

ALUMNI PROFILE

TOOL TIME!

Jason Tasse of
Lee Valley Tools

BOOK EXCERPT

THE POWER OF PRESSURE

VOICE FOR THE MISSING

Gloria Epstein on fixing
how Canada deals with
missing persons



Meet the New Dean

WANDA COSTEN'S JOURNEY FROM WEST POINT TO THE WEST WING AT SMITH

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ALUMNI NOTES

1985

Peter Howe, BCom, tells us that after 16 years of living and working in Europe, and leading United World Colleges in Italy, the Netherlands and Wales, he and Sally will be moving closer to Canada. He is taking up the headship of Somersfield Academy in Bermuda in August 2021. "We are looking forward to being closer to family and friends in Canada and still avoiding Canadian winters!" he says.

McBride, BCom, was appointed to lead Animal Health in a company supporting the veterinary teams and services, which showed adaptability in various challenges.

1989

Bo Meissner, MBA, became chief financial officer of Vital Farms in December 2020, after joining the company in July as executive VP of finance. Bo has more than 30 years of experience in consumer packaged goods and is charged with leading the finance organization of the pasture-raised food brand.

1990s

1990

Charles Dowdall, MBA, BCom'83, became executive director for the Prince Edward County Affordable Housing Corporation in Prince Edward County, Ont., in July 2020. Chuck tells us that he and his wife, Lauramma, moved to Kingston in 2016 and regularly enjoy walking through the Queen's campus.

1991

Steven Major, BCom, told us that he and his wife, Jenn, Artsci'91, are the incoming chairs of the 71st Canadian Energy Executive Association board of directors, whose tenets are networking and advocacy for Canadian energy, and charitable giving. They will assume their new roles on Sept. 1.

Gord Card, MBA, retired in February 2020 from the Bank of Montreal. There, he was senior vice-president and head of Ontario and Atlantic Canada in the corporate finance division. Gord and his wife plan to spend more time at their cottage in Muskoka, Ont. They also intend to travel frequently when it is safe to do so. He says he would love to hear from any classmates. gordonjcard@gmail.com

Canada's Most Powerful Women

One Smith alumna and one alumna made the 2020 list of Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women, compiled annually by the Women's Executive Network.



1993

Andrew Cherwenka, BCom, has joined Vega as head of e-commerce. Andrew Vega is "a premium, award-winning food revolution." He lives in Vancouver with his wife, Alra, and their boys, Wolfgang and Volodya. A 30-month-old and six-year-old, he proudly says he will be a BCom'93 and Bo'93.

Bruce Se...
named
pro...

Kristi Herold, BCom, founder of Team to be Inc. Since 2014, participants have spent time on focus on their own legacy and mill...



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Connie Lo is building a company that's more than skin deep.

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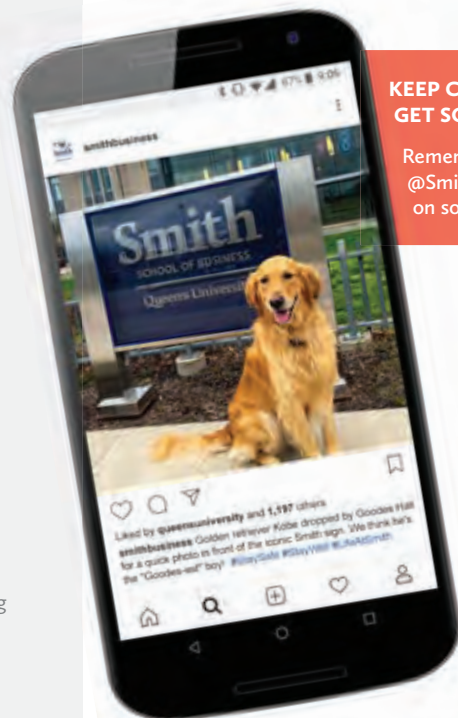
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DEAN'S MESSAGE

I am excited to share my first *Smith Magazine* message since beginning my tenure as dean on July 1. I've had such a warm welcome from the Smith community, so let me start by saying, Thank you!

At the end of September, I had the pleasure of participating in three virtual alumni town halls. It was a chance for us to get to know each other (you asked great questions!) and I look forward to more events—hopefully some in-person—in 2022.

Something that struck me during my first 100 days on the job is the need for Smith to engage our alumni community more deeply. Some of you are already very involved—speaking to classes, hiring our talent and leading our alumni chapters, and for that I am grateful.

As we look ahead, we also need your help to secure additional experiential learning opportunities for our students across programs—such as capstone projects and internships—to ensure our students graduate with more real-world experience. This initiative, encompassing both work-integrated learning and experiential learning, is ramping up, so stay tuned for more on how you can get involved.

Your guidance as alumni is invaluable to our students, and I would love for you to support them through mentoring. Signing up is easy. Just go to your account on our alumni platform, **SmithConnect.com**, and edit your profile settings to indicate the ways you are willing to help. These can include mentoring a student, having a coffee chat or providing networking opportunities.

We would also love for alumni to share their experiences and career journeys with our students (both undergraduates and master's students). If this is of interest, let our Alumni Engagement team know at smithalumni@queensu.ca.

I look forward to getting out of Kingston (despite its beauty) and travelling across the country (soon!) to meet as many of you as I can. In the meantime, I invite you to reach out to me directly with your ideas for how we can continue to engage the alumni community, support our students and enhance the impact of Smith around the globe.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wanda M. Costen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wanda M. Costen, PhD
Dean, Smith School of Business

Inside Smith

After 18 months of mostly remote delivery due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and public health measures, Smith was excited to welcome back students, faculty and staff for in-person learning and program delivery in Kingston and select boardroom learning facilities across Canada for the fall term. We look forward to SmithToronto opening soon. It's Goodes to be back!

GOODES HALL



Charting the course

Tahmena Bokhari is helping advance the school's commitment to EDII.

Even as a young child, born and raised in Toronto, Tahmena Bokhari wanted to make the world a better place. A huge influence was her grandmother, who founded a school for girls in Pakistan in the 1940s, when the country was gaining its independence, and fought for gender and religious equity.

"She was a feminist in her own time," Bokhari says. "She was a strong, timeless leader and used her voice. I got a lot of that from her."

Today, Bokhari is doing her part as the director of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at Smith. It's a dream job for Bokhari, who has often found herself in inaugural EDI leadership roles. She's worked in EDI for 20 years as a consultant, professor, human rights investigator, trainer and coach.

In the newly-created position, which she started in May, Bokhari leads the implementation of Smith's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenization (EDII) Strategy and Action Plan, working closely with the dean and others across the Smith community.

Here, we get to know Bokhari a little better—her career, the changes she's seen in EDI and her goals at Smith.

What made you want to work in EDI?

Working in EDI is not a traditional career path, and it certainly wasn't when my high school guidance counsellors in Toronto would discuss careers. We didn't even have the language back then. This can be a demanding, emotionally challenging and thankless job with rewards few and far between, so there are days that I have often wondered why I couldn't just get a regular job like everyone else. Most people and organizations are still trying to figure out the role of the EDI leader. It doesn't come pre-packaged like human resources, communications, finance or accounting. I have learned a lot on the job the hard way, which comes with being the first. It's both personal and professional for me. Continuous growth and ongoing efforts of inclusion and equity were part of my identity formation. It's what I would be doing even if I didn't have a title.

What evolution have you seen in EDI over the course of your career?

There are some things you can't convince people of until there is broader social pressure. Executives that 10 years ago didn't believe in the existence of anti-Black racism now have big, bold statements on their websites. No EDI professional, even with the most compelling research and presentations, could have convinced them the way that the horrific murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement did. Statements matter. Language matters. But the real test is in the work ahead—on the ground and in the policies, practices and, ultimately, the culture.

What is the biggest challenge that businesses face on this issue?

The first is in the language. Often, organizations have not defined what the words equity, diversity and inclusion mean to them. It's easy to become overwhelmed and confused by internal and external sources and jump on the first trend you see. It's critical for every organization, no matter what sector you're in, to decide what EDI looks like for your business. Ultimately, it has to be part of how people feel



and behave inside the organization, and not just well-crafted statements on your website. Change doesn't happen overnight, nor do you want it to. Take the time to determine what's right for your organization. Progress might feel slow at first, but in the end it's more sustainable.

What are you most looking forward to in your role at Smith?

Building the foundation and shaping the EDI journey for Smith. I'm looking forward to meeting all of the people who make up the Smith community and learning about what motivates them for change. My role is to facilitate that process. It's all of you who will create this change and shape what it means in real life and in our day-to-day experiences.

New Smith faculty

A new group of faculty joined Smith's roster of teachers and researchers over the summer. They bring to the school expertise in accounting, analytics, strategy, business economics and equity and inclusion, as well as a diverse range of research interests.



EDDY NG, SMITH PROFESSOR OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Ng spent over seven years working in the financial sector before deciding to return to school for his PhD. "I remember receiving a directory with everyone's names, titles and contact, from the CEO to the mailroom clerk. I noticed a pattern; all of the executives' assistants were women. There were very few racialized employees in senior positions and many were segregated in certain departments of the bank. That led me to want to learn more about fair treatment in the workplace." Today, Ng's research focuses on how diversity affects a firm's competitiveness and managing across generations. At the moment he's studying the role that location bias plays in companies discounting foreign-earned credentials in the hiring process.

MICHELLE LEE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF STRATEGY AND ORGANIZATIONS

Lee's areas of research include social class, CEO careers, shareholder activism and corporate social responsibility. A recent graduate of the University of Washington, Lee says her dissertation research was inspired by her experience growing up as the daughter of Korean immigrant entrepreneurs. "They started in working-class jobs before starting their businesses, and these experiences were very different from my encounters working with affluent clients at Deloitte and Mazars in New York City." The primary paper from this research looks at whether social class background matters in CEO selection. Her findings show that it does, and that this changes over time with the rise of a shareholder value orientation in corporations.



EVAN JO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF FINANCE

Jo's research focuses on the economics of risk. "I study how to best measure, price and allocate risk through capital markets. If economics is about creating value through trade and allocating resources to people who value them the most, much of finance is about how to allocate risk to people who hate it the least. For example, when I buy car insurance, I am paying to transfer my car risk to insurers who are better able to tolerate risk." Currently, Jo's research explores longevity risk as it pertains to defined-benefit pensions and annuities, and whether creating a better capital market for insuring and trading longevity risk would result in potential savings and cost reductions.

ELAHEH FATA, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT ANALYTICS

Fata was studying mechanical engineering at Sharif University of Technology in Iran when a schoolmate piqued her interest in operations research with a discussion based on two well-studied problems in optimization: the Knapsack and Travelling Salesman problems. “I got so excited about the topic that I took three optimization and algorithm design courses in the same semester. Little by little, I was drawn to management analytics,” she says. Fata went on to complete her master’s degree in electrical and computer engineering, followed by her PhD in controls. Today she studies revenue management and pricing, and currently explores assortment optimization and fairness in revenue management.



ERICA PIMENTEL, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING

Today, Pimentel is studying how blockchain is disrupting the accounting profession. But it was her grandfather’s experience as a women’s apparel maker that inspired her to become a certified public accountant. “Even as a young child, I found his work to be very exciting and it seemed like there were constantly new challenges he had to overcome. This introduced me to entrepreneurship and the value SMEs bring to their communities. I was attracted to becoming a CPA because it would put me in a position to provide advice to entrepreneurs to help them reach their goals.” Pimentel’s broader research interests explore the impact of technological disruption on how professionals engage with their work.

BLAKE STEENHOVEN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING

After graduating with his bachelor of business administration from the University of Alaska, Steenhoven spent time as an auditor before going back to school for his master’s and PhD. He loves being a professor. “When I’m teaching, I get to help students understand and appreciate concepts that many find intimidating at first. When I’m working on academic research, if I have a question that hasn’t been answered, I get to go find the answer myself.” His research interests lie in how managers communicate with financial markets and gender issues in financial markets. He’s currently looking at the vocal cues—pitch, volume and speech rate—managers use when speaking to investors. His aim: to help them communicate more effectively.



PAULA LÓPEZ-PEÑA, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS ECONOMICS

López-Peña was an impact evaluation co-ordinator and research fellow in the social protection and health division of the Inter-American Development Bank before starting her doctoral studies. “I was interested in understanding how non-cognitive skills and adverse life events affect health and labour market outcomes,” she says. Some of her current projects focus on the impact of non-cognitive skills on female entrepreneurs, the causes and consequences of internal conflict, and toxic management, firm productivity and worker well-being.

No doubt

She Leads gives confidence to students heading into the job market.

In 2014, journalists Katty Kay and Claire Shipman published *The Confidence Code*. Each had spent decades interviewing some of the world's most successful women—in politics, in business—yet many still suffered a surprising level of self-doubt. Kay and Shipman wanted to know why. One dilemma they identified: Being successful has as much to do with confidence as it does with competence. But study after study shows women have less confidence in their abilities than men.

It's something that Lora Sprigings, BSc(Eng)'90, Ed'13, noticed too. Sprigings is a business relationship manager in the Career Advancement Centre at Smith. A

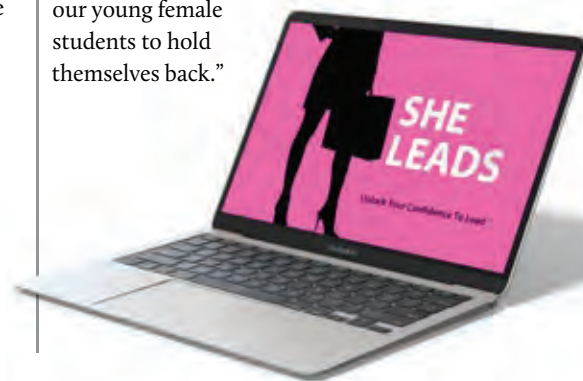
few years ago, while coaching students interested in consulting careers, she observed how the male students were mostly bursting with confidence. But some of the women were hesitant. They were worried that they didn't have what it took to get a job in the competitive consulting business.

