“What the live creature retains from the past and what it expects from the future operate as directions in the present.”

John Dewey

Diversity / Innovation / Citizenship
Summer 2020
An Introduction from Dan Frank

Crisis reveals. It reveals who we are and who we have been, and it offers us the possibility to learn, reflect and shape who we might become if we listen, reflect and remake ourselves with purpose to create a healthier and more just future inclusive of all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world. This crisis has revealed the best and worst in our society. People have acted with heart-filled generosity and kindness toward others who are in serious need of help and care, and people also have acted with disregard for scientific knowledge, protective concern for the common good and respect for fellow citizens. And, not surprisingly, the pandemic also has revealed even more clearly the deeply historic systems and traumatizing patterns of anti-Black racism in our economy, health care system, policing, schools and other vital institutions.

Parker is part of this wider social system that organizes all of our lives. And while this issue of The Live Creature features just some of the truly thoughtful ways our students, faculty and staff, alumni and parents stepped up to meet the needs of society as Parker and the world adjusted to the pandemic, Parker, like other progressive institutions, is not exempt from participating in these biased social systems.

Moving forward, Parker’s challenge will be to continue to support even more civic-minded actions generated by our community members as it also continues—with vigorous anti-racist clarity and action—to educate about and change the systemic faults that exist in our own school, city and nation but are not aligned with Parker’s values and mission.
Together from a Distance: 
How Parker Shifted to Remote Learning

Schools around the country faced an unprecedented challenge with the transition to remote learning this past spring, due to the COVID-19 crisis. As the likelihood of school closures grew, Parker’s educational leadership team—Principal Dan Frank and Associate Principal Ruth Jurgensen; Division Heads Kimeri Swanson-Beck (Lower School), John Novick (Intermediate and Middle Schools) and Justin Brandon (Upper School); and Directors of Studies Barbara Hunt (Lower and Intermediate Schools) and Sven Carlsson (Middle and Upper Schools)—joined with technology staff to develop a plan and equip faculty, students and families to complete the academic year successfully.

The team began planning with the initial assumption that they would need only a short-term solution. As more information became available, the planning intensified. “The emergency move to a digital platform meant literally re-making every lesson plan, some that were years in the making, for a new platform with little time,” Novick said. “Faculty had to move work literally into their homes and take into account the needs and schedules of their own families—all while isolated for long periods of time.” Initial steps included consulting with other schools locally and on the West Coast (which had a head start on the process) and ensuring that all faculty/staff and students had the hardware and software necessary to make the program possible.

Hunt was quick to praise Parker’s Integrated Learning and Information Science (ILIS) and Technology Departments. “Sarah Beebe, along with Seth Bacon, Mary Catherine Coleman and Pete Evans, were, and continue to be, of utmost importance for the LS/IS remote program. We are so lucky to have such a talented, hard-working and collaborative team. First, they had to get iPads ready to go home in just a couple of days. We had to get all classrooms up to speed on Google Classroom, since that was the platform in place for many. We have since had some new ideas about what platform might be best for our younger students. If we are still dealing with remote learning in the fall, we will have more time and experience to choose the most effective platform for each age group.” According to Swanson-Beck, “the Technology Department also found devices for those who didn’t have any at home, as well as WiFi hot spots.”

While Carlsson was involved in varying degrees to setting up the...what made the transition work was the collaboration of teachers with teachers and the incredible amount of work and creative energy our faculty put into adapting their curriculum and pedagogy to this new format.”
weekly class schedules in the Middle and Upper Schools, “the more consequential part of my work was attending to pedagogy; the most time-intensive (and enjoyable) early step was attending departmental and grade-level discussions to dialogue with teachers about how to shift curriculum and adapt instructional methods.”

Carlsson continued, “Planning week [March 16–23, the day remote learning began] was one of the busiest weeks I’ve ever had at Parker, as I was checking in with every department and many individual teachers, trying to have both systems conversations and individual (course- and teacher-specific) conversations to ensure we set up all teachers for success when learning went remote. That said, what made the transition work was the collaboration of teachers with teachers and the incredible amount of work and creative energy our faculty put into adapting their curriculum and pedagogy to this new format.”

The leadership has also communicated with other schools, including other members of the ISACS (Independent Schools Association of the Central States), LMAIS (Lake Michigan Association of Independent Schools) and NAIS (National Association for Independent Schools), to compare successful outcomes and explore solutions for specific issues.

Swanson-Beck noted the important role of School Nurses Anne Nelson and Jessica Mather even before the school closed. “They were involved in the health component from the beginning of February. With their expertise, we established protocols such as washing hands with alcohol-based sanitizer, keeping everyone who had a fever home (and requiring a doctor’s note before returning) and canceling large-scale events like the Science Fair and Grandparents and Special Friends’ Day.”

The educational team learned much after the first week of remote learning,
thanks to feedback from students, parents and faculty/staff. Brandon collaborated with Carlsson on such decisions as how many times classes should meet each week, the start time to the day (taking Upper School student sleep patterns into account) and the addition of “flex” periods to allow for common student free time and office hours with teachers. “We learned from schools across the country and the world that our initial plan mirrored the best practices shared in numerous webinars,” Brandon said.

It was clear that the amount of time anyone can spend in front of a screen each day—students and faculty—was not the same as an in-person school day involved. “We aimed for a four-hour school day, with half that time devoted to live synchronous teaching and half the time to more independent study,” said Novick. “We learned early on from experts and schools that had gone remote earlier that we could not put children and their teachers in front of screens for five to six hours a day, so we had to begin setting some priorities for our live teaching time and send assignments from others via recorded video or Google Classroom. We also began to consolidate parent communication (video, the portal, email) in ways that were manageable for people across the community.”

Swanson-Beck described some of the challenges. “Our progressive approach is impossible to duplicate in this format, and teachers have learned which tools allow us to challenge, engage and be present with our students. For the most part, teachers prefer their busy classrooms and multi-tasking with students in face-to-face experiences. Teachers were having a hard time knowing how their students are doing. How can what teachers know about their students or content areas be of use to students and families? What is developmentally appropriate? Almost every team of grade-level teachers has cried as they miss their students so much.”

Hunt talked about the fact that elements of skill development in the Lower and Intermediate Schools are designed in a “spiral,” meaning that it’s possible to make up next year some of what students might miss this year. “This situation will require extra communication and adjusting. I feel confident the teachers will be able to catch up students over time, and skills will not suffer ultimately.” She also noted that programming for the youngest students has been especially difficult, with JK and SK programs focusing on social-emotional development through play experiences. “Teachers have been maintaining personal connections by

“Our progressive approach is impossible to duplicate in this format, and teachers have learned which tools allow us to challenge, engage and be present with our students.”

not put children and their teachers in front of screens for five to six hours a day, so we had to begin setting some priorities for our live teaching time and send assignments from others via recorded video or Google Classroom. We also began to consolidate parent communication (video, the portal, email) in ways that were manageable for people across the community.”

The school created Remote Learning Resources online for the benefit of students and parents, and Carlsson created a website—the Remote Learning Hub—as a consolidated location for a range of faculty resources, including schedules, technical resources, software in use, articles about online teaching and more.

Top: Upper School Head Justin Brandon (standing) speaks at a Morning Ex earlier this year.
Bottom: Intermediate and Middle Schools Head John Novick speaks at a 5th grade Dubbing Ceremony Morning Ex.
providing videos, read-alouds of story books and conversation time. This is an area we are continuing to explore.”

Although Carlsson cited challenges with remote learning, including translating in-person curriculum online, making real connections via video chat and email, accounting for adverse health effects of increased screen time for adolescents and adapting to the slower pace of remote learning, he also noted numerous instances of success. “Foremost is the ability of Parker teachers to build student agency into their remote curricula. Student choice is a hallmark of progressive pedagogy, and carefully curated class activities thoughtfully reflected this—from a history project designing a virtual tour of a monument or memorial in a city of their choosing to a photography project documenting the various phases of a student’s interaction with his couch during shelter-in-place. Another success was our ability to create room for a range of emotions in classroom and Advisory spaces; keeping joy at the center of learning while also supporting mourning or frustration was particularly challenging and has been especially important during this pandemic. Teachers continually expended an immense amount of creative energy to design and repurpose classroom activities and class time to keep learning fun and meaningful, while also allowing students to recognize and understand the emotions that sheltering at home has engendered.”

Said Hunt, “This all hit us quickly and hard. I am so proud of our teachers. They worked insanely long
hours to learn new technology and rewrite their whole spring curriculum. They collaborated wonderfully and supported each other. They jumped into the unknown and persisted.”

Brandon echoed Hunt’s feelings of pride. “We were not designed to be a virtual school, but we quickly became one in a very short period of time. Our faculty worked with each other to share approaches to remote learning they adopted. We also held numerous divisional faculty meetings to provide a sense of community as well as share ideas and concerns that needed to be addressed in our new normal. I visited several classes and was very impressed with the creativity of our faculty. They continued to meet students where they were despite teaching in a virtual community.”

“We hire high-achieving, smart, highly-motivated and deeply compassionate progressive educators who hold themselves and others to very high standards and who believe in Parker’s philosophy and mission,” said Novick. “They’ve been hard on themselves. They can’t do, in the same way, all they aspire to do. But they have been inspirational, aspirational, resilient, determined and strong. We’re grateful for them.”

Carlsson summed up the experience with these thoughts: “There are two things I appreciate about what I’ve learned about Parker during this time. The first is that all our talk about empathy works; the amount of grace I’ve seen people extending towards others (teachers to students, students to teachers, teachers to teachers, etc.) has been inspirational and beautiful. The second is that, as a community, we are more than accustomed to being around each other—we are tied to one another. This is manifest as sorrow in conversations with students who are sad because they miss bumping into their peers at their lockers and with teachers who really, really miss seeing their students. I expected the disruption of sheltering in place would be frustrating to our students, parents and teachers; I did not expect the chief emotion common to our experience would be missing each other. Strange as it may sound, this fills me with hope for the days where we are again able to gather together physically (whatever that may look like) and encourages me that we will have a renewed gratitude for our model home and how much richer we are when we are together.”

“Another success was our ability to create room for a range of emotions in classroom and Advisory spaces; keeping joy at the center of learning while also supporting mourning or frustration was particularly challenging and has been especially important during this pandemic.”
Alumna Parent Enhances Second Grade Japan Study

At Parker, teachers are eager to find opportunities for parents and alumni to participate in the curriculum, which enriches the learning experience and strengthens bonds in the school community. Welcoming parents into the classroom is a special delight for Lower School students. This year, one such opportunity grew out of deeper connections—and an unexpected change in format.

Studying Japan in Parker’s 2nd grade dates back to the 1950s, when members of the Japanese community, who had relocated to Chicago’s North Side after WWII, began sending their children to the school. Typically, the unit begins with geography, due to its importance in the country’s origins, and religions (Shinto and Buddhism), which impact lifestyle and values. Further teaching includes home, food, clothing, language and celebrations.

“The Japan unit naturally unfolds in a meaningful and engaging way,” described Kathy Wild, who has taught 2nd grade at Parker for 15 years. “It’s rich and enchanting. Children fondly remember their experiences folding origami, visiting the Japanese Gardens, preparing food or spending a day in the tea room for years to come.”

During the past 10 years, the 2nd grade team has evolved the Japan curriculum beyond the traditional elements to reflect modern-day life and counter stereotypes. Wild provided some examples: “While people in Japan wear kimono, most do not wear kimono every day. While sushi is popular in Japan, families do not eat sushi every day. Kids wear shorts and t-shirts, play video games, play soccer and go to McDonald’s.”

