Kemp’s classmate Jim Mora, a tight end who coached in the NFL for 15 seasons.

While Jordan’s eventual departure seemed inevitable—he served as president of the National Collegiate Track Coaches Association while at Oxy—he broke many athletes’ hearts in 1956 when accepted a position at Stanford. During his 22 years in Palo Alto, he took the Cardinal to a second-place NCAA finish in 1963 and produced seven Olympic athletes, six world-record holders, and numerous individual NCAA champions. He served as head track coach of the 1968 Olympic team, which won more medals and set more records than any other U.S. squad.

But it is as a mentor that many of Jordan’s Oxy athletes remember him best. “It is your achievement as a leader, as a molder of character, as an advocate of patient hard work and of the highest possible standards that is your true legacy,” then-Occidental President Ted Mitchell said in bestowing an honorary degree on Jordan in 2001. “All of the thousands of young athletes you coached boast of having run or thrown or jumped for Coach Jordan.”

Writing in *USA Today* in 1992 (an anecdote recounted in a 2004 biography of Jordan, *Champions for Life*, by John B. Scott and James S. Ward), Kemp related the inspirational talk Jordan had given him as a freshman football player. Jordan “called me into his office and told me—in great confidence—that if I worked hard and never gave up, someday I could reach the NFL. I walked out of the office on cloud nine and practiced harder than ever. Years later, I learned that Coach Jordan had the same ‘confidential’ conversation with every player.”

Growing up in Pasadena, Jordan became a championship sprinter while attending Pasadena High School. He idolized 1920 Olympic gold medalist Charlie Paddock, who told him he had the stuff of champions if he was willing to work hard. Attending USC on a track scholarship under coach Dean Cromwell (who went to Oxy with the Class of 1902), Jordan was a member of the 1938 world record-holding 440 relay team. He captained the 1939 team that won a second straight national championship for the Trojans and made the cover of *Life* in 1939.

Although Jordan retired from coaching in 1979, he continued to challenge himself as a senior athlete, setting world records in the 100-meter dash for every age group from 55 to 80. Upon his election to the NAIA Hall of Fame in 1967, Jordan reflected in a letter to Occidental President Richard C. Gilman: “My years [at Occidental] have always meant a great deal to me and I hold a deep affection for the school, the faculty, its alumni, and the many wonderful athletes with whom I had the privilege of associating.”

At a Stanford track reunion, Jordan was asked about his proudest memory. The answer had nothing to do with records, medals, or even uniforms—but instead “the humbling fact” that a number of former athletes, fellow coaches, and friends had named a son or daughter after him. *Champions for Life* lists 18 such namesakes, including Payton Carling, son of Oxy sprinter Bill Carling ’56, and Jordy Terrill, son of Tigers trackster and assistant coach Jim Terrill ’55. May Jordan’s legacy endure for generations to come. □