Sprigings knew better. "These students had all the skills, and I didn't want these young women to go through a lifetime of self-doubt in their abilities before they have this big epiphany that they were, and always had been, up to the task." She decided to do something about it.

The result is "She Leads". Launched in 2016, She Leads helps students "to be fearless in their career aspirations" through hour-long sessions that cover topics like "finding your voice" and "the impacts of imposter syndrome". At first, sessions were in-person and catered to on-campus Commerce and MBA students. But when the

pandemic hit last year, She Leads moved online. That allowed students from other graduate programs (who aren't generally in Kingston) to attend. It also paved the way for more guest speakers. Over the last year, senior leaders from six firms—Accenture, PwC, KPMG, RSM, Level5 Strategy and EY—have spoken.

With She Leads, Sprigings's message to students is simple: "You're capable of more than you think, and any challenge you want to overcome, you can. I never want our young female students to hold themselves back."



A step in the right direction

A new partnership between Smith's Centre for Business Venturing (CBV) and Spalyan Education Group is bringing business, entrepreneurship and management training to six Indigenous communities in British Columbia.

Approximately 30 members from the Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government, Yunetsit'in Government, Tsi Del Del First Nation, ?Esdilagh First Nation, Tl'etinqox Government and Tl'esqox First Nation communities are taking part in specialized training in business applications, proposal writing and Indigenous leadership.

The program builds on the success of a pilot program delivered by the CBV in September 2020 in partnership with Red Bird Circle and the Xeni Gwet'in community. A grant from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training in British Columbia allowed 32 community members to participate in that three-month program and earn a Certificate of Completion in Business and Administration Management.

"After [the pilot program] was complete, I knew that [Smith] was progressive and flexible in terms

of program creation and delivery," says Spalyan Education Group founder June Lulua, who notes that the usual top-down education model, which often concludes with an exam or similar form of testing, can be a barrier to success for Indigenous people.

At Spalyan, Lulua works with educational institutions to provide a rich and diverse learning environment and to deliver culturally safe training and education to students from Indigenous communities.

With an increase in grant funding from the ministry, Spalyan and the CBV have co-designed the current sessions, which began in September and will see participants earn certificates of completion.

JP Shearer, partnership lead for Smith and associate director of the CBV, is thrilled about what the new programs will provide to learners.

"Providing every person with the opportunity to learn and develop is really what matters most, and we are excited to bring six communities together for a collaborative, immersive experience," he says. "With Spalyan, we have blended our teaching with First Nations traditions and cultures to deliver innovative business education. It is truly an exciting time for CBV at Smith."

Brain builders

The events of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a dramatic impact on the well-being of people across the globe, with lockdowns and stay-at-home orders wreaking havoc on physical, mental and social health.

As we continue to move out of the pandemic, Smith's Analytics and AI Ecosystem has joined a \$20-million project to develop an innovative technological approach for personalized health and well-being.

Lululemon, Wysdom.AI, Queen's University, Microsoft and Mitacs have partnered under Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster to launch Wellbeing.ai. The project will see the creation of a "digital brain" for chatbots and virtual assistants to field questions and provide advice and guidance to users about their physical and mental health. The result: a more personalized and human-like experience.

"Providing academic advisory on Wellbeing.ai will give our master's and PhD students an incredible applied research experience in AI," says Stephen Thomas, executive director of the Analytics and AI Ecosystem at Smith.

Proof of concept virtual agents, based on Wysdom.AI's conversational AI-optimization technology, are expected in late 2022. Lululemon will be the first business to use the technology.

"We're excited to work with industry leaders Lululemon and Wysdom.AI to build an AI agent that will support mental, emotional and physical wellness across the country," says Thomas.



Inspiring international impact

Nuša Fain takes the helm of Smith's Master of Management Innovation & Entrepreneurship program.

Nuša Fain, the new director of the Master of Management Innovation & Entrepreneurship (MMIE) program, describes her journey to Smith as a winding road. From her tiny hometown in Slovenia, to Glasgow, Scotland, and finally to Kingston, she has found niche ways to integrate her background in marketing and mechanical engineering.

"I'd always felt I had competing identities since I'm passionate about both industrial sciences and creative arts," Fain says. "The intrapreneurship space in Europe allowed me to grow those interests in tandem."

After Fain spent eight years teaching and doing industry-facing research in Glasgow, her family was on the lookout for their next adventure. With their sights set on Canada for its globally renowned innovation space and, of course, the snow they couldn't get in Glasgow, Fain set out to discover how her unique combination of skills could fit into Canadian higher education.

After several conversations with Smith faculty, Fain joined the school as an assistant professor in 2018. "It was serendipitous," she says. "When I came to Smith and the MMIE program, my identities didn't feel like they were competing anymore. It felt like coming home."

Since its inception in 2015, the internship-based MMIE program has offered experiential learning and one-on-one mentorship opportunities to students with a vision for starting, growing or driving new ventures. Primarily virtual (even before the pandemic), with three on-site boot-camp-style sessions, the MMIE program has 130 current students. They range from 20 to 56 years old and hail from more than 25 countries.

Fain took over as the program's director in April, replacing Shari Hughson, who stepped down to join an emerging social enterprise. In this new role, Fain is working with other MMIE faculty members to build a comprehensive tool box of resources for students to reference when they're off-site. "This will allow us to facilitate more personal coaching sessions to help students and their projects grow without spending valuable time on smaller items we can easily provide in a project guide," Fain explains.

In the long term, Fain's dream is to establish the MMIE program at multiple international campuses. Thanks to the diverse makeup of each year's student group, the program will only increase its impact in the years to come, she believes. "Our students are changemakers," she says. "There's no limit to what they can accomplish, and I'm thrilled to play a part in ushering their inspiring ideas out into the world."



Adriana Leon (left) and Quinn celebrate at the Tokyo Olympics in August.



Going for the gold

A number of Smith students were at this summer's Olympic Games.

When Julia Grosso scored the shootout winner that gave Canada's women's soccer team the gold medal at the Tokyo Games in August, all of Canada cheered. It was, after all, the first-ever women's Olympic soccer gold for Canada.

But there was a Smith connection to the win as well. Three Team Canada players—Adriana Leon, Nichelle Prince and Quinn—are Certificate in Business (CIB) students here. They were part of the team that defeated Sweden in the thrilling gold-medal match.

And they weren't the only Smith students at the Summer Games either. Eleven more CIB students took part, including Alicia Brown, a member of the 4X400 relay team that finished fourth in the finals—missing the podium by just 60-100ths of a second.

Also at the Games: two graduate students. Erica Wiebe, EMBAA'22, who won gold at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, competed in the 76-kg women's freestyle wrestling competition in the 1/8 final, while Benjamin Preisner, MMAI'22, was the top Canadian in the men's marathon, finishing 46th overall.

It was Preisner's first Olympic Games. An experienced runner, he only recently switched to running the marathon, a 42.2 km run that can take more than two hours to complete under sometimes gruelling conditions. In Tokyo, the men's marathon was held in 29-degree Celsius heat. "It was hot but it was an unforgettable experience," Preisner says. "To be able to compete for your country is really special."

Smith has been the exclusive business education partner of the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) since 2016 and is a founding partner of Game Plan, Canada's total athlete wellness program, helping athletes plan for success beyond sport.

Smith adds new exchange partner

MBA and Master of International Business students can now go on exchange in West Africa thanks to a new addition to the business school's list of exchange partners. This fall, Smith announced a partnership with Lagos Business School, the graduate business school of Pan-Atlantic University in Nigeria.

"We are thrilled to be able to further enhance the Smith student experience with a second exchange opportunity in Africa," said Dean Wanda Costen. "Developing future leaders with a global perspective is a key part of Smith's strategy."

Smith has exchange arrangements with more than 115 schools in 38 countries. The business school's first partner in Africa was the University of Stellenbosch Business School in South Africa, in 2018.

Nigerian students who come to Smith on exchange will be eligible for funding through the Douglas & Catherine McIntosh Scholarship, which was created by the 1982 Commerce grads to help African students offset the cost of studying in Canada.



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Transformational and Charismatic Leadership

What is it about some leaders that sets them apart? Reflect upon your personal values and then learn to articulate them in a way that demonstrates commitment and elevates your team to perform at their best.

SPEECH THERAPY

Joze Piranian, MIB'13, motivates people with his words. Not long ago, he could barely speak.

By Angela Kryhul

By the time Joze Piranian hit his twenties, he'd had enough. As a severe stutterer, he'd spent most of his life in near silence by avoiding nearly every speaking situation. One of the hardest words to say was his own name.

When he was a teen, he met a girl at a party. They held hands and she asked his name. But as he struggled just to say "Joze," she dropped his hand and walked away. "Was it something I didn't say?"

Piranian deadpans.

The simple act of speaking one's thoughts and emotions was nearly impossible. Piranian eventually realized that "the only way I would ever overcome stuttering, and all the pain it came with, was by doing the one thing I feared the most: speaking."

Piranian decided to take action. First, he learned a breathing technique that helped to control his stutter for the first time in his life. He joined Toastmasters to overcome his fear of public speaking. Perhaps his biggest (and toughest) step was to spend hours wandering city streets and introducing himself to complete

"I always tell my audience that my performance will be full of s... s... s... suspense!"

strangers. Piranian estimates that he's approached thousands of people over the years.

Today, at 32, Piranian is an international public speaker. He delivers inspiring keynotes to corporate groups and at conferences, university campuses and more. He's also a standup comedian who dispenses punchlines and life lessons in equal measure. In the most authentic, vulnerable, charming and humorous way, Piranian shares his personal story of self-acceptance and resilience to those who yearn to fulfil their true potential.

HIGHS AND LOWS

A documentary about Piranian's life by Canadian filmmaker Josiane Blanc is currently in production. It's called *Words Left Unspoken*. Piranian was in Lebanon this summer, where he was born and raised by his Armenian parents, shooting scenes. Because of pandemic delays, the film is still a work in progress and a release date hasn't been announced.

In the film's trailer, released in 2019, Piranian explains how he was experiencing the highest highs and lowest lows of his life. The highs came as his career took off. In 2018, he'd spoken at TEDxQueensU, and he had shared the stage with entrepreneur and *Dragons' Den* star Arlene Dickinson, at the Archangel Summit, and with Julien Christian Lutz (a.k.a., Director X, Drake's music video producer), at the Top Ten Event. He was also performing standup comedy internationally. The lows came as Piranian struggled to manage the increased stress, including spending the extra time required to work on his stutter before going on stage. He rose to the challenge by using mindfulness, meditation and breathwork. "The emotionality is . . . the emotions are definitely intense," he says in a film clip. "Is emotionality even a word? The last thing I need is to add non-existing words to stutter on."

Piranian's journey to Canada began at 18 when he arrived in Montreal to attend McGill University. He graduated with a

bachelor of commerce. He also studied psychology. "I was looking for answers. I had grown up feeling so insecure and self-conscious that I thought psychology would provide insights about human behaviour—my own and the behaviour of other people," he explains.

Next, in 2013, he earned his Master of International Business degree at Smith. Piranian comes from a long line of business owners, so his family was enthusiastic about where his career was headed. They'd always supported his choices. But there were initial questions about why he decided to veer from business into public speaking and standup comedy. His new path got their stamp of approval "once it became obvious that I was getting booked to speak by different organizations, conferences and educational institutions," he remembers.

Piranian likes to joke that he stutters in six languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Armenian and Portuguese. From his home base in Toronto, he brings a message of inclusion and resilience to a broad audience—from schools like Queen's and Seneca College to companies like Google, Tesla, Dell and Key Media. He was recognized as Speaker Slam's 2017 Inspirational Speaker of the Year. And he's been featured by ABC, CBC and *Forbes*, as well as on the NowThis news website debunking misconceptions about people who stutter.

Piranian has also performed standup comedy in Toronto, Montreal and New York. "Don't worry," Piranian quips during one of his routines. "I always tell my audience that my performance will be full of s... s... s... suspense!" The crowd roars with laughter.

A SEASONED STUTTERER

There are more than 70 million stutterers worldwide, according to the Stuttering Foundation of America. Famous stutterers include Joe Biden, Winston Churchill, King George VI, Emily Blunt, James Earl Jones and Marilyn Monroe.

Piranian takes our perception of adversity and turns it on its head. He

calls himself a "seasoned stutterer" who believes that everyone has an "inner stutter" or personal obstacle that blocks them from reaching their true potential.

It's a message he brings to corporate audiences. Given the stresses of the pandemic, companies are asking him to deliver keynotes on building resilience and managing workplace mental health. A recent Statistics Canada survey on COVID-19 and mental health found that approximately one in five (21%) Canadian adults screened positive for symptoms of depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder.

When Piranian delivered his 2018 TEDxQueensU talk, students told him about their feelings of self-worth, lack of confidence and fear of speaking up in class. Fast-forward three years, and with their lives upended by the pandemic, students are now talking about mental wellness, he says. The lockdown wasn't so easy for Piranian, either. He tells young people how developing positive habits—such as daily meditation, exercise and establishing healthier relationships with his phone and with social media—helped him to view obstacles as pretexts for growth.

Piranian is also asked to speak about overcoming adversity through the lens of diversity and inclusion. "This topic has really grown in significance. Students want to talk about it and to be champions of inclusion on campus," says Piranian, who recently earned a certificate in diversity and inclusion from Cornell University.

Piranian likes to quote a line from Robert Frost's *A Servant to Servants*: "The best way out is always through."