Traditionally, 2nd grade teachers invite parents who have a Japanese background to help out during the unit. Their roles depend on the parents’ interests and comfort level. Ideally, parents’ visit all three 2nd grade classes. This year, Chelsea Dolinar-Hikawa, parent of 2nd grader Atreyu Ribaudo-Hikawa, had offered to introduce her son’s classmates to the Japanese language, recalling her own experience as a member of Parker’s class of 1992.

“I can clearly remember my mother, Sunnie Barbara Hikawa [’67], dressing up in a kimono and coming into our 2nd grade classroom to read us a Japanese fairy tale,” Dolinar-Hikawa said. “With my son in 2nd grade, I felt like I had come full circle and should...
also volunteer to help in the classroom. I told Kathy I speak Japanese and would love to come in and teach the kids some Japanese phrases. After the pandemic started, I asked her if she thought I could still participate virtually, and if she thought it would be better for me to record a video or come to a meeting. Kathy set up a time for me to come to a meeting and it went really well. I think the kids were actually able to learn a lot even though it was over Google Classroom. I was also able to teach the same lesson for Ms. Willett’s and Ms. Davidson’s 2nd grade classes.”

Wild was quite pleased with the outcome, especially given that remote learning was new and sudden. “Chelsea brilliantly created a comfortably paced, interactive lesson complete with visuals. The Japanese language is complex, but she seemed to intentionally teach in broad strokes rather than going into all the details. She started by teaching the kids something very meaningful: their names in Japanese. They were hooked! She had them say their names out loud and practice a simple conversation. She provided a lot of positive feedback, and the children felt confident immediately.
She made a complex topic accessible in a 20–30-minute lesson. At the end of each lesson, she provided examples of the language by reading a book and teaching a short, fun, traditional song. Every child was glued to their screen the whole time. It was very enjoyable. I learned a lot myself.”

Dolinar-Hikawa actually found some advantages to teaching the Japanese language remotely. “In teaching a secondary language, research shows that repetition and consistency are the most important things. It actually works very well to teach a dialogue during virtual lessons since I can demonstrate it and then give each of the kids a chance to turn on their microphones and individually practice with me, one at a time right after one another. It surprised me how well it worked in learning a foreign language.”

Wild noted several components that contributed to the success of remote learning, not only during the Japan unit but in general: “Animation and excitement. Welcoming kids to join in on the fun. Short, meaningful, interactive lessons using as many senses as possible. The visuals are particularly important, as is changing things up—reciting, then singing, then listening to a story. Paying attention to each child but not getting so caught up that you lose the rest of the class. Honoring classroom rituals, balancing screen time with independent work, providing lessons that get kids up and moving and talking rather than sitting at their desk spaces. Maintaining community, connection and confidence are key.”

Dolinar-Hikawa would love to continue working with Wild’s class in future years. “My younger son, Anoki, is starting JK in the fall, so eventually he’ll be in 2nd grade. Kathy has been the most wonderful teacher for us, and we are very grateful to her. This pandemic has been so hard for the kids, but I never forget how lucky we are that Kathy is our teacher and has provided continuum and security for Atreyu in this difficult time.”

Involving parents in teaching contributes significantly to the classroom, and when those parents are also alumni, they provide another layer of experience and understanding.

Involving parents in teaching contributes significantly to the classroom, and when those parents are also alumni, they provide another layer of experience and understanding. With the shift to remote learning, Wild has found it gratifying that Dolinar-Hikawa’s participation has benefited from the new format in some ways. “Chelsea has been especially wonderful to work with because of her deep connection to Parker,” Wild said. “And, being a teacher herself, she was completely masterful at capturing the children’s interest and attention, a difficult thing to do when you have only two dimensions and new technology to work with.”
Remote Learning Maintains Connections

**Pandemic Produces Innovation**

Despite their separation beginning in mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students remained engaged in learning and growing in dynamic ways throughout the rest of the school year. These are a few examples of creative curriculum and experiences during the months of remote learning.

**Virtual Creations in Junior Kindergarten**

Students in Tisha Johnson’s Junior Kindergarten class typically design and create new projects with different themes each week. Despite current circumstances, Johnson wanted to continue fostering this creativity, so she encouraged students to design and create on their own at home.

Each week, she gave the class a new theme, and students could draw, paint or color—but she also encouraged them to think outside the box: “Create something out of blocks, a shadow, natural materials, recycled materials, LEGO, playdough—you are limited only by your imagination!”

The virtual creation gallery themes included Puppets; Animals; Rocketships; and Ducks, Ducklings and Eggs.

**Exploring the Music of Poetry in 2nd Grade**

In her class’s exploration of reading and writing poetry, 2nd grade teacher Sarah Willett helps train students’ ears to listen and find the music within each poem.

In a normal academic year, Willett provides students with a variety of musical instruments, breaks them into groups and asks them to play around with, create and practice a musical version of a poem, which they later perform in front of the entire class. This year, with remote learning the order of the day, she changed things up a bit.

Willett asked students to scour their homes and either find or make musical instruments to approximate the experience and videotape themselves delivering a musical version of a poem. She set up each student’s submission on a Padlet page to share their efforts with each other.

“It was different. The collaborative element was missing, but the kids rose to the occasion,” shared Willett.

Reflecting upon the challenges remote learning poses to a master teacher, Willett said, “It’s a constant
uphill battle to find clear, explicit ways to communicate lessons and even more challenging to gauge how young children are absorbing and practicing those concepts we’ve taught. However, it forces us to be innovative and spontaneous with what we have.”

To view the student work, visit fwparker.org/musicofpoetry.

ZooDay Goes Virtual in 2nd Grade

Any student who has spent time in Kathy Wild’s 2nd grade classroom will tell you about the pets. As a self-described animal lover, Wild currently plays mom to many pets—several of which stay at school during the academic year: a bearded dragon named Creature, a Hermann’s tortoise called Tortellini, guinea pigs Wallace and Gromit, rescued rabbits Flopsy and Stitch and a hamster named Hobbes.

Before remote learning, Wild’s students participated in a scheduled “ZooDay” each week when interested students could stay in during afternoon recess to play with the animals. These students developed special relationships with each other stemming from their deep love for animals. Wild shared, “Having animals in the classroom brings out a side of children that you don’t see when they are working academically. Pets bring joy, decrease stress, cause laughter, reduce aggression and help children develop empathy and responsibility.”

When school dismissed for remote learning in mid-March, Wild knew she would need to integrate the pets into her adapted curriculum. Unfortunately, the same crisis that forced children from their classrooms also brought home her daughter, Parker graduate Sydney ’16, from Emerson College in Los Angeles, where she was studying filmmaking. As disappointing as this was for Sydney, her skills went to good use.

Much like her mother, Sydney is an animal lover and took ownership of the entire process of filming, selecting music and editing weekly ZooDay films. Wild’s son, Parker graduate Zak ’15, was luckily also on hand and assisted in many aspects of the process of producing each clip.

The family’s first video was a collection of clips featuring all the animals to assure the children that they were all well, still cute and as much a part of the classroom as they had always been, despite currently sheltering in place at the Wild abode. They continued sharing weekly videos, to the classroom community’s delight, which included hamsters running through mazes, a bunny getting a haircut and blowout, bath time, critter races and more. Wild’s 2nd grade students, and often their families, looked forward to these videos every week. Wild said, “They are definitely a highlight not only because they are super-cute, but also because of the relationships between the students and the pets.”
During the COVID-19 pandemic, Wild loaned some of her pets to families of only children who don’t have siblings or animals to keep them company or bring them comfort. “We all are feeling isolated, but these children in particular are feeling lonely right now,” she said. Flopsy and Hobbes are spending their COVID-19 days with Wild class families and hopefully bringing some company, joy and humor during a challenging time of isolation.

Wild commented, “Community is such a valuable part of the Parker experience, and whatever it takes to keep it intact while we need to be home is so important. It is what gives our work meaning and joy and brings life to the mission of our school.”

Thanks to the efforts of Wild and her family, the bonds in her 2nd grade community of students and animals only grew stronger, despite social distancing.

To view the Wild Family’s ZooDay videos, visit fwparker.org/zooday.

Students Cavort and Connect During Virtual Recess

With remote learning an everyday reality for students around the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools had to look at everything they have traditionally offered through an entirely new lens—and the concept of recess was among them.

Not long after the pandemic disrupted traditional school activities, Intermediate and Middle School Head John Novick was already asking his 4th and 5th Grade Heads and Assistant Teachers to think about ways to bring students together socially during the time of distance. After piloting the program in March and further refining it, Parker’s Virtual Recess emerged as a much-praised solution to help provide additional activities, camaraderie and social connection to students during the virtual school day.

Twice a week, students in the Lower and Intermediate Schools who wanted to connect with their peers in a more relaxed environment joined together Brady Bunch-style on Google Meet for Virtual Recess. Unlike more structured academic work, these gatherings allowed students to use their devices while moving freely about their own spaces. “Students participated in activities, games and conversations that engaged them socially. It was their opportunity to be with each other in a space that was not focused on schoolwork, but rather on physical movement, fun and social connection,” shared Assistant Teacher Emily Culbert.

Although in-person recess involves an entire grade, Assistant Teachers facilitated Virtual Recesses in small groups, devising a host of ideas to implement during gatherings.
“The Assistant Teachers supervise the regular recesses at Parker so we each carry our own tools from past successes,” said Assistant Teacher Cristine Danielson. The Intermediate School teaching team emerged as true leaders in this process, collaborating and sharing ideas to create engaging and fun programming.

While other schools use their virtual recess time to implement physical education curriculum or share active videos, Virtual Recess at Parker is a social program. “I wanted to have some gross motor element in my Virtual Recess,” said Assistant Teacher Marie Adams. “I always tried to get them moving in some shape or form, whether it was a scavenger hunt or a game.” All involved agree that the social focus of Parker’s Virtual Recess made it unique.

Through their shared experiences during Virtual Recess, students and teachers connected on a different level than they would otherwise, and the more face-to-face connection one can have while engaging with kids on non-academic endeavors, the better. “This was a relaxing and fun time for me as I miss being with the kids in real time, as I am sure we all do,” added Adams.

Danielson noted, “Since kids weren’t stepping outside their homes or family circles, this gave them an opportunity to be 4th graders with their peers.” Adams said, “It was a positive way for kids to have planned time to talk to friends they would not normally see or get to engage with during the online school day.” Culbert offered, “Students were really missing the many points of social connection they experience throughout a typical school day, and Virtual Recess built in more of that social time with peers.”

Virtual Hackathon Goes Lunar
In their efforts to curate creative outlets for students to learn and grow together despite social distance, members of the Integrated Learning and Information Sciences (ILIS) Department orchestrated the school’s first-ever Virtual Hackathon, which invited interested students to join together remotely and work in small groups to design and build a virtual world.

In the weeks leading up to the event, the ILIS team rolled out a series of Friday Virtual Game Nights for students in 5th–7th grades. Interested kids gathered virtually to share similar experiences that many had enjoyed in the Kovler Family Library space, like playing Pictionary and Heads Up using CoSpaces and similar tools.

The Virtual Hackathon was a culminating activity for those who regularly attended the Friday Virtual Game Nights, although it wasn’t a prerequisite to join in the fun, as
the necessary apps were already on all students’ devices, and all were welcome to participate.

On the afternoon of the event, 11 students joined together in CoSpaces with a special code to find themselves transported to a virtual game space where the scene was as follows:

“The year is 2040. The Earth… is not great, honestly. So we turn our eyes to space! Plans are underway for a brand-spanking-new civilization up on the moon. All the heavy lifting is being done by governments and corporations but, as we have done for decades, we have decided to ALSO hold a contest that we can make into a drama-filled reality TV series next season: WHAT THINGS WOULD YOU WANT TO BRING FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON? Work with your team to brainstorm and create the moon version of something that you feel civilization just couldn’t do without.”