Stuttering remains a daily challenge but he's determined to make a difference: "I have found that listening to a story like mine can provide both the inspiration and the framework for others to undergo a similar transformation. If even one person is positively influenced to change their lives . . . to me that's so rewarding, so motivating, and it drives me to persevere." ■



The Investors

By Phil Gaudreau

Every year, a small group of Commerce students
patiently grows a seven-figure portfolio.
And yes, they're beating the market.



It seems like an ordinary board meeting. A handful of people in business attire enter. Executives give an update on the last quarter. They talk about investment performance and strategy. It all concludes with a budget discussion. Just another day on Bay Street, right?

Except this is Union Street in Kingston. And this isn't just any corporation, and those aren't just any executives. They're Commerce-student members of the Queen's University Investment Counsel, or as it's usually called, QUIC. The money, however, is as real as it gets—\$2.1 million in Canadian and U.S. equity investments as of mid-July. When these Commerce students make savvy decisions, those investments go up. When they make bad ones . . . well, they could lose big.

“When I meet with the QUIC executive teams, it is astonishing to see the maturity and professionalism they bring to each meeting,” says Lynnette Purda, professor and RBC Fellow of Finance, who works with QUIC students. “Their ability to discuss what's in the market and current events, their vocabulary . . . it's like they're already an active part of [the financial] industry.”

But how did a once-tiny student club evolve to become a professional multimillion-dollar organization that contributes both educational and job opportunities to its student-members and financially to the very institution they attend? It all started nearly 20 years ago with a question.

EARLY RETURNS

As Francis Baillargeon, BCom'04, peered out into the troubled job market—recovering from 9/11 and the tech bubble burst—he wondered: Why didn't Queen's have a stable, enduring investment club, the kind that might help him and his peers get jobs in this tough economy? Such clubs had existed in the past but, inevitably, people would sign on for an eight-month term. Once summer hit or work opportunities arose, their interest moved on.

So, Baillargeon and Andrew Gubbels, BCom'04, began to have conversations within the school to set up an investment club that could stand the test of time. They wanted to find out why past clubs had folded and what connections were needed to ensure long-term success.

“We started by asking people for a 12-month commitment and structured it so there was coverage and accountability,” says Baillargeon. “We wanted to ensure it was small enough that people felt accountability but large enough that we had a critical mass.” Baillargeon and Gubbels also wisely built succession planning into the structure. Students new to QUIC would start out as analysts, then become portfolio managers as they moved through their degree. Finally, a select few would reach executive positions in their last year of study.

It was a fine foundation. But one more piece was needed: alumni involvement. That would help QUIC members find jobs, among other benefits. “We recruited for culture, adding people who felt the need and obligation to carry the key principles forward and contribute to a meaningful alumni network,” says Baillargeon. The club debuted in the 2003-04 school year.

In the years ahead, QUIC remained intact and its reputation grew. Alumni like Baillargeon and others kept connected to the club, becoming mentors, advisers and supporters. Within the school, meanwhile, word spread. Upwards of 90 Commerce students applied each year for the seven or eight QUIC analyst jobs available. →

One of those successful applicants was TJ Sutter, BCom'10. A friend had encouraged him to attend QUIC's annual general meeting. As he heard students rattle off their job and placement destinations—Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley—Sutter decided he would do anything to get in.

Fast-forward a few years and, after working his way up from analyst for the mining sector, Sutter became QUIC's chief strategy officer (CSO), one of three executive positions. "As CSO, you're responsible for deciding underweights and overweights to various sectors and weighting towards equities versus fixed income versus cash," says Sutter, chairman of QUIC's alumni council last year. "You're constantly assessing your positions, how they're performing and asking if this performance is what I expected, and using that feedback to drive return forecasts."

It's a busy enough job in a normal year, and the 2008 financial crisis was still fresh in people's minds when QUIC took a significant leap forward in 2010. Up until then, students had managed a mock portfolio. No actual money was invested. That changed in the fall when QUIC started managing a \$500,000 fund. It had been seeded by Smith, with some additional money coming from student fundraising and alumni donations. Finally, QUIC was dealing in real money.

"The financial ask began with a conversation with students. They were looking to expand that operation and enhance their knowledge," recalls Peter Copestake, Artsci'78, who is an executive-in-residence at Smith. "The dean and I agreed it would be useful for students to get practitioner experience."

With the seed funding came some additional oversight and structure. QUIC added a board of directors, with Copestake as chair—a role he still holds today. This governance and oversight structure is part of what differentiates QUIC from student investment programs at other universities. It gives students broad

discretion in their investment decisions and fund management initiatives while keeping a steady hand on the tiller.

Four years later, in 2014, a second fund was added thanks to a \$500,000 gift from Mackenzie Investments. That allowed QUIC to hire more students and for them to develop their global investment expertise. Today, QUIC oversees two funds: the QUIC Canadian Fund (started with the initial 2010 Smith investment); and the QUIC-Mackenzie World Equities Fund.

PAYING DIVIDENDS

With a consistently positive rate of return, the assets managed by QUIC recently surpassed the \$2-million mark. Ever since September 2010, when the club started managing real money, QUIC has outperformed the market. A dollar invested in the QUIC Canadian Fund in 2010 earned 16.8 per cent more than it would in the S&P/TSX through February 2021.

Those returns are important too. A portion of the proceeds earned by QUIC's activities are reinvested in Smith and there are financial goals set each year by the executive team on those proceeds. (As of February 2021, QUIC has returned \$335,900 in dividends to the school.)

Behind the money is a team of up to 40 hard-working Commerce students led by a three-person executive team and guided by alumni representatives and their board, including Copestake and Purda. Both have been involved with QUIC since its beginning. That's not to say things haven't changed. Each new group of Commerce executives tweaks the strategy and club operations.

Like any organization, QUIC has also had to face its shortcomings. In October 2013, QUIC executives were invited to speak to school's advisory board. After a brief

My QUIC Experience

Five alumni recall their time on the investing front lines as students.



TJ Sutter
BCom'10
Connor, Clark & Lunn
Investment Management

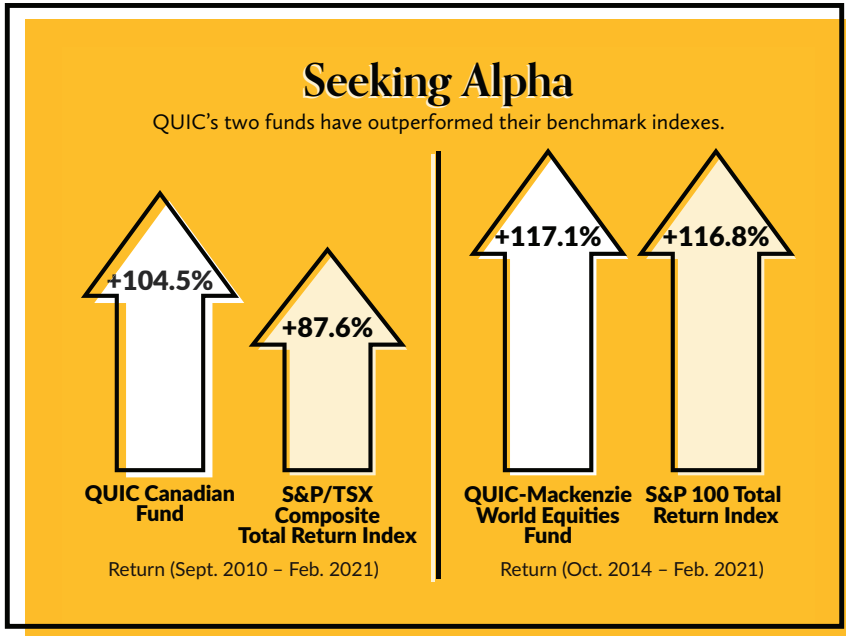
"The thing I remember most about QUIC is the generosity of alumni. Past alumni who had high-profile jobs that I only thought existed in the movies would generously dedicate their time teaching and mentoring students."



Irena Petkovic
BCom'19
Burgundy Asset Management

"During my second year, when I was applying to summer internships, I sent my resumé into a bank's applicant portal. Within three hours, I received an email from a QUIC alum inviting me to sit on the trading floor for a day. That demonstrated what people will do for you just because you share this connection. This person is still a mentor to me."





I think that's very positive," Ranson says.

In more recent years, Irena Petkovic, BCom'19, has helped attract women to the club through the QUIC-Burgundy Women's Investing Series. "Prior to my internship, I thought investment jobs would be like *The Wolf of Wall Street* . . . macho and intense," she says. "But it wasn't. Everyone is open to helping you learn, and there's a lot of room for professional development."

The QUIC team has also grappled with a lot of the same issues their colleagues in the finance industry have faced: balancing sustainability and financial considerations, weathering economic storms and converting their operations to remote work when pandemic lockdowns began last year. "The prior executive did an amazing job last year—as the world shut down, QUIC kept going," says Jamie Bennett, Comm'22, this year's CEO. "As we get together this fall, we're looking forward to bringing back in-person events and strengthening relationships with the broader Queen's community."

Whatever changes may occur, the culture cultivated in the early days of QUIC remains its defining feature. "The alumni engagement is a testament to how impactful this is for students," Purda says. "They keep returning and giving, whether financially or of their time. It doesn't stop with graduation." ■

presentation, came a question from Sharon Ranson, BCom'80: Why did QUIC have just one female member?

Inclusion was an important topic to Ranson, who has had a lengthy career in the finance and investment sectors. "From that conversation, and working with Queen's Women in Leadership, we launched a joint event focused on careers in the investment industry, encouraged a more inclusive QUIC application process and promoted greater representation in future QUIC cohorts," she says.

It was a coming-of-age moment. QUIC had to start thinking of itself like an employer and this meant considering topics like diversity in hiring. "Diversity is a bigger, broader topic than just ensuring women are represented, but in the years since the change was made, QUIC has become a lot more diverse.

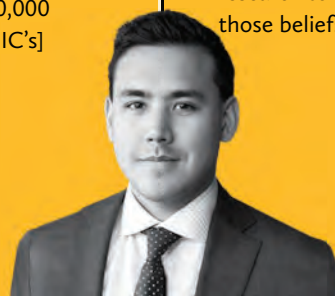
Mustafa Humayun
BCom'07
Sagard

"QUIC taught me to seek out and learn from people who have had the benefit of different experiences. I learned from the best at QUIC and was fortunate to be a part of a community that has stayed with me after I graduated."



Andrew lu
BCom'11
Burgundy Asset Management

"Two of my best QUIC memories are: Our executive team of three working late into the night to interview and hire the new analysts while we were all on exchange in Europe; and receiving and depositing the \$500,000 cheque that began [QUIC's] real-money investing."



Laura Heaphy
BCom'08
McKinsey & Company

"QUIC taught me the importance of always having a point of view on an investment, including how to quickly develop an in-going hypothesis and how to leverage research to validate or refute those beliefs."

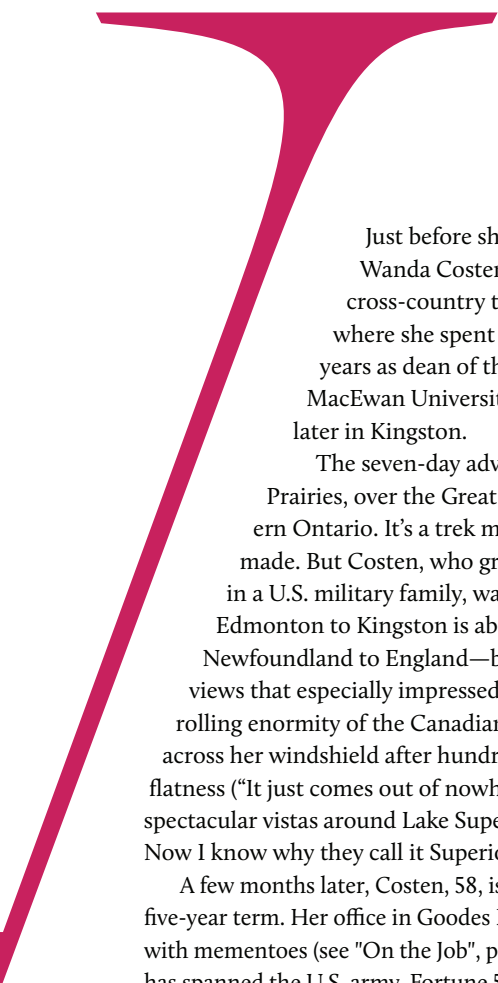




WANDA COSTEN

An interview with the new dean.

By Robert Gerlsbeck



Just before she became dean on July 1, Wanda Costen jumped into her car for a cross-country trip. It started in Edmonton, where she spent the last three-and-a-half years as dean of the business school at MacEwan University. It ended 3,600 kilometres later in Kingston.

The seven-day adventure took her across the Prairies, over the Great Lakes and down to southern Ontario. It's a trek many Canadians have never made. But Costen, who grew up "all over the place" in a U.S. military family, wanted to see the country. Edmonton to Kingston is about the same distance as Newfoundland to England—but with better scenery. Two views that especially impressed her: the moment that the rolling enormity of the Canadian Shield suddenly appeared across her windshield after hundreds of miles of Prairie flatness ("It just comes out of nowhere, like, *whoa!*"); and the spectacular vistas around Lake Superior. ("They're just stunning. Now I know why they call it Superior.")

A few months later, Costen, 58, is settling in at Smith for a five-year term. Her office in Goodes Hall's west wing is decorated with mementoes (see "On the Job", pages 20-21) from a career that has spanned the U.S. army, Fortune 500 companies and academia. And, after living in land-locked Alberta, she's taking advantage of Kingston's generous waterfronts by learning to kayak.

Of course, there's work to be done. Costen took over from Brenda Brouwer, who, as interim dean for a year-and-a-half, led the school through the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the school's engagement and response to issues of discrimination raised, in part, because of the Stolen by Smith Instagram initiative. Under Brouwer, Smith launched an EDII Strategy and Action Plan to guide the school's progress on that front.

Costen wants to build on Smith's reputation as a top business school. "We have amazing faculty and talented staff who help us deliver a phenomenal experience," she notes, adding that business schools have an important role to play in shaping the future "and in transforming society." Diversity and inclusion, an area Costen specializes in as a researcher, will also be a priority. "It's about creating an environment where everyone feels welcome," she says.

Costen's bio covers a lot of ground. Her dad was a U.S. soldier; her mom worked for the Army and Air Force Exchange

Service, the military's retail arm. After high school, Costen attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, in just the seventh class with women. After graduation, in 1986, she served as a platoon leader and military police officer. Next, she worked at companies like Xerox, Pepsi and Aramark. By her thirties, she was moving up the business ranks. But she found her calling in the mid-1990s teaching. She earned her doctoral degree and taught at Washington State University, then went to the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, University of Tennessee and Northern Arizona University, before coming to Canada in 2018.

Smith Magazine recently sat down with Costen for a wide-ranging interview in which she discussed her career, her priorities for Smith and why she decided to take the job. Here are edited excerpts from that interview.

Smith Magazine: Where are some of the places you grew up?

Wanda Costen: We lived in Texas at Fort Hood, which is the largest United States military installation. We also lived in Fort Riley, Kansas for a short time, Oklahoma and San Antonio, Texas. We typically moved every three to five years. When you're young, you don't realize how unique that is. It's just what your family does. You move a lot.

The first significant trip for us was to Germany. It was a very different experience for a 12-year-old with two younger brothers, but we weren't worried because my parents—working-class people from the Northeast—were excited about it. They fell in love with Germany. They embraced the language and told us to learn the culture. I think that told us not to be afraid of new cultures and new experiences.

Why did you decide on a military career? And why West Point?

Most people expect to hear that I grew up in a military family and followed those footsteps, but that is not what happened. In trying to figure out which electives to take when we came back from Germany to Oklahoma, a counsellor suggested JROTC [Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps.]

I took it and was good at it. I got promoted very quickly. By the time I moved into my senior year, I was the highest-ranked cadet. I was the battalion commander for the entire school, and I realized that all the people ahead of me who had been in that role went to West Point. So I remember coming home and saying to my parents, 'Hey, I've figured out where I'm going to go to school. I'm going to West Point.' My dad knew how prestigious that school was, but I had no clue. →

W

What was your experience at West Point like?

Certainly better looking back now at 58 than when I arrived at 18. When I became a faculty member at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, my students would hear me tell stories and they would say, Dr. Costen, you're part of history. My response was: I'm not that old. I am not part of history. Well, now I know I was part of history. We were the seventh class of women at West Point. The first class entered in 1976. I graduated in '86, so we were the 10-year anniversary of women just being at the academy. There was a lot of backlash against us from male cadets, and we didn't understand why that was happening. There were also a lot of silly things. For example, women's washrooms weren't on every floor of the barracks. I had to go up or down a flight of stairs just to go to the washroom. That eventually changed, but the experience taught me a lot about the evolution of a historic, traditional institution, how people's experiences can differ, and what it means to be welcomed, invited in and treated equally. Regardless, my philosophy was: You can throw whatever you want at me; I'm not leaving, and I'm going to graduate.

You've had three quite separate careers. The army was one. Then came industry and academia. What was your first private-sector job?

After the army, I moved to Phoenix and started working for PacTel Paging, which today is Bell, selling pagers. I was successful at it, which led me to think,

OK, I'm good at sales. I'm in Phoenix, which I like. Which companies are the best sales companies here? My research revealed two: Xerox and US West. I applied for, and got, a sales position at Xerox, which is one of the best sales training grounds in the world. That's when my career took off. After Xerox, I went to Pepsi, then Greyhound and Aramark. So I developed a background in sales, moved into operations and then human resources with Aramark. After that, I embarked on my PhD.

Was there a specific moment that you decided to get your PhD and become a professor? Clearly, you were moving up in business. So why the career switch?

You're quite right. I had earned my executive MBA from Pepperdine University and was interviewing for VP jobs at Aramark. In my EMBA class, they asked us: What are you going to do next now that you have this new-found knowledge? I read a book called *The Path*. I'll never forget it. It helps you write a mission statement for your life. At the end of the book, it asks: Are you living your mission statement? My answer was: kind of, but not really.

At the same time, I was the HR director for the West Coast of a business unit of Aramark. Part of my responsibilities was to recruit new talent. I would be invited into the classrooms at Washington State University. I would guest lecture and I'd meet the students. The director of the program kept saying to me, 'We need people like you in post-secondary!' Every time I came back, he'd introduce me to different people, like the dean and the provost. What I didn't know was that, behind the scenes, he was convincing them to entice me to come to Washington State and get my PhD. The next thing I knew, I had an offer to teach as an instructor and get my PhD. So I just took a leap. →

ON THE JOB

As the school year started in September, new dean Wanda Costen was getting down to business. A few items in her Goodes Hall office provide a glimpse at her personality, passions and career.

1 Costen's bachelor of science degree from West Point. She was in just the seventh class to include women.



2 There's often a coffee on Wanda Costen's desk. She loves getting out to talk to students with a cup in hand. And yes, she prefers Tim Hortons.

At West Point, Costen played varsity volleyball. She still loves the sport and was thrilled to see the U.S. women's team win Olympic gold this summer.

3

Among several sports bobbleheads is one of legendary University of Tennessee coach Pat Summitt, who insisted her players excel on the court *and* in the classroom. Costen was a regular at Lady Vols games when she taught at Tennessee.

4

One of Costen's students drew this picture of Nelson Mandela, with the words to *Invictus* beside. During his 27 years in prison, Mandela often recited the poem. As a professor, Costen read *Invictus* to her students to show that "life is not easy, but you have the tools to be successful."

5

Costen bought this print by the influential Anishinaabe artist Roy Thomas on her cross-country drive to Kingston. Called "Relative", it shows spirits inviting relatives and people from different ways of life to meet. Thomas saw all of humanity as relatives to one another, connected by the Spirit.

6





I look at success in terms of the impact that we can have as an organization.”

You once said that working in industry was your profession. But teaching is your vocation.

Absolutely, absolutely. I fully believe this is what I'm put here to do. Make no mistake, I loved every job I had. But when I got in the classroom, it just fit. It's about impact. It's about passion. It's about love. It's about integrity. It's about helping people achieve their best. As someone who looks like me, those doors weren't always open. And they're still not, frankly. So how do we provide that opportunity? This is what you'll hear me say a lot. I believe one of the things we have to do at Smith, and more broadly at Queen's, is to remember that, at the end of the day, we're providers of talent. How do we assess that raw talent and identify who will benefit from the vast array of resources and experiences we're going to pour into them to develop them into the future leaders of society? We have to recognize that if we're going to continue to be the exceptional institution that we are, and continue to be a leader in business education, we have to recognize that today that raw talent looks differently, presents differently, has different experiences. Industry is well

aware that they have to have talent that looks different because their clients and their customers are different, and it's critical they have diverse approaches to solving problems. At the end of the day, we're trying to provide the right talent, and I am counting on our alumni to let us know if we are getting it right.

What made you want to be the dean at Smith?

Well, it's Smith and Queen's! The growth and success of the school has been unbelievable. Even though I'm a U.S. citizen and I didn't know a lot about Canada before I moved here, I knew about Queen's. There are just certain institutions that you know.

Reason number two is Principal [Patrick] Deane's strategic vision for Queen's. As part of the decanal search process, I got to talk to him about what he's really trying to do here and the impact that an institution with the prestige of Queen's could have on the world. I wanted to be part of an organization that's ready to do things differently, that's ready to position itself for what I believe business education is for the 21st century. The principal is committed to this, he gets it. So that's why I'm here.

What are your major priorities at Smith?

For me, the most important area is this: I want to create a collaborative academic learning community where people are respected for bringing their authentic selves into Goodes Hall.

This is about the kind of environment we create in Goodes Hall, SmithToronto, and everywhere we engage with students that allows people who perhaps have never had a pathway into Queen's to bring all of who they are to class. It's about what happens in the classroom. It's about *how* we teach; *what* we teach; and *who* gets to teach. All of that has to work together to create this community in which people say, I belong here.

We have to prepare future leaders to operate in environments that will have people who are different from them—different backgrounds and different biases. So if we're not preparing students for that experience, then we are falling short.

The school did an amazing job creating, what I would call, an incredibly aggressive EDII strategic action plan that has a heavy focus on data and dashboards. We are committed to posting our results on our performance against those key performance indicators. But I want to ensure we move beyond data and focus on that collaborative, inclusive learning community. Please know that there are things in that plan that we will not yet be able to do—and we will be transparent about that. I think people recognize that changing organizational culture and climate is real deep work—and that it takes time.

Number two is values—something that is incredibly important to me. We need to solidify the values that are foundational for us, values that will carry us forward and tell the story of who we are.

I have made a commitment to the Smith community that we will have a



complete action plan by the end of this academic year. It is not going to be easy on top of all the other things we're doing, but we will get it done.

How are you going to measure success?

I have to say that at my core, I'm an academic and I love students. Recently, I reconnected with undergraduates from my time in Tennessee and they said, 'When you taught us, you were challenging us to push the status quo as we moved into the world.' Then they told me that they are now leading positive change in their companies. We're planting seeds in a university that we start to water, but they really get all the rain and nutrients they need when they get out into the world. The hope is they grow deep roots from the foundations we're giving them. So that's what success looks like.

I also look at success in terms of the impact that we can have as an

organization. The university's focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals really sends the message about how everything we're doing on this campus is going to be geared towards impact—globally, but also in our own local communities. Who are we partnering with? Are we teaching different world views? What impact does the research Smith faculty produce have? If we ask ourselves what the role of business education is in a global society, I'm hoping that we're developing the kinds of leaders that recognize business for good.

How do you move forward while maintaining traditions that many people still find important at a university?

I'm reading a book called *Navigating the Future*. It's co-written by the former dean of the Duke Divinity School. He proposes something called "traditioned

innovation". What happens is you have these very old institutions that are built on solid foundations and have contributed immensely to their countries. They have produced amazing leaders and talent. But you have to peel those apart because we now recognize that some of those traditions are not necessarily the traditions we want moving forward.

For example, the West Point tradition starts with three core values and they're on everything we do: duty, honour, country. So what are those core values at Smith and what are those core values at Queen's? How do we ground ourselves in those values? Which traditions fully illustrate those values? *This* is who we are. *This* is how we contribute to the province and Canada and the world. Then we innovate with those values and traditions as our foundation. We don't throw all the traditions away but we use them as a jumping off point. So we're no longer "traditional", which is tied to the past. We innovate using those traditions as our foundation to leap forward.

Who has had a really big influence on your life and career?

I would say my maternal grandmother. She was a domestic labourer for wealthy white people in upstate New York. If you ever read the book or saw the movie *The Help*, that was my grandmother. She was a deeply religious woman and every time I achieve success I think of her because I'm standing on her shoulders. She had the courage to emigrate from South Carolina and go to New York at a time when the north was the place for African-Americans to make a living without the Jim Crow laws of the South. My mom was committed to education in our family. All three of her children have university degrees. Two of us have multiple degrees. We're all professionals. Two of us served our country. I realize I'm standing on all their shoulders to now be the dean of Smith. ■

When we think about pressure, we typically think about moments: Curt Cronin taking enemy fire on deployment, a big sales presentation we need to nail to keep our career on track, a high-stakes exam that will impact where we go to university. But there's another form of pressure.

In 2019, with the Toronto Raptors up 3-1 in a best-of-seven series against the defending champion Golden State Warriors in the NBA Finals, Kyle Lowry sat at a press conference and was asked what pressure meant to him. A perennial all-star, and the de facto captain of the Raptors, Lowry was in the midst of one of the highest-pressure periods of his professional life. Before the season, the Raptors had traded his fellow star and best friend DeMar DeRozan to San Antonio in exchange for Kawhi Leonard, an injured superstar whom most saw (rightly, it turned out) as a hired gun brought in for one season to lead the team to victory. The team had asked Lowry to swallow the loss of his friend and surrender leadership of a team that had been "his" for the past five playoff seasons in service of hopefully breaking through to the biggest stage. Lowry had done all of that and, led by Kawhi, the team was on the verge of doing the impossible: beating the Warriors to secure Toronto's first-ever NBA Championship. On the eve of his first shot at a league championship,

here is what Lowry told reporters pressure means to him:

"What my mom had to go through, what my grandmother had to go through, feeding myself, my brother, my cousin, my little cousin, my other little cousins. Going to work, getting up at five in the morning and [still] having a bowl of cereal sitting in the refrigerator with some milk [for me]. Being able to provide for me, my brother and my family. That's pressure. That's pressure to me."

In what had to be one of the highest-pressure moments of Lowry's life, he didn't take the expected route when asked about pressure. He talked about enduring pressure over time. And while Lowry didn't bring home the championship in Game 5, he delivered an all-time performance in Game 6, scoring the Raptors' first 11 points to establish an early 11-2 lead, and eventually putting up 26 points and 10 rebounds to bring the first NBA Championship to Canada in the Raptors' 25th season. This is someone who understands pressure.

Pressure comes in many flavors. Importance, uncertainty, and volume can combine in an almost infinite number of ways. Sometimes, with enough importance, even the tiniest bit of uncertainty can create pressure. Other times, the sheer volume of what we're navigating creates pressure even if each individual item isn't hugely important to us. But broadly speaking, there are two major ways pressure manifests that

IN AN EXCERPT FROM HIS NEW BOOK, THE POWER OF PRESSURE, DANE JENSEN, BCOM'04, WRITES ABOUT DEALING WITH PRESSURE IN THE MOMENT AND OVER THE LONG HAUL.