Members of the ILIS Department supervised four teams using a mashup of Google Meet breakout rooms and CoSpaces to collaborate and build together. At one point, a NASA spokesperson interrupted the teams in their break-outs to inform them a “moonquake” was happening, and their structures had to be moonquake-proof! Students shared ideas and resources to build their moon colonies, were very creative and had a lot of fun laughing and building together.

Social Justice in 6th Grade
Social Studies
As part of the recent work in 6th grade history and social studies classes, teacher Keedra Gibba guided students through a reading of Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You by Ibram Kendi and Jason Reynolds. She rated the experience a success because students learned how and why racism was constructed in history, and, more importantly, they studied a tradition of resistance to racism.

Throughout the year, Gibba invited parents to the classroom to share their work, especially related to social justice and making our world a better place, which aligns with Parker’s curriculum and institutional mission. They hosted visiting parent professionals working in climate justice, journalism and the criminal justice system, when Marjorie Berk Moss joined the class for a Zoom gathering.

As a social work supervisor and staff attorney at Northwestern University’s Bluhm Legal Clinic Children and Family Justice Center, where she established the Juvenile
Defender Resource Institute, Berk Moss described the three broad categories of her direct work with Black and brown youth: those charged with crimes, those currently incarcerated and wrongly convicted and those who have served their time, ensuring they can be successful when they leave prison.

In describing what drew her to this type of work, Berk Moss shared her personal story of coming to appreciate the power of storytelling to advocate for abused and neglected people. Storytelling enables her to humanize her clients involved in the legal process and break down a host of assumptions and stereotypes associated with racial identity.

She offered examples of past clients to further illustrate the pervasiveness of racism and its impact. She told the story of a client who was shot on the way home from meeting with her and taken to a prison rather than a hospital despite having committed no crime. This story helped illuminate how the construction of the Black criminal stereotype popularized after Emancipation still serves to justify violence towards Black people even when there is no evidence of criminal activity. A client helped her understand that, for Black and brown kids, clothing can do more than make you “cool”—it can get you killed, which substantiates his conscious efforts to drop his hoodie while passing by people in the “nicer” part of town. With the story of a judge mistakenly identifying a Northwestern law student, who happened to be Black, as a criminal in a courtroom, Berk Moss reminded those gathered that racism is real, it is everywhere, and antiracism is necessary to change the system.

Berk Moss spoke about the prison system and that artificially high costs for communication with imprisoned people structurally limits the ability of those incarcerated to connect with loved ones and maintain their support network while behind bars. She also noted the very low wages of prison workers, often no more than $0.50 per hour. Students’ examination of the Prison Industrial Complex prompted them to question such low wages for prison labor.

While Gibba’s students already had a basic understanding about the construction of racism, justifications for policing and how prisons are punitive and costly for some while making boatloads of money for others, Berk Moss’ personal examples made their learning all the more real. “These issues you are learning about in Ms. Gibba’s classroom are really all around you,” Berk Moss said before fielding questions from her 6th grade audience.

Emphasizing the importance of bringing real-world practitioners into the classroom, Gibba commented, “Students are hopefully inspired by everyday people who use their skills and passions to improve our current world. People of every identity have joined a long legacy of freedom fighting, and so, too, can they.”
Discovering the Beauty of Math Remotely

Many at Parker are familiar with the innovative ways Upper School mathematics teacher Vicki Lee integrates technology into her geometry classes. Recent months of remote learning provided her and her students an opportunity to stretch their mathematical mindsets well beyond the classroom by taking a closer look at a pair of Greek philosopher Pythagoras’ well-known discoveries.

After proving the Pythagorean theorem using similar triangles, Lee shared a YouTube video that depicted a visible and tangible proof of the theorem. As an optional assignment, she asked her students to create their own original proof videos or recreate a proof inspired by someone else.

Lee also introduced the concept of the Pythagorean spiral while exploring concepts of geometry using a compass. In one project, she asked students to use a compass to create a spiral of right triangles constructed on the hypotenuse of the previous right triangle and to creatively color their products.

To view the student work, visit fwparker.org/pytheorem.

Looking at the Human Side of Science

In guiding her Upper School students as they study biology, teacher Kara Schupp likes to take the time to help increase appreciation for the human beings actually practicing the science she teaches in classes, in addition to their important contributions to the discipline.

Schupp wants her students to understand:

- Science is a result of human endeavors, imagination and creativity.
- Individuals and teams from many nations and cultures have contributed to science and advances in engineering.
- Technological advances have influenced the progress of science, and science has influenced advances in technology.
- Society influences science and engineering, and science and engineering influence society.

To drive this message home, Schupp shared information on a scientist she believes deserves a spotlight: Stanford neurobiologist Ben Barres, an individual who has truly lived a science-and-society experiment. Beginning his career as a female and transitioning to male, he...
had a unique perspective on the sexism inherent in research labs and science in general. “Students are really moved and inspired by this man’s unique story and experiences,” said Schupp.

Next, Schupp asked her students to suggest other scientists’ stories that deserved the spotlight. Students set to work doing independent research to identify important people who have made significant contributions to a field of scientific inquiry, but might not be on everyone’s radar for one reason or another. During a normal academic year, they would share the products of their investigation in class and display them in the science hallways, but due to social distancing guidelines, they instead shared them online. To view Scientist Spotlight Videos, visit fwparker.org/scispotlight.

Schupp likes this project because it “helps students see the scientists as people contributing to the scientific community. It emphasizes that scientists are people who have stories to tell, and we can learn not only about what they studied, but how they impacted the people around them, made a difference and have a story that isn’t in the textbooks. We may not get to write the science textbooks or influence what gets included, but we can investigate and share the important contributions of scientists whose lives mattered, whose work mattered and who we think deserve to have a moment in the spotlight.”

Recreating Paintings in English
Upper School English teacher Mike Mahany has a reputation for bringing fun to every class he teaches. Inspired by online photos of people recreating famous paintings at home during the pandemic, he put juniors in his two American Literature sections to a similar challenge.

Mahany asked each student to recreate a famous American painting in their home using only props and talent available. Each student also had to submit a piece of writing describing the original painting formally and provide one fun fact about the piece or the artist. As a culminating experience, Mahany shared all student work with the class—a wonderful treat everyone enjoyed. To view the submissions, visit fwparker.org/englishpaintings.
Sharing Sounds in Music Mayfest

The Music Department wanted to seize upon the spring season for their traditional series of performances to share student accomplishments this year. Not to be stymied by social distancing, students and teachers worked together on a week’s worth of live and prerecorded experiences to showcase student music in the first-ever Parker Music Mayfest! To view videos of the performances, visit fwparker.org/musicmayfest; view the special website teachers created at fwparker.org/virtualchoir.

Video Creation in The Corona Chronicles

In a typical academic year, video arts teacher Travis Chandler and history teacher Dan Greenstone masterfully lead Upper School students in the Creating Historical Documentaries class as they produce original medium-length documentary films about an important historical event, moment, crisis or social justice cause. Student work that has emanated from this class has been impressive, as demonstrated by the showcase of prior films available at fwparker.org/histdocfilms, but this semester’s shift in circumstances gave Chandler and Greenstone a unique opportunity to tweak their curriculum by asking students to produce video logs, or “vlogs,” of their new lives since remote learning began.
The Corona Chronicles Vlog assignment required students to make films that captured the strangeness, anxiety, dark humor, boredom, uncertainty and tension of the extended school closure. Students filmed themselves for several minutes a day, equipped with a list of ideas to help get their creative cogs turning.

In guiding students, teachers encouraged them to show what was happening, not just tell about things that happened. For example, instead of talking about tension with their parents as to whether or not they could go out, students recorded the conversations. Instead of talking about the lack of toilet paper at a store, they filmed the empty store aisle. Chandler and Greenstone constantly encouraged students to think visually and show, not tell, while striving for incongruity, emotion, conflict, humor and vulnerability in their work.

To view the student vlogs, visit fwparker.org/coronachronicles.

A Virtual Gallery for Student Artwork
Despite being away from their classrooms, Parker’s art teachers directed the flow of their students’ creative energies from afar during remote learning. Once it became apparent that the hiatus from in-person instruction would last longer than a couple of weeks, teacher Kay Silva worked with the school to create a virtual destination to share work students had created in their home studios. To view this virtual art gallery, visit fwparker.org/virtualgallery.
Senior Sendoff

Students in the class of 2020 had a very different sendoff for their final year at Parker than previous classes. Despite being physically displaced from our “model home” due to COVID-19, the school worked closely with 12th grade parent leaders in developing creative alternatives to commemorate this milestone in students’ lives. Their efforts—particularly those of parent and photographer Jon Rauschenberger (see p. 39)—included “Senior Shout Out” videos, a virtual “Who’s That Senior Baby” game, special signage delivered to student homes and displayed at the school, physically distanced portrait photography as well as Parker’s first-ever virtual Commencement Exercise. Share some of our graduates’ glory here and at fwparker.org/Classof2020.
Parker Community Takes Action During COVID-19 Crisis

The spread of COVID-19 and the requirement to stay home produced feelings of uncertainty throughout the Parker community. But stories of students and faculty doing “everything to help” reaffirm a commitment to each other and the larger community.

From the TIDES Garage to the Hospital

Rather than let the current COVID-19 crisis make him feel powerless, one Parker sophomore partnered with the school to produce personal protective equipment (PPE) using a 3D printer from the TIDES Garage at home, donating the results to health care workers at hospitals around the city.

Not long after school dismissed for remote learning, Ryder Selikow first discovered via CNN that people were printing 3D face shields at home to help fill the void in the current nationwide shortage. The story highlighted a New York company retooling its 3D printers to make face shields for local hospitals. “Basically, I wanted to help any way I could. And this seemed possible,” he explained.

Familiar with the 3D printing capabilities in the school’s TIDES Garage, Selikow obtained approvals from Principal Dan Frank and Upper School Head Justin Brandon to bring home one of the school’s machines for this effort. Next, he touched base with Integrated Learning and Information Science teacher Annette Lesak, who had been following various discussions about 3D-printed PPE on online forums. She agreed that creating face shields was the best way for Selikow to proceed using the school’s equipment. To that end, Lesak researched and provided him with an existing production design from Budmen and ordered clear plastic shield pieces for delivery to his home to facilitate assembly and donation as soon as possible.

Selikow’s two-step process is to 3D-print the visor and elastic attachment pieces for the face shield, then use acetate and foam tape to assemble them into the final form. He has manufactured masks for Swedish Covenant Hospital, Northwestern Memorial Hospital and Lurie Children’s Hospital thus far. He said, “We hope to help these hospitals in any way we can, even in a small way. The demand for PPE is massive, and our email is being flooded with requests. We hope to meet as many of these requests as we can.”
Science Teacher Making Masks for the Masses
As a woman of science, teacher Elizabeth Druger is well aware of the PPE shortage globally affecting those working on the front lines. As a wife whose partner is immunosuppressed and the mother of a child with asthma, she nonetheless wanted facial masks for her family during these uncertain times.

Using her skills as a fabric artist, Druger first started sewing face masks for her family, then focused her efforts on others who may be potentially at high risk. “Homemade masks allow more PPE to go to those who need it most, rather than being diverted to populations that are not in direct contact with the virus on a daily basis,” explained Druger.

Druger came up with the idea of making her own masks from watching a video about an Italian garment manufacturer who retooled his business to produce masks for his community. By serendipity, many of the quilting groups and friends she follows on Facebook started sharing patterns for making face masks and organizations that were accepting masks, further encouraging her efforts.

One of Druger’s friends from the Chicago Modern Quilt Guild began offering online tutorials and has collected more than 300 handmade masks to date. Another friend, a former police officer, is hard at work making them for officers dealing directly with at-risk populations in the city.