BEYOND PRESSURE

Are you feeling a lot of pressure these days? Join the club. Every day, we're faced with various degrees of pressure. Sometimes it's quick and intense. Sometimes it drags on and on . . . and drags us down.

But what if pressure wasn't the problem. What if it was the solution that allowed us to perform better at work and everywhere else? In *The Power of Pressure*, Dane Jensen makes that case.

Jensen is CEO of Toronto-based Third Factor, where he works with leaders, athletes and coaches to become more effective and resilient. He also teaches at Smith. Over the last few years, Jensen has interviewed more than a thousand people about how they've dealt with high-pressure situations—everything from the stress of make-or-break job interviews to the sudden fear of being caught too far from shore while swimming in the ocean.

The stories of several people Jensen interviewed make it into the book. They include Curt Cronin, a U.S. navy SEAL who had to make quick decisions under enemy fire, and Jeremiah Brown (Queen's Executive Education, 2018), an unlikely Canadian Olympian. In this book excerpt (starting on this page), Jensen uses Brown's story to explain two types of pressure—long-haul pressure and peak pressure—and the importance of being able to handle both.

we'll examine over the remainder of the book: peak pressure moments, like Lowry's performance in Game 6, and the long haul of pressure over time.

THE LONG HAUL

Jeremiah Brown is an unlikely Olympian. After graduating from university with a torn labrum that had ended his college football career, he moved back in with his parents. On August 17, 2008, he sat on his parents' couch and watched, enraptured, as the Canadian men's eight rowing crew triumphed over the British and American rowers to bring home gold. His athletic spirit rekindled, he made a bold promise to himself: "I will be on that podium in four years in London." There was only one problem: outside of a single disastrous one-hour experiment in a four-man boat the year before, he had never set foot in a rowing shell.

That small inconvenience did not hold Brown back. He found a job at TD Bank in Victoria, British Columbia—2,800 miles across the country and the home of the national team's training center. By a stroke of luck, at his company's holiday party in December 2008, he was pointed toward Doug White, the head coach of the Victoria City Rowing Club. When I sat down with Brown, he talked about how pivotal that first meeting with White was: "I remember looking at this guy with this baseball, leathery face, creased and wrinkled from all those years coaching on the water, and feeling like, I need this guy to believe in me. Because he knows what he's talking about." For the first time, Brown put into words what he was trying to achieve. "Doug looked at me, and he said, 'Jeremiah, what do you intend to do in this sport?' And for the first time, I vocalized it: 'Doug, I want to go to the Olympics, and I want to win a gold medal.' I just threw down the gauntlet." Staring across the table at a naive 22-year-old who had never taken a proper rowing stroke, White simply said, "Well, we don't have a lot of time. We better get to work."

"Rowing is a pain game," Brown would tell me later. And the period that followed was definitely one of pain—physical and psychological. He would wake up at 4:30 a.m., rolling out of a warm bed to make the icy drive to Elk Lake. In the dead of winter at 5:30 a.m., the rowers were on the water with LED lights affixed to their boats, bobbing in the pitch black. Following a grueling workout he would sprint to work, often arriving last, to the displeasure of his new boss. At lunch he would head down to the YMCA to get in a second workout, returning to work dripping with sweat. And finally, at the end of the day, he would head home, exhausted, to his partner, Amy, and their young son, Ethan.

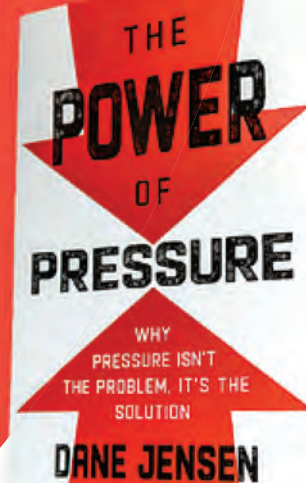
In the midst of this demanding routine, his relationship with Amy unraveled. It was gut-wrenching and only added another layer of pressure to Brown's life. Not only was he holding

down a full-time job and training twice a day, he was a single dad half the time and feeling profound guilt the other half.

The first major milestone on the path to Olympic glory was the National Championships in 2010. An exhausting period of increased training with White paid off: Brown finished second to Mike Braithwaite and nabbed a "D-Card" that entitled him to national development funding as an elite athlete. This was the golden ticket. The minimal funds it provided were just enough to allow Brown to take a leave of absence from his job at the bank and move to a full-time training regimen. Finishing second at Nationals also accomplished something else: it put him squarely on the radar of men's national team head coach Mike Spracklen, who, in January of 2011, pulled Brown into the National Team training group.

Spracklen was a proven winner who had guided teams to the podium at six different Olympic Games. He was also the owner of a well-earned reputation for working athletes harder than they could possibly imagine. The uptick in training volume was immediate and brutal. Spracklen didn't believe in pacing in training—he demanded that every workout be done at full intensity. In the damp Victoria climate, the blood blisters on Brown's hands never turned to callouses. To avoid coating the handles of his oars with a mixture of blood and blister serum, he would Krazy Glue his wounds closed every day before his first training session. He existed under a constant cloud of physical pain—between the blisters on his hands and torn tendon sheaths in his fingers that couldn't fully heal without Brown taking a rest that would essentially disqualify him from competing for a seat in the boat, he was a mess.

But it was the psychological pressure that was the killer. With eight seats in the boat that would compete in 2012, and 20 rowers training with the National Team program, there was intense competition within the ranks, something that Spracklen encouraged. As they neared major competitions, they would routinely engage in "seat races" where one rower would be switched out of the boat for another to see what happened to the boat's time. If the boat got faster after you were swapped out, well . . . that wasn't good for you. Almost no one was safe, and the coach used the uncertainty around placement in the boat to fuel the competitive fire of the athletes. →



The three grueling years Brown endured between his move to Victoria and the eventual London 2012 Games are an example of what I call the “long haul”: a period of intense volume and pressure that is grinding and unrelenting. Often, the long haul is a period, like Brown’s, that is building toward a peak pressure moment. In his case, that was the Olympic Games; for others, it could be months of work to secure a big client, the grind of developing and launching a new product, or preparing for a big presentation at a conference or a professional exam.

In other cases, long periods of pressure aren’t building toward anything—they simply exist. This type of long haul can come on gradually, as additional sources of pressure are slowly layered on, one by one, until you realize you are no longer sleeping well at night or are feeling emotionally overwhelmed, unable to focus. Instead of spontaneously resolving as it reaches a peak, the pressure may gradually abate as the situations you are facing start to resolve.

So, in the midst of the pressure of the long haul, what’s our goal? We might aspire to learn to love these periods—to not just endure but enjoy the pressure of the grind. Sometimes that’s possible. Often, however, it’s not realistic. When pressure is visited upon us for a long period of time, it can be profoundly uncomfortable and unenjoyable, regardless of how we approach it. Yet it is possible to not just endure these periods but actually become committed to navigating them, to see them as meaningful challenges we can rise to, and, ultimately, to emerge with the satisfaction that we were equal to the challenge. We may not wish to repeat the test, but deep down we can feel a sense of pride in our resilience, confidence that we can handle whatever life throws at us, and a feeling that we are better or stronger than we were before.

“It was bigger than rowing for me. It was about my will—it was a test of my will,” said Brown as we sat in a hotel in Calgary six years later. He was in the midst of embracing another pressure-filled journey—this time setting his sights on becoming a world-class professional speaker. I had just watched him bring a room of 200 business executives to their feet, marveling at what he had endured and accomplished in just three years. “I knew if I can do this, I can do anything. And because I went all in with my chips, the price of not seeing it through would have been too great for me. I would feel tremendous regret.”

In short, the long haul may not be enjoyable, but with the right tools it can be meaningful and developmental. Our ability to look back on periods of great pressure free from regret and with admiration for ourselves is a hallmark of a life well lived and a vital source of the healthy self-esteem that leads to deep-seated satisfaction and contentment.



Dane Jensen:
“Pressure is just a
big ball of energy.”

PEAK PRESSURE MOMENTS

A peak pressure moment is just that: a moment. It could be a footrace lasting 10 seconds or a professional exam lasting several hours, but it has a beginning and—more importantly—a well-defined conclusion with a clear range of outcomes. You pass the exam, or you don’t. You hit your time in the race, or you don’t. The sales pitch is successful, or it’s not.

Brown’s peak pressure moment arrived at the 2012 Olympic Games. His unlikely gambit had paid off: three bloody, backbreaking years after taking his first stroke he was heading to London in the men’s eight boat. Just like that, the long haul was over and it was performance time. Out of the frying pan and into the fire.

The top eight teams in the world qualify for the Olympics. At the Olympics, they are divided into two heats of four. The winner of each heat automatically advances to the finals, while the remaining six boats race in what is known as a repechage, or “rep.” Of the six boats in the rep, the top four join the winners of the heats in a six-boat final for all the marbles.

Canada came into the Games ranked third in the world and full of confidence. They had set a new world record at the World Cup in Lucerne three months before the Games. They knew they could win it all.

And they promptly finished dead last in their heat. Bursting with nervous energy, they delivered a season-worst

WHEN PRESSURE STRIKES: “WILL I MAKE IT?”

DANE JENSEN TELLS US WHY HE WROTE A BOOK ABOUT PRESSURE AND WHAT HE LEARNED ALONG THE WAY.

Smith Magazine: How did writing *The Power of Pressure* come about?

Dane Jensen: I spend a lot of time talking to people about pressure and resilience. That's something I've been doing for more than a decade. The genesis for the book was this question I had: 'What's the most pressure you've ever been under?' I found that it was almost this magic portal, because no matter who you asked, there was a really interesting story on the other side. And that story was rooted in real wisdom and experience. I came to realize two things: First, when people told me about the most pressure they'd ever been under, they were telling me about a moment that really mattered to them. It bent the arc of their lives, for better or worse, and how they handled it led to tremendous satisfaction or tremendous regret. Second, I started to see patterns in the causes of pressure. I thought, maybe there's something that we can learn from these critical moments.

What patterns did you find?

The stories I heard from people varied a lot. But there were three consistent patterns. The first was that every situation people told me about had an important outcome. Second, every situation carried a fair bit of uncertainty. Will it happen? Won't it happen? Will I make it? And finally, many situations incorporated an element of volume—the sheer number of tasks, decisions or distractions that surrounded that important, uncertain outcome. If we can learn to relate to those three things in a productive way, if we can take action on them, as opposed to just letting them happen to us, we can begin to manage pressure and even harness it in a positive way.

Anything surprise you in your research about pressure?

One thing was the incredible role that support plays. My initial theory was that the more support you have, the better. I found a more nuanced story. One of the ways that people increase their pressure is by having too many people offering support. If support is going to be helpful, you have to keep the circle reasonably tight—generally no more than five people. And it should be people who are in the arena with you, that have some skin in the game. They're not purely spectators. You also need to be proactive in dictating what you need from your support network. Sometimes we fall into this trap of, well, I don't want to tell somebody who's trying to help me how they should help. I found that people who were good at leveraging support were very prescriptive. They said, here's what I need.

Why can pressure be a solution rather than a problem, as you explain it?

Pressure can be a problem, of course. We've seen the impact day in and day out throughout the pandemic. But what I really want people to take away is that in every situation I unpacked through the research and the interviews that I did, it was the energy that the pressure created that gave people the capacity to handle the situation. Pressure is just a big ball of energy, and yes, that energy can be destructive. But it can also fuel our ability to move to higher levels of performance, higher levels of empathy and higher levels of creativity. That was core to a lot of the stories I heard from people who were successful in those moments of great pressure.

time, limping in a full 12 seconds after the winners—an absolute eternity in rowing. “People were already leaving the grandstands to use the washroom before the next race,” Brown remembers. “I was never more mortified in my life.”

When I asked Brown about the most pressure he had ever been under, this was the period he chose—between bombing in the heat and competing in the Olympic final three days later. Following an almost unimaginable result in the heat, Brown descended into “a tornado of thinking,” he recalls. “You want to be fired up, and you want to come back and show the world what you're all about. But no, I felt small. I felt like it was going to be very difficult to right the ship.” He found himself watching civilians in the Olympic Village and dreaming of an escape—how comforting it would be to simply be living a normal life, laughing over dinner and watching the events on TV. He contemplated how it could have all gone wrong after all the pain and suffering the team had gone through, how thoroughly they had prepared. He considered what he would do if they repeated their poor performance in the rep and failed to qualify for the finals, a plan that involved disappearing to Portugal and living out a quiet, unremarkable life.

His coach did nothing to alleviate the pressure. As the team headed into their boat at the rep, he looked at Brown and said, “Think about your son, Jeremiah. He doesn't want his dad to let him down, does he?” With a bolt of searing anger at Spracklen for putting this additional weight on him, Brown pushed off with his boat. The coxswain, who acts as a coach in the water, ultimately set things right: “It's up to the nine guys in this boat right now. We're going to do it for each other—no one else.”

And they did. Rebounding from their brutal result in the heat, they rowed to a second-place finish in →

the rep, crossing the line half a second behind Great Britain. The immense pressure of imminent failure was off, and the pressure of the upcoming final began to build. For Brown, the waiting was excruciating: “It’s fatiguing even thinking about the moments leading up to the race. The fatigue would often set in for me 48 hours before. Sweaty palms, elevated heart rate, shallow breathing. All those things would strike me so early, so I have so many memories of the fatigue, of expectation, and the foreshadowing of the pain to come. I think we all have levels of resilience and endurance, and I was at my limit a lot of that time.”

Swimming in adrenaline and cortisol, Brown endured the minutiae of the final approach minute by minute—sharing silent elevator rides down to the dining hall with teammates, forcing himself to chew and swallow food with no appetite, and trying to imagine the same crushing pressure bearing down on his opponents, wondering how they would endure and taking some cold comfort in suspecting that they might not.

And then the moment arrived. Six boats lined up. Six final minutes of pain to get a verdict on whether all of the suffering had been worth it. The perfect race would require “a water rescue and eight stretchers at the finish line,” Spracklen had once said. Every man in the boat knew that was what was required: maximal pain, maximal effort. The starting gun sounded and the referendum began. At 500 meters they were in third place—hundredths of a second ahead of the Netherlands. They kept pounding until the coxswain yelled, “Two minutes to go here, boys!” with a quarter boat-length separating them from the Germans and Great Britain. Then there were 250 meters left—around 30 strokes. With 10 shuddering, powerful bursts they overtook the Brits and by sheer force of will held on for the next 20 strokes. Silver for Canada. A glorious end to a remarkable journey.

Peak pressure moments are different from the long haul. When they end, so does the pressure. There is no long tail-off. For Brown, the pressure was immediately replaced by ecstasy, but that’s not always the case. Some peak pressure moments don’t go our way and the pressure is replaced by sadness, anger, or grief. But either way, it’s no longer pressure.

In peak pressure moments, the goal is simple: perform. Get out everything you are capable of when you need it most. In sport, this is known as “performance on demand.” While over the long haul we define success as building confidence and the satisfaction of facing life’s challenges head-on, when it comes to peak pressure moments, success is about what you get out. It is

not necessarily about winning or losing—in many cases that’s out of our control; it is, however, about performing to the peak of our abilities instead of shrinking from the moment.

While some peak pressure moments come on us without warning, most consist of two distinct phases: the pressure of anticipation and the pressure of performance. Almost without exception, high performers will tell you that the pressure of anticipation is worse than the pressure of performance. “Waiting is a disease,” Brown wrote. As a result, while you can apply them at any time, many of the techniques we’ll cover when talking about peak pressure moments are of highest value in the immediate anticipation of performance. This period—whether it’s the 10 seconds we have to steady ourselves as a patient requiring a life-saving intervention moves from the ambulance to the ER bay, or the week before a big presentation—is the space in which we have the most opportunity to impact our eventual mental state during the performance itself. In most peak pressure moments, managing anticipation is managing pressure.

“Almost without exception, high performers will tell you that the pressure of anticipation is worse than the pressure of performance.”

BEING AMBIDEXTROUS

The things that make us good at navigating the long haul aren’t the same as those that make us good at nailing our peak pressure moments. Some people can sustain performance through the long haul but struggle in a crisis, and a lot of elite athletes and Navy SEALs who are tuned up for performance on demand don’t have the most well-ordered or high-performing lives outside of their peak pressure moments.

If you can learn to be better at both performing in peak pressure moments and approaching the long haul with a sense of challenge, commitment, and motivation, you can become unstoppable. People who are “pressure ambidextrous” are set up to embrace the challenges that make for a rich, meaningful, and ultimately successful life.

Becoming ambidextrous is all about returning to the root causes of pressure: importance, uncertainty, and volume. While these manifest quite differently over the long haul and in peak pressure moments, the same three fundamental forces are at play—and by dealing with each of them in turn, we can transform our experience of pressure. ■

Excerpt from *The Power of Pressure: Why Pressure Isn’t The Problem, It’s The Solution* by Dane Jensen. Copywrite 2021, HarperCollins. danejensen.com

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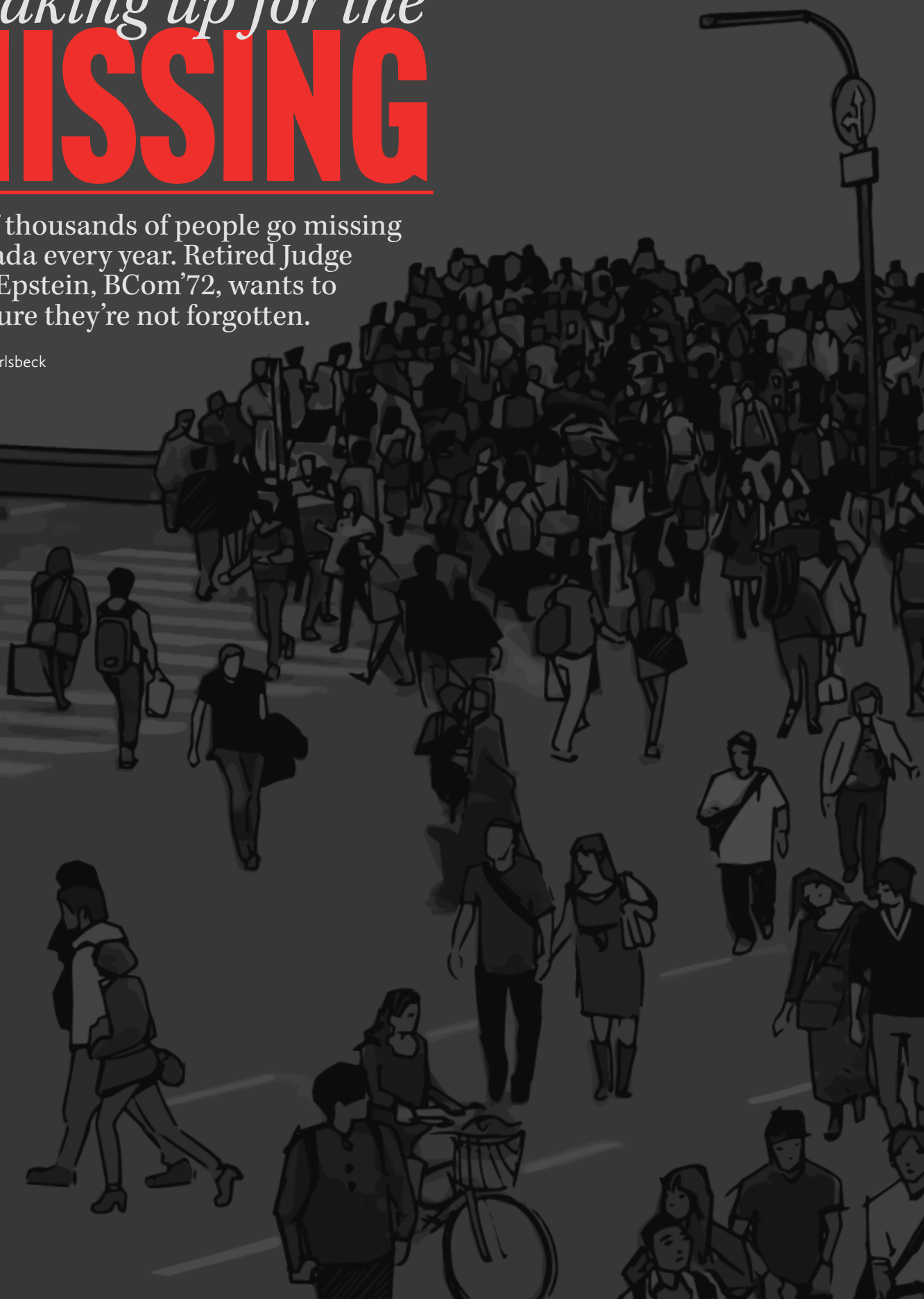
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speaking up for the **MISSING**

Tens of thousands of people go missing in Canada every year. Retired Judge Gloria Epstein, BCom'72, wants to make sure they're not forgotten.

By Robert Gerslbeck





Gloria Epstein: "In Canada, we don't pay enough attention to the missing themselves or to the consequences of disappearance."



“Bruce McArthur killed eight people. All were gay or bisexual. All but two were men of colour. All were valued.” So begins “Missing and Missed” a more than 1,200-page report by retired Ontario Court of Appeal Judge Gloria Epstein. It examines how, for years, McArthur, a self-employed landscaper, was able to prey upon Toronto’s Gay Village. His known murder spree lasted from 2010 to 2017, before he was caught, convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Epstein wrote the report as head of the Independent Civilian Review into Missing Person Investigations. She was appointed to the post by the Toronto Police Services Board in mid-2018. Nearly three years later, in April 2021, she released her findings, including 151 recommendations that the Toronto Police Service has said it will implement.

The Epstein review was exhaustive. It involved hundreds of interviews with police, as well as members of Toronto’s LGBTQ2S+ communities, sex workers, the homeless and those with mental health challenges, to name a few. There were two related parts to the review’s mandate. It was to examine how Toronto police investigated missing persons (particularly disappearances from Toronto’s diverse communities, focusing on the eight men McArthur murdered and two unrelated cases of women who went missing, whose bodies were later found) and make recommendations for improvement. It was also to examine the relationship between the police and Toronto’s diverse communities and recommend how police could improve the relationships. Judge Epstein also examined approaches to missing person investigations in other parts of Canada and around the world.

In her report, Epstein makes it clear that she would like to see Canada give higher priority to missing person cases

including the support of more robust research into why people go missing with such frequency. “I want people to understand that missing people matter,” she told *Smith Magazine* in a recent interview. Here are edited excerpts from that interview.

Smith Magazine: Your review looked at the cases of eight missing men and two missing women in Toronto. But you discovered a bigger issue. Can you explain?

Epstein: What I found was that in Canada missing persons cases are not considered that big a deal. They are not treated as important. The general view is that if there’s no body, there is no crime. The person either doesn’t want to be found or will return on their own. That’s not how missing persons are regarded in some other countries where the general population and particularly the police treat them as seriously as homicides with commensurate priority and resource allocation. In Canada, we need to understand two things. First, missing persons is a much larger problem than many believe. In 2019, more than 74,000 people were reported missing. In other words, hundreds of disappearances are reported every day. Second, many disappearances have a profound impact—on the person who has gone missing, on his or her family and friends and on society.

How does someone going missing have a wider societal effect?

Very few missing person cases are high-profile and make the news. But many that attract little attention evidence a myriad of serious underlying social problems, problems that often involve or lead to criminal activity. In many situations, family members, such as young teenagers, run away from home

because they are victims of abuse. In other cases, predators lure young people away from home to entrap them into the world of sex and/or drug trafficking. And then there are people in marginalized communities who disappear because they have no place to turn and, in desperation, just wander away. In Canada, we don’t pay enough attention to the missing themselves or to the consequences of disappearance. This serious attitudinal problem must change.

Which country is doing a good job dealing with missing persons?

Without question, the United Kingdom. I thoroughly examined the U.K. system and came away impressed with a number of things. First and foremost, they take the report of a person’s disappearance very seriously. Second, the U.K. takes a holistic, collaborative approach to the issue. There, the missing are not just an issue for the police to deal with. Various agencies are involved—government, health, housing and social services, to name just a few. And the police approach the many challenging issues surrounding missing persons with creativity and considerable commitment of resources.

I learned a great deal from the missing and exploitation manager of the Thames Valley Police Force. She is an extraordinarily knowledgeable and experienced officer who has dedicated her career to the missing. As an example of some of her force’s initiatives, she described monthly meetings called STEM [strategic, exploitation and missing] in which the heads of social service agencies and police discuss trends they are seeing around the missing.

In the U.K., there is also significant civilian involvement in the investigation of missing person cases. One area where civilianization has had a considerable impact

is in the area of risk assessment. Many U.K. police departments have trained risk assessors who work collaboratively and full time performing this key task. Another initiative that has met with great success involves police forces that have moved toward hiring civilians as missing person co-ordinators. In addition to overseeing investigations, these co-ordinators undertake such tasks as reviewing cases to identify patterns and communicating with loved ones of the missing.

What else is being done in the U.K. that we can learn from?

There is a missing persons charity called Missing People [missingpeople.org.uk]. Founded in 1993, the charity offers help for people who are missing or are at risk of going missing. It is significantly resourced and is therefore in a position to offer professional services to many who are dealing with the challenges of the missing, including the grief-stricken families and other loved ones of those who have disappeared. The charity also funds much-needed research on the many complex issues surrounding missing persons. Missing People is a successful charity. It assists the police. It also does valuable work that no one else, not even the police, are in a position to do.

Would Canada benefit from a similar type of non-profit?

Yes. One of my recommendations to the Toronto Police Services Board is that, together with the federal, provincial and municipal governments, the board should support the creation of a not-for-profit similar to the U.K.’s Missing People. Such an organization could help in several valuable ways. By way of example, it could provide a 24-hour, confidential support line for those who are missing

and who don't want to be found, yet who still want to remain in contact with someone. The person who is 'missing' may not want to turn to the police for this type of assistance for fear of being located.

A Canadian missing person not-for-profit organization could also support families of the missing in various ways including acting as a link between the police and the families and friends of the missing by, among other things, keeping the missing's loved ones up-to-date with steps taken in the investigation. When there is a search for a missing person, the not-for-profit could help co-ordinate a network of community organizations, businesses and people to help in that search.

You found problems with how Toronto police deal with missing persons. But are other places in Canada making progress?

There are a number of cities, like Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Saskatoon, that have taken positive steps. The Winnipeg Police Service has civilian missing persons co-ordinators. Even though the police do the actual investigations, the co-ordinators have considerable involvement to support those efforts. The Saskatoon Police Service is doing interesting work with analytics. Missing person investigations are the third most common type of police investigation in Saskatoon. The police there are working with the Saskatchewan Police Predictive Analytics Lab, the province and the University of Saskatoon, developing predictive models that could help identify young people at risk of running away and find patterns in missing person cases.

Should there be more research done on missing persons?

Absolutely. There's almost no research done in Canada on this issue. More research will allow us to answer important

questions: What are the underlying problems that cause people to go missing? What are possible initiatives to prevent disappearances and/or support the missing and their loved ones during the period of what has appropriately been called 'ambiguous loss'?

Research can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, a police service can partner with academic institutions. I would love to see a missing persons institute in Canada—similar to the Centre for the Study of Missing Persons created at the University of Portsmouth in England. If the Canadian government were to help fund such an organization, it would actually save money long-term through the development of more effective ways to locate those who disappear—better still, to prevent them from disappearing in the first place.