Druger worked with her daughters, 5th grader Teagan and 8th grader Gabby, during the April Recess to make as many masks as they could. Druger said, “We have been making them in the evenings for family and friends. Gabby and Teagan have been cutting the patterns and pressing, while I have been stitching them together. It is quite a process, and we are enjoying it together.”

Druger and her family provided the first batch of their masks to workers at their local grocery store and the Night Ministry, with more to come.
Gaining Perspective from a Pandemic

In 5th grade, teachers focus on the concept of “perspective” in much of their work. Prior to Parker’s shift to remote learning, when one student used the morning meeting to share her independent efforts to write get-well notes to patients who had recently contracted COVID-19, a number of her peers were interested in lending their hearts and pens to the effort.

Teacher Mike McPharlin seized upon this teachable moment to expand the conversation to include doctors and nurses—to be thankful and appreciative of other people’s perspectives.

McPharlin shared, “Just appreciating the sacrifice and efforts that doctors and nurses and even patients are making to get through this crisis is an important idea to try and grasp through these crazy times.”

With the curricular table set and student interest stoked, McPharlin reached out to 5th grade Parker parents and physicians A. Kyle Mack and William McDade to explore the possibilities. Both doctors were happy to help and agreed to deliver the 5th grade letters to their respective hospital communities.

Next, McPharlin invited his peer 5th grade teachers Jeff Stone and Scott Turner and their students to contribute to the community goodwill effort.

McPharlin was proud to personally deliver these notes to Drs. Mack and McDade. To view the students’ work, visit fwparker.org/notes2docs.
There's No Tastes Like Home
Food Service Director Chef Zac Maness realizes how many people were missing the flavors of Parker's cafeteria, so he set himself to the task of creating a series of videos to help folks recreate the flavors of Parker and more at home. To view Chef Zac’s video recipes, visit fwparker.org/ChefZac.

Tech Help for All in a Time of Remote Learning
In addition to supporting our community of teachers and learners as they worked together remotely, Parker’s tech team did their part to do “everything to help.” During the third week of remote learning, Parker’s three-person Technology Department began offering their full suite of support services to students or parents from any school who needed technical support.
At Parker, students engage in “learning by doing,” discovering the power of taking action to address challenges they face. That kind of lesson sticks, as several mid-'70s alumni are demonstrating with their efforts to confront one formidable issue stemming from the spread of COVID-19: access to ventilators.

Blake Hannaford ’73 is a professor of electrical and computer engineering and an adjunct professor of bioengineering, mechanical engineering and surgery at the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle, where he has been on staff for more than 30 years, collaborating with UW’s medical school. He is also co-founder of Applied Dexterity, Inc., which develops innovations in surgical robotics; co-founder of SPI Surgical, which researches and develops innovative surgical devices; and principal of his own consulting firm.

His background and expertise set him on a course to respond to the limited availability of ventilators.

“I was contacted in mid- to late March by a retired anesthesia professor, Dr. Brian Ross, who had been approached by a couple of retired execs from the ventilator industry, Nicholas Ong and Ron Tobia, to see if I could get a UW team together to help with engineering,” he said. “They had a design for a low-cost ventilator they worked on in 2007 for the SARS virus. As the SARS virus petered out, so did that project. We started with their model but basically have redesigned it. There are a bunch of ventilator projects out there, and our niche is to start with a full-featured ICU ventilator and strip out all features not needed by COVID-19 patients to reduce cost and speed manufacturing. We are targeting a cost of less than $1,000 (a typical ventilator is $10,000–30,000). I’ve been working with my Ph.D. student, Andy Lewis, and some undergrads from our
various engineering programs. Our 3D fabrication team is working on-site with an official exemption for COVID-19-related work. We’re employing local craft workers (machinists) who are out of work due to the Boeing shutdown.

“We have an aggressive seven-day-per-week schedule, and, since the FDA has dramatically cut the time required for approval of ventilators, we think we can be shipping thousands of FDA-approved low-cost ventilators by this summer.”

It wasn’t long before Hannaford recruited a former Parker classmate, Mark Bernstein, who has been a chief scientist with Eastgate Systems, Inc. for more than 33 years. “I work on technology for reading and writing, studying the future of writing beyond the printed codex,” he explained. “Much of my recent work has been analyzing and visualizing research notes. I’m also quite interested in exploring ways to write literary fiction to be read on computers.”

The early days of the COVID-19 crisis left Bernstein “distraught. Local officials were dismissive, the Federal Government was exacerbating our problems, the President was again turning against science. I was sidelined, unable to do anything to help as catastrophe approached. In our Boston neighborhood, I heard lots of people complaining about their personal inconvenience but saw very little effort to prepare or to save lives. I expected efforts to build hospitals in parks, convert vacant factories to pop-up ICUs, recruit research help. None of this happened. People seemed content, or perhaps resigned, to wait for the worst or to hope that things would improve.

“At some point, Blake’s sister, Kitty Hannaford ['75], mentioned a GoFundMe to raise a modest sum with which to purchase parts for Blake’s prototype. I wrote to Blake, asking to help. A couple of days later, I was pulling together a team to build the documentation apps, talking to colleagues and contacts on four continents. I’ve also been writing software to test the software that will run the ventilator, which feels a little more directly in contact with the crisis. It’s all very tangential, but perhaps it’ll help some people who will need it.”

For Hannaford, Bernstein serves in a key role: “We will need his software expertise to build a cell-phone app for training the physicians who will use the device. Our medical team will create the training content for Mark’s Android/iOS app. He’s also doing a cool simulator so that we can debug software without the complex ventilator test setup.”
Raising the necessary funds to bring the ventilator—now called WorldVent—to life is also a challenge. The team members all work as volunteers, but there are expenses for parts, supplies and more. When Dr. Ross launched the GoFundMe campaign, a third Parker alum got involved: Jill Kearney ’75, a writer, visual artist and former journalist and film executive who founded and serves as executive director of ArtYard, a contemporary art center in Frenchtown, New Jersey.

“My brother Dan [’73] forwarded an email from Michael Druzinsky [’73] about Blake’s GoFundMe page,” Kearney related. “Like everyone, I was feeling a sense of helplessness and rising panic—my art center had just closed, and construction had been halted on our theater, and when I saw the email, I felt as though the cavalry had arrived: someone really capable who I trusted completely was organizing a practical, humane, communal effort.”

Kearney made a significant contribution to Hannaford’s GoFundMe, which reached its goal in only three days. “It made me so happy to be able to help,” she said. “The Hannaford family was the anchor of our childhoods at Parker. I have such happy memories of the Hannaford house, and I always looked up to Blake as a steady, calm, intelligent, caring person.

“It felt like 40 years evaporated in an instant.”

Bernstein too found the collaboration with Hannaford a reflection of their time together at the school. “Working with Blake certainly harks back to many after-school explorations of science and engineering—melting plastics, wiring up radios, building models.”

An exciting opportunity for WorldVent has come from the military, as Hannaford described: “A medical procurement group in the Army put out the call for low-cost ventilators. We made it past round one ($5,000) and passed round 2 ($100,000)! The winner of round 2 will get an Army contract for 10,000 ventilators. We also have a partner (Racer Technology in Singapore, racer.com.sg/) that will manufacture for Asia. Other groups, such as consortia of U.S. states, are in the market for strategic ventilator stockpiles, already thinking ahead to the next pandemic.”

Bernstein continues to find that Parker experiences resonate with his work today. “I think the idea of Morning Ex is also pertinent. If you’ve got something to announce, then get up and announce it. Stand up, speak out. If something needs to be done—manufacturing for County Fair, props for the 8th Grade Play, a script for a Class Day sketch—you don’t worry too much whether you’re ideally qualified to do it. You aren’t. You’re a kid. The thing still needs doing.” (See sidebar, p. 32, for more Parker inspiration.)

Thus, the lesson of “learning by doing” plays out, decades later.

For more information, visit Worldvent.org.
More Parker Inspiration

More thoughts from Mark Bernstein about a Parker experience inspiring him today

This is a small project, but it’s international in its development team and purpose. Blake and his crew are building a great ventilator at a whopping pace, but from the outset it was clear that these ventilators were unlikely to arrive in time to help victims of the first wave in North America and Europe. That would have deterred lots of people, I think, but it is easy to foresee that these ventilators might be invaluable to places with less international travel and trade, where the virus will arrive later. The virus may prove seasonal, giving a respite to the Northern Hemisphere while increasing the threat to the Southern Hemisphere.

I’m afraid too many Americans would be discouraged because the first beneficiaries might not be our neighbors. But the Parker I knew taught to render help where it is needed, not where it’s convenient. That attitude was due, in part, to the fact that Parker in my time was still shaped by a cadre of dedicated educators who had themselves fled Europe before World War II. Their outlook was communitarian, international and often internationalist. Many were reaching retirement age in my era but their influence remained strong.

In 1st grade, we had to write a letter to a favorite author—the ideal Parker assignment. First, it assumed that one possessed a favorite—that everyone should, as a matter of course. Second, it implicitly reminds us that books come from people, and sometimes those people might write to you just as you wrote to them. I was delighted to receive a note from the eminent Dr. Seuss! Perhaps as a result, I’ve never been very shy to seek help from people who are distant, busy and frighteningly accomplished.

That’s been a huge help in building the doc teams. Whenever we’ve run into a problem, we’ve had real authorities to fall back on. Can you use a smartphone app while wearing surgical gloves? I knew someone who would know. Just to make sure, he spent a morning with various cell phones and a variety of personal protective equipment. What changes might we need in a version for Arabic-speaking hospitals? I found one advisor in Egypt from my correspondence and a second, a British medievalist specializing in Arab science, who helped locate Arabic-speaking practitioners to lend a hand.
In a typical school year, Parker alumni return to school periodically to present Morning Exes, visit classes and reconnect with former teachers. The 2019–20 year has, of course, not been typical, and while some alumni stopped by Parker earlier in the year (see Alumni Reconnect, p. 50), one of the ways the school pivoted with the shift to remote learning was the establishment of the “ZooMX,” a collaboration initiated by Principal Dan Frank and History Department Co-Chair Andy Bigelow.

These virtual encounters with alumni began in April, before planners had even coined the “ZooMX” name, with political journalist, best-selling author, documentary filmmaker and former *Newsweek* magazine senior editor **Jonathan Alter ’75**, who visited with 8th and 11th graders to discuss the legacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Alter, who wrote the bestseller *The Defining Moment: FDR’s Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope*, commented on the milestone accomplishments during Roosevelt’s leadership of the federal government following the Great Depression and implementation of his New Deal domestic agenda in response to the worst economic crisis in U.S. history.

“In his inaugural address, FDR used what became his famous statement, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” but if you’re worried about whether or not you can put food on the table, that’s not just fear, it’s something real,” Alter commented. “FDR was a great actor, so he could project a level of confidence that we were going to get through this. He was very deep into the idea of how to communicate with the American public, and he did it well.”

Alter noted FDR’s creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a work relief program that employed millions of young men on environmental projects during the great Depression, was “the fastest mobilization of a program in recent history.”
Roosevelt realized you could just have a conversation. ...By mastering radio, he mastered the presidency.”

Alter “greatly enjoyed” the ZooMX, “especially because the questions (every single one!) were first-rate. In some ways it was better than either an in-person class or a Morning Ex. I’ve appeared in Parker classrooms before and it’s just one class—a grade at best. This Zoom class had students from several grades. It was also better than a Morning Ex because it wasn’t as big, so I think anyone with a question got to ask it. Of course, it’s always better to see your audience in person, but it was a tech substitute that would not have been available just a few years ago.”