Why don't marginalized and vulnerable communities get the attention they deserve in missing person cases?

That's a good question. My research led me to conclude that, initially, the police apply fewer resources to the report of someone's disappearance from a marginalized and vulnerable community relative to the report of a disappearance of someone from a more mainstream part of Toronto, primarily because of the circumstances surrounding how their disappearance is reported. There are three things to consider here:

One is timing. If someone like you or I were to go missing, it's probable that someone would almost immediately know that we were not where we were supposed to be and report the matter to the police. That's because we tend to lead patterned, predictable lives. If I failed to show up for dinner, and I didn't call in an hour or two, someone would be on the phone to the police. But because many in the marginalized and vulnerable communities have less predictable lifestyles,

a good deal of time may go by before someone notices their disappearance. Also, when a person from a marginalized and vulnerable community is reported missing, police often have an initial tendency to assume the person just chose to go experience life somewhere else and saw no need to notify anyone.

The second factor is that friends and family of members of marginalized and vulnerable communities are often reluctant to contact the police because of mistrust or their own personal issues with the police such as uncertain immigration status or outstanding charges.

The third factor is what I call 'noise'. Again, if someone like you or I were to go missing, you can be sure there will be an avalanche of people putting pressure on the police to start a well-resourced investigation. And it is unlikely these people would let up. It goes without saying that the more pressure put on the police, the more likely they are to act. One of the saddest aspects of the review is that Dean Lisowick, one of McArthur's victims, was not ever reported missing. If no one reported him missing, certainly no one was going to put pressure on the police to step up the investigation into his disappearance.

On the other hand, Andrew Kinsman, who was McArthur's final victim, had many friends. He did a lot of volunteer work and had a good deal of influence in the gay communities. His friends and loved ones immediately noticed his disappearance and immediately reported it to the police. Mr. Kinsman's social circle became involved not only by checking the police investigation but by becoming involved themselves—helping search, putting up posters.

Why did you decide to head up the missing persons review? You had to leave the bench to take on this job, after all.

As I look back, I tend to think that my taking up this assignment was meant to

be. First, it was offered to me at a time of self-reflection—on the 25th anniversary of my being appointed a judge. Second, the review’s mandate was something with which I had a personal connection given my having decided, years ago, a ground-breaking case in which I recognized the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms’ protection of equality rights for same-sex relationships. I also thought the review would let me contribute in a manner different from the kind of contribution I had made as a judge. I could sit down at a table and listen to people rather than learn about them through the words of lawyers. I was right. I learned so very much about Toronto’s diverse communities, about the police, about the challenges they both face.

What kind of effect did this work end up having on you?

I used to joke, somewhat seriously, how being a judge made me less judgmental. Over time as a judge, I became more understanding of other people. But being involved in the review increased my insight by an order of magnitude. It was a more direct, more powerful way to learn about the lives of people, particularly those from marginalized and vulnerable communities. I spent real time in the personal space of homeless people and sex workers and people with profound mental health issues. I spent time with people who risked their lives coming to Canada to escape from countries where being gay is a criminal offence. I was forever changed by sitting at a table listening to an intelligent, thoughtful man recount the abuse he suffered in Sri Lanka, his country of birth, followed by his harrowing journey on a ship in which he almost drowned, and his struggles as he made a life in Toronto. Then to work with another such individual for whom I wrote a letter in support of his university application. These strong, resourceful

people altered my view of life. I am now much more aware of the challenges that people with such backgrounds go through, the contributions they can and do make, and how we need to do better to support them.

What kind of reaction did your report get from the police and the gay communities?

When I released the report last April, I was ready for the worst. My communications adviser told me to be prepared to be vilified. He said no matter what findings I made, there would be strong disagreement. I reminded him of my history as a judge where I had to make decisions that inevitably left one party or the other unhappy. He replied that in this instance the criticism would be public and personal.

To my amazement, everyone embraced the report—all the findings and all the recommendations. Significantly, the LGBTQ2S+ communities and other diverse communities supported it. The Toronto Police Service and the Toronto Police Services Board supported it. The chief of the Toronto Police Service publicly committed to ensuring that all of the recommendations were implemented. Now, it is early days and there is a great deal to do—we will see. But I am delighted by the support the report received.

You interviewed hundreds of people for this report. Is there one that stood out?

I spoke with a man named Michael Wells, who is the father of Alloura Wells. She was a

young trans woman and a sex worker who disappeared in 2017. Much later, her remains were found in a ravine. These remains sat in a morgue for months before being identified.

Alloura and her father and sister came to Toronto from northern Ontario. Michael Wells was homeless but he would find ways to stay in touch with Alloura. At the very least, he would speak with people who had seen her, to check that she was OK. At one point, Mr. Wells realized that no one had seen his daughter in a while. He went to the police. Now, remember that he was homeless—he was not a man who was comfortable going into a police station. But in he went. Sadly, the police treated him with considerable disrespect. They did not even take a report. They effectively just shooed him out of the premises.

I very much wanted to speak with Mr. Wells and, finally, in January of this year—in the thick of the pandemic—I

did. We met in a deserted room in a rundown building in downtown

Toronto. The two of us sat around an old card table. It was against that background

that I experienced the most impactful interview. Mr.

Wells was so thoughtful about his life. He was so thoughtful about his daughter. When his 12-year-old son told

him, ‘Dad, I think I’m a girl,’ Michael Wells said the following: ‘That is OK. Just be a good person.’ Imagine

the power of that moment where I am in the middle of a pandemic in derelict surroundings with a

homeless man who possesses such wisdom, such insight, such strength. The investigation into Alloura’s death is still ongoing. ■



Jason Tasse inside the Lee Valley Tools store in Ottawa.



TOOL TIME

Jason Tasse, EMBA'11, began working at Lee Valley Tools in university. Now he's leading the hardware chain into a bold new future.

By Rebecca Harris

When Jason Tasse was earning his Executive MBA at Smith, he asked Leonard Lee, Artsci'63, the founder of Lee Valley Tools, to come and speak to his class. A larger-than-life entrepreneur, Lee stood in front of the room and declared: "I don't hire MBAs." The class laughed—Lee had a great sense of humour—but there was an important message behind the joke. Lee told the students: Everything you've learned, you've learned at your mother's knee (meaning values and principles). The trick is to stick to them. You have to be clear and you have to act on them.

"What I picked up from Leonard was a values-based business built on hard work," says Tasse, president and chief operating officer of Lee Valley Tools, an Ottawa-based retailer that specializes in high-quality woodworking and gardening tools and supplies. "That's the kind of corporate and personal development that I've been surrounded by, and we're still only in the first few years of my career here."

On that last note, Tasse is also joking. He's been with Lee Valley for more than 25 years. "As the expression goes, when you find something great, hold on to it," he says. Indeed, in both his business and his life, Tasse's loyalty runs deep.

IN FROM THE COLD

Tasse was born and raised in Ottawa and has always called the city home. He went to the same elementary school as his wife, Tammy; they later reconnected and married. He attended Carleton University and, 20 years ago while working for Lee Valley Tools, he played professional lacrosse

for his hometown team, the Ottawa Rebel, in the National Lacrosse League. He continues to coach the sport, calling it his "other full-time job."

The son of a teacher (mom) and firefighter (dad), Tasse at first wanted to be a police officer. However, when it came time to make a university choice, he didn't have a career in mind. So, he followed his interests, studying law and political science at Carleton. He also took a job at a local lumberyard to help pay for school. With the cold Ottawa winter coming, a co-worker told him about a local company that was hiring: Lee Valley Tools. What was great, the co-worker said, was that you got to work inside.

"I thought, 'That's fantastic. I get to work inside during the winter as opposed to being out in the yard.' That was my motivation," recalls Tasse. Once there, another motivation arose: If you worked hard as a seasonal worker, Lee Valley might hire you on as a regular employee. "There is an appreciation for hard work," says Tasse. "So, that was my mandate—to be the hardest working seasonal picker they'd ever seen and hopefully stay on. And that is what happened."

At 22, Tasse became a permanent Lee Valley employee. Soon after joining the company he also began to build a relationship with Lee, its founder. Tasse would arrive early and leave late—something he and Lee had in common—and the two would talk. "I always thought it was wonderful that someone who owned the business would take the time to chat with staff, be genuinely interested in who I am and what I'm doing, and share his concerns about the business," says Tasse. →

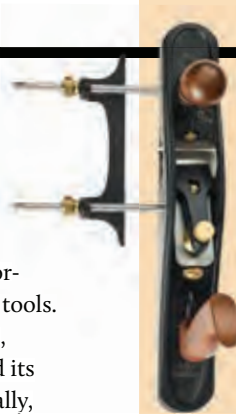
A former civil servant with degrees in engineering and economics, Lee started Lee Valley Tools in 1978 as a mail-order company selling quality woodworking tools. The company opened its first store in 1981, spurred by a Canada Post strike that halted its ability to deliver products by mail. Eventually, Lee's son Robin Lee took over as CEO, a position he still holds today. (Leonard Lee died in 2016 at age 77, having been made a Member of the Order of Canada in 2003.)

Today, Lee Valley has 19 stores across Canada and a revamped e-commerce platform that launched in October 2019. The retailer offers a wide range of woodworking and gardening tools and supplies, plus hardware, kitchen and general-purpose tools, with a focus on quality and craftsmanship. Since 1985, Veritas Tools has been the manufacturing arm of Lee Valley, making 250 woodworking products. Still a family-owned, Canadian company, it employs more than 1,000 people across the country.

Over the years, Tasse worked his way up to manager of operations, director of operations, VP operations and chief operating officer. Before accepting the COO role, though, Tasse decided he should get an MBA. As he told his bosses at the time: "I feel I need this level of education because I've come through operations, but I've got to be able to communicate with marketing and merchandising and manufacturing. I don't want to cut my teeth at the frustration of others. I want to be able to have a supportive and collaborative conversation."

In 2011, Tasse graduated with his Executive MBA. He calls the Smith program life-changing. "I could relate almost every ounce of academic content to my work at Lee Valley, talk to my team about it and apply it in real time," he says.

As he was moving up in the company, Tasse says having the unwavering support of the company's leaders—including Leonard Lee, Robin Lee and his wife Lucie Robitaille, chief customer officer, and CFO Iain Campbell—made a big difference. "I'm emotionally connected to Lee Valley Tools," says Tasse. "There have been opportunities over the years for me to move on,



JACK RABBET PLANE

"This is a magnificent expression of Lee Valley's innovation and domestic manufacturing capabilities," says Tasse. "It's one of our most complicated and stunning hand planes and was featured on the Discovery Channel's *Manufactured series*."



GARDEN TOOLS

"These are a great example of how Lee Valley sets itself apart in the garden tool market—heirloom garden tools designed to last a lifetime," Tasse says. "You will not find these at your typical grocery store and seasonal garden centre."



CHISELS

"These are made with a proprietary steel, PMV11, an industry-first, unique steel that holds its edge longer while remaining easy to sharpen," Tasse says. "The handles are made with a torified (cooked) domestic Canadian maple."

but what kept me here were my personal relationships and the runway that the Lee family provided me to have an impactful, positive influence on Lee Valley Tools."

DISCOMFORT ZONE

While Lee Valley has developed a devout following of tool lovers and do-it-yourself diehards, Tasse's move to the president's role in January of this year comes as the company is at—in Tasse's words—"a significant crossroads."

"Going into our 44th year, we are a specialty retailer that has an extremely strong, emotional following of customers," he says. "Our customers love Lee Valley and they come into our stores to talk about their gardening and woodworking projects." But now, the company is looking ahead to a new base of customers. As its core baby boomer shopper ages, it's trying to attract the younger millennial generation.

As part of a long-term strategy that began around five years ago, Tasse is overseeing the modernization of Lee Valley and appealing to a new generation of woodworking, gardening and DIY enthusiasts. "Leonard Lee created a brand that is about quality and principles . . . That's core to who we are and that's amazing," says Tasse. "But now, we're focusing on the mechanics of retail: How do we take [our brand] to market, how do we connect with customers, how are we fulfilling orders?"

A key tool in the modernization toolbox is Lee Valley's

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

WOODWORKERS AND GARDENERS PRIZE LEE VALLEY TOOLS' WELL-MADE PRODUCTS. HERE, JASON TASSE BREAKS DOWN WHAT MAKES THREE POPULAR ITEMS STAND APART.

digital transformation, initiated back in 2014. What started as a website refresh became a complete back-end systems rebuild, along with new software tools, new photography for 30,000 products, modifications to processes and on and on. “It crippled us,” admits Tasse. “It was so painful.” Internally, the organization was stretched extremely thin, with staff doing double duty. Two years into the project, Lee Valley parted ways with its developer and essentially started from scratch. “I remember staring outside my window, thinking, ‘what have we done?’” recalls Tasse. But, as a leader, his perseverance kicked in and his message to staff was, “This is the discomfort zone and we’re going to get past this.”

Fast-forward to October 2019, when the new website (leevalley.com) finally launched, complete with a new design, new product photography and descriptions, enhanced e-commerce capabilities, educational videos, articles and other content. At first, it wasn’t exactly a hit—longtime customers initially pushed back. However, that’s to be expected when introducing new technology, as shoppers are generally uncomfortable with change. “We predicted a two-year recovery from that deployment,” says Tasse.

And then COVID hit. All of a sudden, people were locked down, they couldn’t go shopping and they were looking for things to do around the house. That meant Lee Valley customers got used to the website rapidly.

Another leg on the stool that Tasse has focused on overhauling is marketing. Lee Valley is trying to connect with a younger demographic on an emotional level. In the past, the tool was the hero in advertising. Now, Lee Valley is celebrating people working with their hands, through the new brand platform #letsdosomething. The idea is to inspire people to make things and be proud of their accomplishments, even if they’re not perfect.