With the ZooMX concept firmly in place, Parker’s History Department hosted a second alumnus, New York University Professor of Social Science, published author and New York Times columnist Eric Klinenberg ’89, for a virtual gathering with more than 70 8th grade and Upper School students and faculty in May.

A 14-year Parker student, Klinenberg opened his remarks by

Following his remarks, Alter responded to questions from students and faculty. When someone asked to what extent FDR deserves credit for getting the U.S. out of the Depression or if it was World War II that was the real cause, Alter said, “FDR got us into World War II, and World War II got us out of the Depression.”

Answering a query about FDR’s famous fireside chats, Alter noted, “They had an enormously positive influence on public opinion. People felt he was talking to them in their living rooms. And he wasn’t the one with the fireplace—Americans were sitting by their radios at their fireplaces. My grandfather was a big distributor of Majestic Radios in Chicago at that time. Radio revolutionized communication.
expressing his love of the school. “I can’t think of more exciting and intellectually intense rooms than the ones I sat in at Parker,” he said. While he was honest in acknowledging that no place is perfect, he referred to his Parker experience as “powerful and profound [and] a special place to learn and grow.”

He then talked about his first book, Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago, a sociological look at the 1995 Chicago heat wave—an avoidable crisis that resulted in thousands of Chicagoans hospitalized and hundreds dead and featured local political leaders fighting with the scientific community about the “actual” causes of these deaths. As he shared details of how this relatively modern crisis disproportionately affected minorities and those living in traditionally blighted areas of the city, Klinenberg repeatedly asked if any of the details sounded familiar, alluding to the current COVID-19 crisis.

Klinenberg continued by examining the concept of social distancing, noting that, in times of crisis, we may need physical distance, but the concept of social solidarity was important and possibly even essential to keeping people alive and engaged in society. He said it is fairly easy to survive a heat wave if the proper social supports are in place, but in this current time, we are all hunkered down in relative solitude. Modern society is organized into a web of interdependent relationships between people and institutions, and Klinenberg pointed out that times of crisis have a way of making these relationships more visible—for better and for worse.

When this COVID-19 crisis ends, Klinenberg predicts a period of social and political change the likes of which we have never seen as a country. He hopes we emerge with new ways to encourage and support each other.

After answering questions from those in attendance, he closed with, “There has never been a time in my life when it felt like so much has been up for grabs. What kind of future we have depends a lot on folks like you.”

Like Alter, Klinenberg enjoyed the ZooMX session. “It’s always a pleasure to be in conversation with Parker students. It would have been better in person, but they didn’t disappoint in the ZooMX. The thing I liked best was seeing the names and faces of so many of my old friends’ children. But of course it was also great to get so many insightful questions, the kinds I expect from college students. Parker students are bold and precocious. Some things never change.”

The History Department welcomed a third alumnus, Roy A. Roberts Distinguished History Professor at the University of Kansas Dr. David Farber ’74, who specializes in the 1960s. Farber visited Parker two years ago as part of the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and addressed students and a public audience on the topic.

In his ZooMX presentation for 8th–12th graders and faculty, Farber shared a brief history of the impact of the Vietnam conflict on the U.S. home front, the antiwar movement and the events in Chicago in 1968. “Vietnam was a fiasco that led to Americans reimagining our role in the world,” Farber said, “and half a century later, we’re still trying to make sense of what went wrong.”

He continued, “After WWII, there was a consensus that the U.S. should concentrate all its resources on a grand strategy: the U.S. would stand for the spread of democracy and
capitalism everywhere by constraining its archenemy, the Soviet Union, from spreading its ideology, totalitarian Communism. Vietnam was part of that strategy. But very quickly the war became very unpopular, at least among some, so the strategy started to break down, and it has had massive implications ever since.”

Farber noted that schools became early places where people asked questions about the war, holding teach-ins to exercise their rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. The Civil Rights Movement also provided examples of effective tools, such as protests and rallies. “One legacy of the war is that citizens have found themselves in positions to use our powerful Bill of Rights to stand up to illegitimacy. We have tools we can use to promote change.”

Among the questions Farber responded to was how Parker students in 1968 reacted to the war. Farber recalled that he and his classmate—now Principal—Dan Frank were Middle Schoolers then, but he remembers Parker as “a hotbed of activism. By 1970 there was a chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, a radical leftist group, and lots of kids had gone to antiwar protests. In 1972, Dan and I worked for [presidential candidate] George McGovern and got credit in our 11th grade history class. We were pushed to think and be engaged in the issues of our time, and we were, very much so.”

Following the event, Farber shared, “As we now know, the hardest part about a Zoom event is gauging the reaction of our fellow Zoomsters. Staring at a gallery of little square images is just not the same as looking people in the eye as you speak with them. Still, Parker students, unsurprisingly, rose to the occasion. Using the chat function, many students asked smart, pointed questions. As I had hoped, they were interested in thinking out loud about how the ’60s antiwar protests fit into a larger conversation about citizen activism.”
and democratic culture. I tip my hat to Andy Bigelow and Parker’s superb roster of history teachers; their students were primed for the ZooMX. And thanks, too, to all the students who participated. Throughout the years—decades!—I have talked to several generations of Parker students, and it’s always a fun and rewarding challenge.”

Two non-alumni also participated in the ZooMX experience:
American history expert, author and Northwestern University History Department Associate Professor Daniel Immerwahr shared insights from his second book, How to Hide an Empire: Geography and Power in the Greater United States. He opened with a personal account, from early in his teaching career, of when he recognized the pervasive U.S. influence well outside its traditional contiguous borders. This realization has influenced his views about and methods of teaching history, and many consider him an expert on the topic of empires. He used the 2008 presidential election to demonstrate how notions of citizenship, foreignism and successionism came into play. From the controversy surrounding John McCain’s birth in the Panama Canal Zone to Sarah Palin’s support for her husband’s work with the Alaskan Independence Party to Barack Obama’s disputed birth records from Hawaii, Immerwahr made clear that the lines that define our country’s history are often blurry.

The final ZooMX of the school year featured Dr. Jill Lepore, the David Woods Kemper ’41 Professor of American History at Harvard University, The New Yorker staff writer and host of the podcast The Last Archive. She first Zoomed with an 8th grade student book group who had read her book These Truths: A History of the United States and answered questions ranging from how she determined the content to include as well as not to include in her book to her process as an author and her work in general, from how she came up with the names for her chapters to advice to 8th graders and more. Following the book group, more students joined the session, and Lepore answered questions about her recent articles in The New Yorker, her work as a historian at Harvard and her recent experience creating her new podcast The Last Archive, which “traces the history of evidence, proof and knowledge.”

To view recordings of the ZooMX experiences with Alter and Farber, visit fwparker.org/ZooMX.
Anyone who has attended a Parker athletics event during the past couple of years might have noticed a parent taking photos with some impressive-looking cameras. And parents who wanted action photos of their student-athletes quickly got to know him. Jon Rauschenberger, whose daughter Lauryn graduated this year, had become a regular fixture on the sidelines (before the shelter-at-home orders).

“Photography has always been a casual hobby, and it really started changing over the last year or so,” he said. “Making images that capture a moment in a special and unique way has become something I find incredibly rewarding, and students and parents appreciate it after trying to snap decent photos with their cell phones.”

Rauschenberger is hoping to take his photography to the next level, which is quite a change from his previous profession. After growing up in Milwaukee and Florida, he came to Chicago in 1994 to help start a software company. “I met a couple guys online who had an idea, so I decided this was a good time to make a move, when I was young (just two years out of college) and had no other responsibilities,” he recalled. “My Dad actually advised me not to do it. He was nervous about me going to a new company in a new city, but in the end, it worked out very well.”

“We liked that the school focuses on developing good people within a flexible academic structure. That resonated with us.”
The company, Clarity, originally served as “developers for hire” who would build nearly any kind of software, but eventually they focused on voice and phone systems, mostly for contact centers. “It’s not sexy, but it’s important plumbing that a lot of companies need,” Rauschenberger said. He and his partners sold the company three years ago, and he hopes to make the transition to professional photography as society reopens. In the meantime, he’s working on a few “quarantine projects,” including self-portraits (including those in this article) and photos of his children “when I can get them to pose for me.”

Rauschenberger and his wife discovered Parker through the Mary Meyer School, where their children attended preschool. “My wife took the lead in finding them a school,” he noted. “I was a public-school kid; Janet went to an all-girls school in Columbus and wanted to find the right school for our kids. She realized early on Parker was the best fit for the kind of school experience we wanted. We liked that the school focuses on developing good people within a flexible academic structure. That resonated with us. Even the way they handled kids coming in for their play parties during the admission process; other schools separated our kids because they were twins, which really traumatized our son, but at Parker they kept them together. Parker was much warmer, more nurturing and more concerned about finding what’s right for each kid and making that a priority.”

The Rauschenbergers also liked the ways the school encouraged parents to participate in activities. “You feel very welcome to get involved in the school, which was something we were looking for. It reinforced that Parker was the right place for us.” That sense of community became an important part of their children’s experience as they progressed from JK into the Upper School.

Although their son, Noah, an ice hockey student-athlete, left Parker to attend an athletically focused Catholic military school in Minnesota for his senior year, “he’s still extremely close with the kids at Parker. They developed an incredibly strong bond, and I think that will be the case for life.” This fall, Noah plans to play Junior Hockey, a level between high school and college.

“For Lauryn, Parker was the perfect school,” Rauschenberger shared. “She played a lot of sports as well but it was more of an addition to the whole experience. The mix of academic focus and emphasis on arts and athletics was a perfect balance for her, along with flexibility and freedom.” Lauryn is enrolling at Kenyon College in the fall and will continue playing field hockey.

Rauschenberger’s relationship with the school during the past few years has expanded beyond parent-related activities to encompass his passion for photography. After developing a reputation for his great photos from Lauryn’s field hockey games, as well as producing the video for the 8th Grade Tribute during his children’s 8th grade year, he began working with Parker’s Communications Department and the Athletics Department in the hope of formalizing the relationship. This year he was instrumental in helping to
celebrate members of Parker’s class of 2020 remotely by developing tributes to the graduating seniors through photo-montage videos and an online version of “Who’s That Baby?,” which are available for viewing at fwparker.org/classof2020.

“It’s been challenging to find good representative pix of all the seniors throughout their experience at Parker,” he said. “It can be difficult for the parents to provide them since they should be focusing on enjoying their children’s activities rather than documenting them. I’m hoping we can move forward with a more structured approach. There are milestone events like Big Brothers Big Sisters, ‘12 Days,’ County Fair, and there are the ongoing activities like sports, performances, student clubs like robotics. I’d like to be there taking good pictures and making sure to get everyone, then cataloging them so we know who we have and can go back and find them. The goal is to free up the parents. I’d like to get to a point when parents get pix of their children periodically. Hopefully from there I can build a business.”

Rauschenberger appreciates the school’s efforts to transition to remote learning. “Parker has done a very good job; the teachers are making the shift to remote interaction, which was difficult with no notice.”

As for Lauryn, “she’s keeping a good attitude—all the kids are—but it’s definitely heartbreaking, especially for a kid who’s been there for 14 years and seen seniors before her going through all the rituals. Many people are putting a lot of thought and effort into ways of honoring the seniors, but they want that shared experience. The school is doing a great job, though; everyone is acutely aware of and sensitive to the impact this is having.”
As someone who usually interacts daily with students, faculty, staff and even parents from all areas of the school, it’s been particularly challenging for Anne Nelson—better known at Parker as “Nurse Anne” for the past 30 years—to shelter at home.

“Our dog gives my husband and me something around which to structure our day,” she described. “There are things we have to do that involve him. But really my attention span these days is about 15 minutes!”

Fortunately, she’s had the chance to sit in on a few Zoom classes to reconnect with her Parker colleagues and students. “The kids are doing really well, and the teachers are doing such good work. This is a hard switch, and I’m so impressed with them.”

Nelson grew up on Chicago’s South Side and attended Catholic school. “I’m firmly rooted in ‘South Side Irish,’ which was like a little Irish town in Chicago,” she described. “I was 10 before I found out not everybody is Irish! I had a strong Catholic upbringing, and even though I’m not a practicing Catholic today, it’s still my belief system.”

“I fell in love with the school. The main attractions were the people and the traditions—traditions were very important in my background—and I loved the job!”

After high school, she worked downtown while attending Loyola University, studying to be a teacher—“In my day, girls became nurses, teachers, secretaries or stewardesses, and while I thought being a stewardess could be glamorous, I opted for teaching.” But, at the age of 19 she thought her world was a little too small and decided to get an apartment with a couple of women in Logan Square “before it was trendy.”

Nelson had never thought about becoming a nurse, but an aunt made the suggestion and helped her get into nursing school at Oakton Community College (then in Des Plaines) when she was 21. To become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) would take only one year. “I thought I could do anything for a year, even if I hated it,” she recalled, “but when I started, I really loved it. I liked the idea that there were many ways to become a nurse.”

After graduating from the program, Nelson moved to California—“back in the hippy days”—but returned to Chicago after a year. She was an LPN for 13 years but realized, to do more, she needed to go back to school. She went to the University of Illinois at Chicago, satisfied the prerequisites and graduated in 1984 with a BSN—Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She returned to Evanston Hospital, where she had spent a few years as an LPN, now as a Registered Nurse (RN). “As an LPN, you don’t work with the very sick patients, but as an RN, you can do everything necessary.”
She deeply empathizes with today’s health care professionals working on the front lines of COVID-19. “When I see first-person accounts of nurses in the ICU and the ER, I know what they’re talking about. You go to work, you do the best you can, but you never feel like you’ve done enough because people still die. I feel for them now—it’s heartbreaking. It takes about six months before you see every kind of patient you’re going to see, then you get to a point where you are OK and realize it’s not your fault.”

Nelson later worked at an office with pediatricians and family practice doctors in Evanston. There she met Carmel Cassidy, and they worked together until Cassidy left to join Nancy Dann in the Nurses’ Office at Parker. “When Nancy decided to take a year off, Carmel asked me if I wanted to join her at Parker, and—just like when I started nursing school—I thought it would be fine for a year,” Nelson said. “But I fell in love with the school. The main attractions were the people and the traditions—traditions were very important in my background—and I loved the job! I felt like I could accomplish a lot and feel good about what I did, and it turned out to be very good for me.” When Dann decided not to return, Nelson stayed on part-time, and when Cassidy moved to Atlanta, Nelson took over the job full-time.

“When I see first-person accounts of nurses in the ICU and the ER, I know what they’re talking about. You go to work, you do the best you can, but you never feel like you’ve done enough because people still die. I feel for them now—it’s heartbreaking.”

Nelson admits that, at first, Parker was a bit of a “culture shock. I went to a Catholic School with nuns. I liked school, but there were 50 of us in a classroom, and we sat in our seats and did our work. I would have been in heaven at Parker! I would have loved all the traditions and the Central Topics. At first, I was shocked by the relaxed way kids moved about the school and how comfortable they were communicating with their teachers. But eventually I realized it was a good thing. Our teachers and students have good working relationships. The kids feel known, and our teachers are so dedicated, it’s really great.”
In addition to her work in the Nurses’ Office, Nelson was teaching one freshman health class each semester, but the job got busier as the number of students, faculty and staff increased. “And with more people came more chronic problems, like allergies and asthma,” she explained. “I was teaching four days a week, and I never had a day when I wasn’t called out of class for some medical reason.” Her colleague, Upper School Counselor Gary Childrey, offered to take over the freshman health class. Now Nelson is a “guest instructor” for various classes, including 4th grade puberty, 5th grade puberty/sex education, 6th grade sex education and freshman sex education. “I love the questions they ask, especially the younger kids. They’re funny and real; 5th graders are fascinated by twins, conjoined twins, anything medically odd. I’ll answer any question because I don’t want them to think you can’t talk about these things.”

Outside school, Nelson enjoys bike riding, reading, going to movies and plays and spending time with family. The oldest of nine children who live mostly in the Chicago area, she typically meets up with her siblings at a place in Wisconsin every summer—“but this year, we don’t know.” She has a daughter, two stepchildren and seven grandchildren, ages 11 to 20.

Meanwhile, during this time of sheltering at home, Nelson has contributed to keeping the Parker community safer with two instructional videos: one demonstrates how to make a face mask out of a bandana, and the other reveals a simple recipe for making hand sanitizer. To view the videos, visit fwparker.org/NurseAnne.
Colette Holt ’76

Colette Holt represents public agencies and private firms on issues related to civil rights, public contracting and affirmative action. She has broad experience in conducting defensible disparity studies, consulting and testimony involving expert witnesses, drafting legislation and policies, designing programs, managing initiatives, defending affirmative action programs and counseling private firms on compliance with diversity requirements. She serves as general counsel to the American Contract Compliance Association and is an author and frequent media commentator on these issues.

Holt received her B.A. in philosophy from Yale University and her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School. She was a law clerk to the former Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Prior to developing her own practice, she was associated with a large law firm, assistant corporation counsel for the City of Chicago and chief operating officer of the Chicago Park District. She is a former adjunct professor at Loyola University School of Law and the John Marshall Law School. Among her professional honors are Women Business Champion of the Year from the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Advocacy Award from the Women’s Business Development Center and the President’s Award from the National Black Chamber of Commerce. She is married to David Wood, and they live in San Antonio, Texas.

A Community of Learners: Alumni

What inspired you to major in philosophy?

I was interested in the history of ideas, and philosophy seemed like a way to study the broad swath of great thinkers. I also thought it would be good preparation for law school, which it was. I still believe in the liberal arts concept that college is not a trade school, and that has served me well.

What led you to law school?

My father was a lawyer, as were several other relatives. I saw it as both intellectually interesting and a way to work towards social justice. I never seriously considered doing anything else.

What was challenging about government work? What was especially satisfying?

The biggest challenge about working in or for governments is the lack of resources, both financial and human. During the last 40 years, government has been demonized and downsized, and it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and keep good people, get the funds to competently deliver services and address the ever more complex problems facing our world. While a governmental agency certainly can’t do everything, there is no private sector substitute when there is a need to act collectively. The current pandemic has made this so sadly clear. What is satisfying is when work leads to a better situation for our community, when that collective power is harnessed to solve problems and provide needed services or support.
What have you enjoyed about teaching?

Helping others see things in a new way or to move to action to effect change. I have been teaching about supplier diversity law and program best practices for almost 30 years, and I have watched people move up and take leadership roles in our industry. It’s exciting to know you have transferred your knowledge and experience to the next generation.

How did you end up focusing on affirmative action programs?

I come from a family of civil rights activists, so I knew I would do something related to civil rights. I was an assistant corporation counsel for the City of Chicago in 1989 when the Supreme Court handed down a very conservative decision that turned civil rights law upside down. Local governments were suddenly required to conduct extensive statistical and anecdotal research to establish that discrimination remains a barrier to fair access to government contracts and that any program is narrowly tailored to that evidence. These research projects have come to be known as “disparity studies.” I led the city’s Law Department team to enact the first Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Ordinance for Chicago in 1990, and I have been doing this work ever since. I founded my own law firm in 1994.

Were there people or activities at Parker that influenced choices you’ve made since graduating?

Everything about Parker has influenced my entire life. I often say it was the most important thing that ever happened to me: lifelong friendships, academic preparation, professional networks and, most important, my values.

What are some of your favorite Parker memories?

Big Brothers and Sisters (I actually recognized my 1st grade big sister when I saw her at O’Hare around 20 years ago); “This concludes the Morning Ex”; County Fair; Class Day; our 6th grade trip to Cassopolis, Michigan and our 7th grade trip to Starved Rock; debating in Mr. Markwell’s class; trying to please Mrs. Stone; Brigadoon and Guys and Dolls; springtime in the courtyard.

How do you spend time outside work?

I have been involved with politics all my life so I spend a lot of time working with candidates and policy issues. I ran as a delegate for Amy Klobuchar, who is my friend from law school at the University of Chicago. I also love to cook, which has been good since we are locked down in San Antonio. I have worked from home for almost 25 years so this wasn’t any major change in our business. We got a Shih Tzu puppy in January so we hang out with Colonel Charlie Parker and our cats, Selma, Montgomery and Cookie Monster.

How are you coping with quarantine?

If I had had a child, she would have gone to Parker!
Alumni Reconnect

Although alumni activities planned for the spring were unable to take place, several alumni returned to the school earlier in the year to share with students, faculty and staff.

Military veteran, historian, businesswoman, investor, developer, philanthropist and transgender woman Col. (IL) Jennifer Pritzker ’68 commented on the importance of understanding the military’s role in a democratic society.

Regine Rousseau ’90, a businesswoman, entrepreneur, poet and author, focused her presentation on labels and their impactful influence on what we think we can achieve. She shared her story of shedding labels to create her own unique business, Shall We Wine, an event planning and wine company.

Len Goodman ’80 talked about his career as an attorney, first at a large law firm, then as a criminal defense attorney working against a system that typically favors those who are privileged.

Melanie Nutter ’89, also a current parent, is principal of Nutter Consulting, which provides strategic planning services to advance smart and sustainable city goals. She encouraged listeners to do what they can to help the environment.
Class Notes

Parker alumni: please send your class notes to Associate Director of Development—Direct Marketing Bridget Haley Organ, borgan@fwparker.org.

1952

George Malko writes, “Here in New York we distance, we scrub down, we wear protective N95 masks if we have them, and we wash our hands all the time. I continue to teach both of my NYU Tisch School of The Arts classes in the Department of Dramatic Writing, one a cross-discipline class where the students, almost all graduating grad students, are rewriting either screenplays or theatrical plays. The other is the MFA Thesis class, in which the students, again grads, are writing a screenplay. NYU went to the Internet right after Spring Break, which ended on March 23. We are using Zoom, and it works well.

“There’s a different kind of intensity to teaching this way, a kind of intimacy in that we are all looking only at each other’s faces—actually more in the way of head and shoulders shots. There isn’t the expanse of the classroom, the sway of looking around, gesturing broadly. But it works. In fact, it does more than work. The students are working hard, writing even as we find ourselves pausing to wonder aloud, ‘What’s the point?’ We had that discussion in the very first Zoom class we had, and it was important. Why, after all, write a romantic comedy or chase thriller when the numbers everywhere keep climbing, more and more people testing positive, more being hospitalized and more dying?

“My father once told me that he did not agree with the Latin phrase inter arma musae tacent: ‘in time of war the muses grow silent.’ He believed that is the time when they are most needed. I have found this to be true. After 9/11, I was working as an artistic consultant to a theatre company here in New York. We had a meeting shortly after that tragedy, and several members of the company—writers, directors, actors—wondered what the hell they were doing talking about the theatre. I listened to everyone, and then I said that I felt, deeply, that it is the responsibility of artists—the writer, the painter, the composer—to try and make sense of the chaos; to describe what has happened, but then to find a way to not only make sense of it, but, in doing so, find the human strength and purpose for us all to keep going.

“This is true now more than ever.”

1954

1957

Jim Lowry’s grandnephew, Evan Lowry, writes, “While I myself am not an alumnus of Francis W. Parker School, many in my family are. My grandfather, William E. Lowry ’52; my granduncle, Jim Lowry; my father, William A. Lowry ’80; and my cousin, Cameron Pilcher ’11, all attended Parker. In addition, my aunt, Kim Pilcher, was a faculty member for two years and my grandmother, Lil Lowry, had a career spanning 33 years at Parker, culminating in her becoming Dean of Students from 1986 to 1996. Thus, as you can see, the Lowry family has had a long and distinguished association with Parker for close to 70 years.

“I am writing to inform you that recently my granduncle, Jim Lowry, had his book *Change Agent: A Life Devoted to Creating Wealth for Minorities* published and distributed by Archway Publishing. In the opening chapters of the book, he highlights the life-changing impact Parker had on him, our family and the Black community both here in Chicago and abroad. I am reaching out to you because, while the book might have special interest to minority alums, Jim and I both believe the book, as a historical recount of the last 80 years, may also appeal to all those affiliated with the school. *Change Agent* dives into the ways in which race, along with politics, guided Jim through the world of global management consulting, all while turning to the principles instilled at Parker for guidance and reassurance along the way. The book presents a unique historical perspective while also shedding light on the importance of Parker as a longstanding progressive educational institution.”

1966

Peter Logan writes, “[I am] hanging out on ‘old Chicago’ Facebook pages and getting in touch with other Parker alums. Kim Thomas ’68, Steve Manaster, Christine Rago Brown ’69, Norman Welch ’64 and others responded to my posting about Al’s Fishery/Mr. Shrimp’s. I am missing playing music, though, and there is no substitute. Looking forward to long summer days after the virus restrictions are lifted.”

1969

Joe Flynn writes, “Shortly before the pandemic hit, I signed a deal with Tantor Media to do the first three books in my Jim McGill series—*The President’s Henchman*—as audio books, a fast-growing segment for books of all sorts. Tantor even bought the right to use the covers my wife, Catherine, designed for our ebooks and print books. You can see these books on the Amazon website: amzn.to/2y1ToB7. Amazon allows authors to advertise their books on other authors’ Amazon pages. That’s why you’ll see other people’s books on my pages. This works two ways. For example, I advertise my books on David Baldacci’s Amazon pages. The first book in my Jim McGill series, *The President’s Henchman*, has 1,586 Amazon reader reviews with a 4.5-star (of 5) rating. The stories revolve around the first private eye to live in the White House. He’s married to the first female president. Any Parker people working in streaming TV should give this book a look. With 12 books in the series now, there’s a lot of good material.

“I hope everyone is being careful and doing well…and will help to put the first female vice president in office later this year.”
Lise Haines is one of six Boston-area authors who are leading the initiative Writers Against Racial Injustice, which has raised more than $55,000 to support the Equal Justice Initiative. Read more in Publishers Weekly: fwparker.org/Haines69.

1973
Blake Hannaford is working with an experienced team of ventilator engineers and doctors on a new low-cost ventilator design. He writes, “I hope you are still safe from the C-19 pandemic! Cyn and I and the kids are fine so far...knock wood...sanitize...” Read more about Hannaford’s ventilator project on p. 30 of this issue.

1974
Jonathan E. Jaffe writes, “February 2020: formed a consortium of small manufacturing businesses in northern Illinois to manufacture sub $1K ventilators. By April, the governor is buying supplies in secret to avoid federal confiscation. We’ve been unable to make contact with him so we don’t know if we’ll ever ramp up to our goal of 500 units per day using ‘massive parallelism’ to make enough significant to the national need.

“April 20, 2020: Good news—eight years after the idea and seven years, five months after submission, U.S. patent 10,621,589 was awarded for the NoCompromiseChargeCard (NC3). Easy to read material at the bottom of nc3.mobi describing benefits to consumers, merchants and issuers and removing the prize for crooks to break into merchants to steal millions of credit card credentials.”

1979
Mark Hallet writes, “Greetings, everyone! Things are good. Living in Chicago’s Edgewater neighborhood with wife Carmen and daughter Emilia (23); son Gabriel (26) lives nearby in Uptown. Carmen works at JLL, Emilia is in her last year at School of the Art Institute, and Gabriel is with the architectural firm Studio Gang. I am at the nonprofit Illinois Humanities. Part of the exciting work there, in response to COVID-19, is that we are making a series of grants to help out smaller arts and humanities organizations throughout the city of Chicago, and even statewide, to weather this crisis. It’s very gratifying, knowing the role these groups play in making communities more resilient through researching and sharing community history, exploring literature and conducting oral histories. Sending a lot of love to fellow FWP alums! In this picture, Carmen, Emilia and I are out on a walk in Lincoln Square. Feels emblematic of these strange times.”

Mark Hallett with wife Carmen and daughter Emilia.
The Live Creature

1987
Clarita Gardiner and the class of 1987 had a great time getting together for a Zoom reunion. They are hoping to do it again soon.

Class of '87 Zoom reunion.

1990
Amy Kohn writes, “We live in Padua, just a 40-minute drive from the hillside town of Vo’ where the first Italian casualty of the virus was reported. We’ve been home since late February, and with time and patience we’ve developed a rhythm with homeschooling and work (i.e., keeping our seven-year-old son Giordano’s made-up operatic songs at a reasonable level during my husband’s work hours!). Our garden store is now considered essential so we were happy to be able to buy some plants today, and I’m so grateful to have my Chicago-made piano here for writing new songs. Sending lots of love to the Parker community! amykohn.com, amykohn.bandcamp.com.”

1991
Rebecca Shapiro celebrated her daughter’s bat mitzvah at Brooklyn Bowl on May 11, 2019 with some fellow Parker alumni.

(L–R) Rebecca Rosen Shapiro, Casey Benjamin, Maegan Pussilano, Darcy Cohler Addison, Jon Singer, Clarinda Howell Taylor, Alex Taylor (Clarinda’s husband) and Mike Gibb (Maegan’s husband). In attendance but not pictured: Jennifer Leavitt Oppenheimer.

1992
Amie Siegel was featured on a PBS NewsHour segment, “How this philanthropist hopes to boost mid-career women artists,” in February 2020, available at fwparker.org/Siegel92.

1994
Sara Berliner writes, “I was looking forward to a family trip to Chicago this spring to participate in Career Day. Instead, I’ve been leading Vote Like a Mother, the social enterprise I founded in 2018, in raising money for Feeding America, the national network of food banks. We raised $2,000+ in cash donations on March 13. I am also donating 100% of profits on Vote Like a Mother’s ethically made gear. Cool Mom Picks called the new VLAM Face Mask ‘the essential accessory of 2020.’ The face mask plus t-shirts, hats, car magnets and more are available at votelikeamother.org.”
“On the kids’ media side of my work life, I’ve been helping a client build Hellosaurus, a play-along interactive video platform for ages three through eight. Once stay-at-home began, we decided to produce my concept for a show, where every episode’s a party, to lift kids’ spirits. Check it out at hellosaurus.com. Tap ‘Be in the Show’ to request a shout-out for your kiddo’s birthday. We’re also asking kids to get creative and share virtual presents, with the idea that the best gifts are those we make or perform for each other. I hope, for those of you with young kids at home, The Birthday Show is a half-hour where you know they’re being safely entertained and engaged.”

2000
Rachel Terp writes, “I am working temporarily as a supervising attorney for the Center for Worker’s Rights’ Coronavirus Job Protection Helpline, assisting California workers whose jobs have been affected by COVID-19.”

2005
Emily Reeves is working as a pediatric hospitalist and ER physician at a community hospital outside Baltimore.

2007
Alicia Maule was included in Negocios Now’s first-ever 40 under 40 in New York City. In her statement, she references Parker: “At high school graduation [from Francis W. Parker School], I told my mom I would give her a return on investment. I’ve learned that the return can be more than just about money—it can also be about service and justice for humanity.” You can view her profile and the Negocios Now 40 under 40 announcement at fwparker.org/Maule07.

2010
Whitney Mash and Justin Levin got married in October. Many Parker community members were there to celebrate!

2016
Ben Weiss is a junior at Yale (mechanical engineering major) and a social entrepreneur. He has co-founded Havenly, a nonprofit that provides job training for refugees to “earn while they learn” about industrial baking and food safety. Classes cover food safety certification, digital and financial literacy, ESL, resume building and measurements and proportions. At the end of the program, fellows are placed in jobs with local businesses. Havenly also has been busy with its COVID Food Relief Program. As of early July, Havenly had generated nearly 5,000 meals for communities struggling with food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. For more information, visit havenlytreats.com.
In Memoriam

Joseph Marcus Weil, Jr. ’35, according to an obituary, “was born in Chicago in 1917, the youngest child of Joseph Marcus Weil, Sr., and Hattie (nee Lepman), with two older sisters, Alice and Margaret. He grew up near Belmont Avenue and the lake through the 1920s and 1930s. His father ran the family tannery on Belmont and the river, together with his brother, Victor. The tannery was founded by the family in Ann Arbor in the 1840s and was moved to Chicago not long afterwards.

“Unfortunately, his father died young, while Joe was about ten, and the business was sold in the late 1920s. Joe attended Francis Parker School and excelled in almost all subjects, though he joked that he nearly killed his French and music teachers, subjects he had no talent for. He graduated from Harvard College in 1936, majoring in economics, and from Harvard Law School in 1939, where he served as an editor of the Harvard Law Review. After Law School, he entered the Navy as an officer and was assigned to the battleship USS North Carolina, though he never put out to sea. After the War, he returned to Chicago and joined the top law firm that is now Mayer Brown. When he joined, the firm had about 40 lawyers, and he saw it grow to about 1,500 lawyers in 27 cities around the world. He specialized in financial law and was one of the firm's lead lawyers for its biggest client at the time, the Continental Bank. He spent his whole career at Mayer Brown and rose to become a senior partner. He was known as brilliant, tough, and hard working, but also as compassionate and gentle, especially with the young lawyers whom he mentored. He always maintained his common touch and humility, though not the norm, and was respected for his integrity. In 1949, Joe married the former Janis Uhlmann of Highland Park, a woman of great warmth and intelligence. Together in the 1950s, they had three children, Frederick David (Rick), Jane, and Susan. They were married for almost 70 years, when Janis passed away in 2019 at the age of 92. Joe and Jan were at the center of a large community of family and friends and were very active in civic affairs. Joe was a leading figure at the Chicago Jewish Child and Family Services, the Jewish United Fund of Chicago, Michael Reese Hospital, Francis Parker School, the Highland Park Civil Service Commission, and many other organizations. Joe and Jan were longtime members of Lakeshore Country Club in Glencoe, and Joe served as president of the club, and was an avid golfer and bridge player. For many decades, Joe and Jan spent part of the autumn in Woodstock, VT, and late winter and spring in Scottsdale, AZ. Their lives largely centered around family, friends, and service activities.”

Consuelo Joerns ’43 lived in Wiscasset, Maine. According to an obituary, she “was born on October 21, 1925, in Evanston, Illinois and was a wild, adventurous, free spirit, who was an eclectic reader and artist. She was raised in Chicago and went to Francis W. Parker School where she met her best friend Edward Gorey [’42]. She attended Mills College and then attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, again with Edward Gorey.

“During WWII, she worked as a civilian for the U.S. armed forces in France. She had showings of her paintings in Nice and Cagnes-Sur-Mer and later in Chicago and New York. After the war, she went to Guatemala where she had an ocelot as a pet. The ocelot would drape itself around her neck to go for ‘walks’ with Connie.
“She moved to Martha’s Vineyard for many years and created many paintings as well as ink drawings of the ships and the waters around Martha’s Vineyard where ‘there be monsters.’ She began writing and illustrating children’s books, including The Forgotten Bear, The Foggy Rescue, The Lost and Found House, Oliver’s Escape and The Midnight Castle. She illustrated The Green Machine by Polly Cameron and The Everywhere Cat by William Corbin.

“She started going to Japan on her own for months at a time, visiting the shrines, temples and gardens while studying the different art styles in Japan. Anyone who knew Connie would not be surprised that when she was in her 80s, she fell in Japan and broke her arm—while running for a bus. She moved to Wiscasset in 2000 and loved the people there. Her last showing of her paintings was in 2018 at the Maine Art Gallery, ‘Three Women on Board.’

“She made the world a better place. We will miss her but never forget her. As Kahlil Gibran said, ‘…For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun….And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then you shall truly dance.’

Patricia “Patsy” Starrels Bernstein ’46 “was born in 1928 in Chicago, to Celeste Rau, a pioneering newspaper woman, and Joel Starrels, a chemical engineer, commodities trader and collector of modern art. She grew up in Highland Park before her family moved to Chicago, where she attended Francis W. Parker School. After graduating from Colorado College and winning a writing contest for Mademoiselle, she moved to New York City, where she worked at Good Housekeeping. She later returned to Chicago, where she was fashion editor for The Chicago American and met her future husband, Dr. Haskell E. Bernstein, on a blind brunch date at the Drake Hotel. They married in 1954 at the East Delaware home of her parents and were married for 45 years.

“A traditionalist who was also ahead of her time, Patsy wrote for Encyclopedia Britannica while a stay-at-home mother of three. She insisted that her daughters never learn to type, lest they land in a secretarial pool. She loved fashion, had style and had a wonderful eye. She adored antiquing and cherished road trips and weekend outings with family and friends.

“Her favorite movie was An Affair to Remember, and in their empty-nest years, Haskell and Patsy found their own wanderlust with adventures to far-flung destinations. One of their most memorable was spent sleeping on the floor of an Elder’s home in a Dyack village of Borneo. During this time Patsy also discovered her passion and talent for watercolor painting.

“Patsy leaves behind wonderful memories and many who loved her. Her children wish in particular to thank Cindy Conroy, who is forever part of our family and whose love and care throughout Patsy’s long decline was its one blessing.”

Her three children attended Parker: Mark ’73, Laurie ’75 and Jan ’77.
Caryl Hollender Susman ’48 loved Parker and supported the school in many ways. She served on the board of Parker’s Alumni Association, on the Endowment Fund Committee and as a trustee on the Board of Trustees from 1982 to 1987. According to an obituary, she was “extremely active in local charities and democratic politics. Through her work, she touched the lives of many people. At a time when there were few Democrats in New Trier Township, she was a Democratic precinct captain and knew all of the Democratic households in her three precincts. Caryl volunteered throughout her life for many social causes and became president of the Mary Lawrence chapter of the Jewish Children’s Bureau. ...Caryl was a 1952 graduate of Mills College in California where she studied psychology. She went to work at the Chicago Department of Welfare and became a ‘big sister’ through a mentoring organization. She and her ‘little sister’ were still friends 50 years later. Caryl also volunteered on the boards of several social services agencies. She credited her Parker Student Government experience as her ‘early teacher’ for her lifelong engagement in politics. She said that her ‘experiences at Parker impacted [her] choices after college.’ In the Alumni Newsletter, Caryl said that, ‘As students, we receive so much from Parker. That’s why it is important that we give back. Alumni can contribute as essential historical links to the school’s past, but we must contribute to the school’s future so that students will continue to benefit from all that we were privileged to experience.’ To give back and help provide financial assistance to students at Parker for years to come, Caryl founded and contributed to the Caryl H. and Bernard M. Susman Endowment fund. To recognize her continued support of Parker in so many ways, she was named an honorary trustee of Parker’s Board in 2011.” Donations in her memory may be made to Francis W. Parker School at fwparker.org/parkerfund or by check to Francis W. Parker School; for information, contact Connie Molzberger at cmolzberger@fwparker.org.

Dr. Harold Y. Arai ’53 lived in Libertyville. According to classmate Cary Sokoloc, he started in Parker’s freshman class in 1949. “He was a keen participant in classes, extracurricular activities and on athletic teams. He attended Ohio Wesleyan University for undergraduate studies, then Loyola University for doctoral degrees in dentistry and orthodontics. Harold’s term as a captain in the U.S. Air Force furthered his abilities in his profession. His practice as an orthodontist extended beyond 40 years, serving the Park Ridge and Northwest Chicago communities. Several years ago, Harold invited my wife, Marlene, and me to attend a lecture he was presenting at the Libertyville Library. His subject was the historical record of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and his personal experience having lived in the camps for four years. His interest was not only in the past, but also in the present and future where he devoted a lot of time mentoring the youth. During his lifetime, Harold and his family traveled to many continents and visited many fascinating countries. In recent years, he became involved in stem cell research projects that focused on diabetes treatment, putting him in contact with physicians, medical laboratories, pharmaceutical companies and investors.”
Former Faculty

David J. O’Neill, former Parker history and English teacher, lived in Eugene, Oregon. According to a Chicago Tribune obituary, “A few months before graduation from Harvard in 1953, David wrote to his parents, ‘You must understand, the kinds of work that I like don’t pay beans. This is the way it is going to be...I do want my work to be honest, truthful, with some purpose…. The money doesn’t mean anything. I would sooner commit suicide than be an advertiser. In short, I don’t like business because it involves selling something for more than it is worth. Excluding being a teacher, I don’t like the idea of working for the government because I think they are, in essence, all bureaucrats, and I don’t like the bureaucrats either. So, if you exclude business, and the government, the only other group I can work for is Labor, or I can be a laborer myself. That is, teacher, social worker, farmer, civil rights lawyer, newspaper editor or reporter, steel worker working as a would-be-labor relations man, doctor, historian. ...But in the meantime, since I am not a pacifist, I will be in the army, and I shall apply for the infantry...’

“With service in the army complete, David took his saved military money and cycled through Europe. In France, he met two young English women on a tandem bike. One of them, Janis Huke, became his first wife. In London, David began teaching. When the couple returned to the States, David took a position in Pennsylvania and later moved to Chicago to teach History and English at Francis W. Parker School. With three daughters, Rachel, Kate and Sarah, the family settled into life in the city. After a decade at Francis Parker School, David gave notice and worked as an editor for several publishers. He finished a master’s degree and began teaching high school in the Chicago Public Schools. The marriage of 23 years soured. The couple divorced.

“David met Janet Hiller at a summer seminar given by the National Endowment for the Humanities. An English teacher herself, the couple soon married and made a home together. Cycling to work, David wore Birkenstock sandals in the Chicago winter. He drank coffee black, wore a cotton fishing hat and planted tomatoes near the back alley. A few years later, yearning for a change, the couple pulled up roots, packed Janet’s Corolla and headed west to Eugene, Oregon. The small college town had good libraries, an amenable climate, was walkable and bike friendly. David took Tai Chi at the YMCA, volunteered at the library, tutored children and began watercolor classes at Campbell Senior Center. He inscribed the books he sent his grandchildren at Christmas, wrote letters and protested government actions, carrying a sign when he felt indignant, wearing that cotton fishing hat, always in sandals.”

Contributions may be made in his name to the Eugene Public Library Foundation or to the American Parkinson Disease Association.
Barton J. “Bart” Wolgamot lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he moved after retiring from Parker in 2010. He taught music at Parker for more than 35 years. According to an obituary in the Santa Fe New Mexican, he “was born November 10, 1939 in Danville, the first of 10 children born to Edgar K. ‘Pete’ Wolgamot, Jr. and Marguerite (Smith) Wolgamot. Bart attended St. Patrick’s Grade School and Schlarman High School in Danville, graduating Schlarman in 1957. A gifted musician and music educator, Bart graduated with a B.A. in musicology from University of Illinois and an M.A. in music education from Northwestern University. During his retirement, Bart played with classical music groups in Santa Fe until his illnesses took their toll on his physical condition. He was interested in numerous intellectual endeavors, was a lover of the arts in all forms and was a frequent traveler to Europe, where he could practice and use his fluency in numerous languages. While Bart was sometimes described by those who loved him as ‘eccentric,’ in fact he was best described as ‘interesting.’”

Several alumni and former faculty shared memories of Bart; following are a few excerpts. To read the comments in their entirety, visit fwparker.org/CelebratingBart.

His instruction was indispensable, his energy was insurmountable, and his falsetto was inimitable! Bart was a seminal figure in Parker history.
—Jill Chukerman Test ’77

Over the years, he became like family to many Parkerites, and, in truth, Parker was Bart’s family—his colleagues, school parents, graduates. Several times he left—for a break, sabbatical, to retire, etc.—but it never seemed like he left.
—Anthony Moor ’78

I am deeply indebted to [Bart] for encouraging me to find my confidence and growth as a musician in my formative years. …The greatest teachers test and push their students’ limits, and that most certainly describes Bart. —Andrew Chukerman ’79

His love of teaching and his incredible talent are a lasting reminder of what a lifetime devoted to Parker School can mean. —Julia San Fratello ’80

Bart Wolgamot was the most patient teacher in the world. He was kind and nurturing as well. —Caryn E. Price ’81

Bart Wolgamot was a genuinely kind person, passionate educator and truly musical force of nature. —Timothy Sheridan ’83
Bart Wolgamot taught me to play guitar, something that has continued to bring me joy for decades since. —Jason Walker ’84

When I became a teacher myself, I often would think of Bart and have long-past-due respect for his patience and never-ending commitment. Great compassion was there as well… —Larry Grimm ’85

He was a sweet man, yet a perfectionist in every project he decided to undertake.—Sarah Johnson ’86

He was a wonderful teacher and truly wanted each student he worked with to develop their own talent. —Emily Singer Lucio ’86

I’ll never forget Bart enthusiastically leading the entire school in a rousing rendition of “Come to the Fair” each year in Morning Ex. Hearing those first notes on the piano from Bart was an annual tradition I loved. —Daniel Rosenberg ’89

Mr. Wolgamot was a crucial mentor to me in my early musical life…He supported and created opportunities for my earliest efforts in conducting and composition, premiering my first choral-orchestral piece my senior year… —Alan Pierson ’92

…his joy and enthusiasm were not limited to music. Rather, these qualities extended to his genuine interest in hearing about the lives of individuals, like me, that he knew before. —Patrick McHale ’96

“Hi-Hooooo, come to the Fair” is a highlight memory of Mr. Wolgamot. He had so much passion for music and singing and every County Fair leading us in song. —Oren Matteson ’97

“Everything to help and nothing to hinder.” He was a good and kind man and a wonderful teacher—and some of my favorite memories are from Music class, where I felt so safe. —Rob Belushi ’99

Back in the ’60s I was a 2nd grade teacher when the Pied Piper arrived on the scene. His presence was felt immediately by both children and their teachers. I remember especially his energy and humor. —Helen Doughty Lester, former 2nd grade teacher

Bart and I started and ended our Parker teaching careers almost at the same time. Working with Bart over those many years was both fun and educational. —Harriett Cholden, former 5th grade teacher

He became a dear friend and valued colleague, and Parker was a better place because of him. …it was very clear that he had a deep understanding and appreciation for the bedrock ideas on which our school was founded. —Bob Merrick, former Upper School history teacher
A Fond Farewell

At the end of the 2019–20 school year, Parker celebrated two retiring faculty members, who spent a combined 74 years at the school. Unfortunately, the school was forced to honor these two longtime instructors virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, parents and students are grateful for the immeasurable contributions of these two master teachers to the Parker educational experience and our community. Enjoy the honoring of these teachers’ contributions to the school community during their years of service at fwparker.org/2020Retirees.

Mark Aymar
6th grade English, 6th grade social studies and Upper School Latin teacher
Taught at Parker for 30 years

Anne Marie Fries
Lower School and 8th grade science teacher
Taught at Parker for 44 years