For example, a video that launched

last year shows a towel rack and the rod falling off, a wardrobe with doorknobs that don’t align and wood posts being thrown into a fire pit. The narrator talks about failed projects and tells the audience, “You will get better.” The spot ends with the line, “But no matter how good you do, the doing always feels good. Let’s do something.”

“The majority of our campaigns are now being built around inspiring people to get over their self-consciousness and enjoy working with their hands,” says Tasse. “You think back to Grade 8 and the clay ashtray you made for your grandparents. You came home with it proudly, saying, ‘Look at this. I did this.’ That’s the moment that Lee Valley wants to help facilitate for our customers.” In September of this year, Lee Valley won the retail marketing category award in the Retail Council of Canada’s annual “Excellence in Retailing Awards”.

Meanwhile, there’s another generational shift happening at Lee Valley, and it’s within the company. Tasse is rebuilding the senior leadership team, as the majority of these leaders have retired or are near retirement. “That is common in a second-generation business—there is this succession turnover,” says Tasse. “It’s one thing if you replace one [member] of your senior leadership team because they’re supported by the rest of the team. There is some level of continuity. But the majority of our team is being replaced, so it’s a pretty tough task.”

In the grand scheme of things, Tasse has been entrusted with the generational transfer of the brand. As the father of two university-aged sons, though, he’s got his own footsteps to be followed. Both of his sons have had multiple jobs at Lee Valley, from cutting grass at the distribution centre, to being box makers, to doing packaging and assembly. “They are putting in their time to understand the business,” says Tasse. “My older son is studying business at Saint FX [St. Francis Xavier University]. The running joke is, ‘if my dad can do it, I can do it.’” ■

Jason Tasse

MY OTHER CV

Hometown: Ottawa

What was your first job? Working for our local butcher. To this day, I remember his name: Roger. He was a nice fellow, pleasant and hard-working. I am sure he gave me the job more for my benefit, at 15, than his.

Favourite all-time books: *The Goal* by Eliyahu Goldratt and *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni.

Favourite movie ever: *Invictus*. We studied Nelson Mandela as the ultimate transformational leader in business school, and this movie is a wonderful depiction of how he leveraged the Springboks to unify a nation—despite all opposition.

My motto is: Appreciate. Work hard. There is always a way forward.

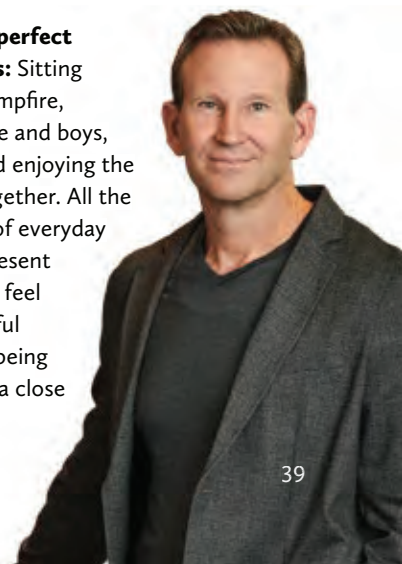
Best Smith memory: My class team and the gift of self-awareness relative to my team. To this day, the imprint of my team is like the movie *A Beautiful Mind*. I take their personas, strengths and points of view with me as I process challenges.

What’s the best advice you ever got? Take the time to understand others’ perspectives, figure out where the other person is coming from before you act/respond/judge. Assume positive intent.

My favourite travel spot: Home. The more I travel, the more I love to return home to Ottawa, Canada.

What’s on your playlist right now? Luke Combs, Eric Church, and some Motley Crue.

My idea of perfect happiness is: Sitting around a campfire, with my wife and boys, laughing and enjoying the moment together. All the turbulence of everyday life is not present and you can feel the wonderful memory of being together as a close family.



Setting Sail

With Three Ships, Connie Lo, BCom'15, GDA'15, is building an all-natural (and affordable) beauty brand.

By Brenda Bouw

As a 12-year-old in Toronto, Connie Lo used to gather different ingredients from the kitchen, such as bananas, oatmeal and egg whites, mix them with green tea and lather the whole thing on her face to soothe her skin. Her parents didn't mind. Her mother believed in natural remedies and her dad was an open-minded entrepreneur who ran an international cookware business. "My parents would come home and see me there with the latest mixture on my face and say, 'What is our daughter up to now?'" says Lo, 28, with a laugh.

In late 2016, Lo met a like-minded skin-care enthusiast, Laura Burget, a chemical engineer who was looking to start a line of natural-ingredient beauty products after discovering a shortage of the kinds of products she preferred. Lo had long dreamed of being an entrepreneur. "I just never had an idea that resonated with me enough to feel like it was something I wanted to pursue full time until I met Laura . . . We just vibed off each other from the get-go," Lo recalls of their first meeting over dinner in Toronto.

Their vision for their lives and the natural-beauty industry were aligned. "We wanted to really hustle in our twenties and early thirties to start and grow a business and then help others with what we build," Lo says. "We also both saw the natural-beauty industry being really confusing and overpriced, and we felt like there was something that we could do about it."

The pair quickly realized that they had opposite personalities and some skill sets that could work in their favour when building a company. Burget is more of an introvert who enjoys the back end of the business, like analytics and cash flow. Lo is extroverted and enjoys branding, marketing, customer service and sales.

By the end of their initial two-hour dinner meeting, which then spilled into another hour at a local coffee shop, the duo was already brainstorming product ideas. "At the end of the night, Laura asked me, 'Do you want to be my →



Shelf Stars

Three Ships co-founder Connie Lo gives us a tour of three of her skin-care brand's bestsellers.



Dew Drops

Mushroom Hyaluronic Acid + Vitamin C Serum

Dew Drops was named the best hyaluronic acid serum this year by *Self* magazine. It combines hyaluronic acid from Tremella mushrooms and vitamin C from the Kakadu plum. "The natural hyaluronic acid has a small molecular weight to absorb quickly into the skin," Lo says.



Nourish

Lavender + MCT Cleansing Oil

This is the first product that Lo and business partner Laura Burget came up with. "We purchased the ingredients for testing from Whole Foods," Lo recalls, "and three years later we launched at 45 Whole Foods locations in the U.S."



Radiance

Grape Stem Cell + Squalane Day Cream

Radiance is Three Ships' No. 1 selling product. "We sold out four times over the pandemic," Lo says. "Recently, we even sold out over the course of a weekend."

co-founder?" Lo recalls. "I immediately said yes . . . Not only was this a great idea, but it was something I had been extremely interested in since I was a kid. It was like the stars aligned."

The next day, the pair started on what would become Three Ships Beauty, a skin-care company with a unique selling proposition: all-natural, science-backed, certified cruelty-free and vegan products priced under \$45. Most skin-care products with comparable claims sell for twice that amount.

RAISING SAILS

Like many entrepreneurs, Lo and Burget started the business as a side hustle while working at their full-time jobs (Lo was an account manager at Kimberly-Clark). Each put in \$2,000 of their savings to buy coconut oil, essential oils and other ingredients at Whole Foods. Soon they were testing different concoctions in Lo's kitchen on weeknights and weekends.

Their first product was a line of makeup removers for different skin types that sold for \$15 each. Lo and Burget set up shop at farmers' markets in the Toronto area and managed to accomplish two things: First, they generated enough revenue to grow the business. Second, they garnered critical customer feedback that allowed them to improve their products and develop new ones. "We were able to talk directly to our customers and iterate the product based on their feedback," Lo recalls. "Because we only had \$4,000 to build the business, we couldn't do marketing or market research. So that was our form of market research."

Lo also pounded the pavement in Toronto neighbourhoods to get listed in stores. She'd walk into shops that sold skin-care products and pitch her brand, which at the time was not known as Three Ships but instead went under the name Niu Body. One sale led to another, and then another, which eventually led to larger orders. Within one-and-a-half years, both she and Burget were able to quit their day jobs and focus on the business full time.

CHANGING COURSE

While sales were starting to tick higher, Lo and Burget found themselves with a problem. Consumers were confusing Niu Body (Niu is Hawaiian for "coconut") with brands with similar names. People also had a hard time pronouncing Niu Body and some thought it was a body-care company. The natural facial skin-care angle just wasn't coming through strong enough. After 10 months of market research—in which they discovered that many of their customers weren't just their target Gen Z market but also millennials—they settled on a more direct brand name: Three Ships.

The new brand launched in July 2020. It's based on the mythical story of the fountain of youth, which adventurers would go to great lengths to find. Some legends suggest a small

"Our mission is to be the most transparent natural beauty brand in the world," says Connie Lo (right), with Three Ships co-founder Laura Burget.



PHOTO | COURTESY OF THREE SHIPS

fleet of three ships discovered it. Lo says the name is linked to the idea that great discoveries can be made with limited resources—an idea that fits with certain Three Ships products. For instance, a bestselling serum has just four ingredients: vitamin E, almond oil, pumpkin oil and lavender essential oil.

The brand makeover worked: Within six to eight weeks, Three Ships landed a handful of huge customers that Lo and Burget had been pitching for months. They included Target, Whole Foods, Indigo, Holt Renfrew, Urban Outfitters and Well.ca, among others. "They all came after the name change, so clearly we made the right decision," Lo says.

Getting into Target stores was an especially big deal. "I had been trying to get in contact with the Target buyer for months, to no avail," Lo recalls. Then, she had a coffee chat with a former student at Queen's who was looking for career advice. As it turns out, the student had gone on exchange with someone who now worked at Target. Lo sent over some product and was able to connect with the right buyer.

At first, Target only wanted to test Three Ships products on its website. But Lo wanted more. She realized that she and the buyer would both be attending the same trade show in New York. "On the last day of the show, I saw him walking towards the men's bathroom and saw my chance. I stationed myself

outside of the men's room, and when he came out I walked up to him and asked him to come by our booth. It was there that he agreed to a pitch meeting at Target headquarters." The deal Lo landed put Three Ships into more than 500 Target stores.

Lo and Burget also appeared on the hit CBC pitch program *Dragons' Den*. "It's probably been the number one driver of awareness for us across Canada," Lo says of the appearance that aired in October 2020. Shortly after, Three Ships raised a seed round of \$1.4-million from angel investors. Last year, the company's sales spiked to \$1.4 million, more than double the year before and despite a sales lull and some supply shortages when the pandemic first hit in the spring of that year. Three Ships is on track to generate about \$5-million in sales this year.

NAVIGATING STORMY SEAS

It hasn't been all celebration for the founders of Three Ships. Early last year, at age 26, Burget was diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent a 10-hour surgery in early March, just before the first pandemic lockdowns in Canada.

Burget understandably stepped away from the business to recover and is now back full time, helping Three Ships chart its next stage of growth. The company now donates a portion of its sales to Make-A-Wish Canada to support the wishes of children who have brain tumours and cancer. Their goal is to donate \$1 million by the end of 2024, which is the equivalent of 100 wishes in three years.

Despite being hit with their share of hurdles, Lo and Burget are successfully conquering the complex, fragmented and highly competitive world of skin-care products. Veteran beauty industry executive Tim Coolican, BCom'01 is a Three Ships mentor. He believes Lo and Burget have succeeded because of their clear conviction and courage. "Having a great idea for a brand is one thing; being able to translate that idea into great products is another thing," says Coolican, a former L'Oreal executive who is now CEO of Milk Makeup in New York. "And then being able to take that brand and those products and bring them into the market in a way where you are really able to connect with the community and build a business out of it is a whole other endeavour. I think what Three Ships has done really well is connect those three things."

Looking ahead, Lo says the company plans to keep introducing new products and eventually expand into other natural beauty areas such as cosmetics, hair and body care. "Our mission is to be the most transparent natural beauty brand in the world and to be the go-to natural beauty brand for everyone."

Three Ships appears to be well on its way. ■

Starting up!

In December 2018, Three Ships won \$10,000 through the UPstart Venture Challenge at Smith. The annual competition, run by the Centre for Business Venturing, helps fund new businesses.

Alumni Notes

1950s

1950

John Walcot, BCom, died on July 22, just 10 days after his 94th birthday. He played varsity sports while earning his Commerce degree, but the proudest moment of his sporting life was when he scored the winning touchdown for his North Toronto Collegiate football team in front of more than 20,000 fans in the city championships at Varsity Stadium. After Queen's, John spent 40 years with New Holland Farm Equipment and enjoyed supporting his kids and grandchildren at thousands of games, recitals and events. He is survived by his wife of more than 69 years, Nancy; children Ann, Peter, Robert and Bradley; four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

1957

Michael Moffat, BCom, died on July 1 at age 85. After graduation, Michael spent 11 years at Eaton's, followed by over 30 years with the Oshawa Food Group, where he became VP of corporate business planning. After taking an early retirement, he started his own consulting business. Michael was an avid reader and enjoyed solving daily crossword puzzles, playing golf, shooting pool and watching the Toronto Blue Jays and Maple Leafs. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Catherine; children Edward, James, John and Kate; and nine grandchildren.

1970s

1971

Doug Jordan, MBA, let us know that he's published his latest novel, *The Treasure of Stella Bay*. Set on Amherst Island in the 1960s, it tells the story of 12-year-old Alex Jorgenson, whose family has moved to the island and who must find his way in this new environment. Along the way, he makes new friends and has many adventures, including building a secret hideout and solving an old mystery. Doug says he drew on his inner Mark Twain and Stephen Leacock to write the book. afspublishing.ca



John Morgan, MBA, died on April 14 in Kamloops, B.C., at the age of 77. He had a lengthy career in management, marketing and sales and was president of Labatt Breweries in the 1990s. John spent his life travelling, living and working all over the world, and he taught business at Simon Fraser University. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, **Lynne Morgan, MBA'71**, Artsci'69; daughters Jen, Kathryn and Heather; and two grandchildren.

Michael Stoneham, MBA, died at his home overlooking Georgian Bay in Ontario on April 27—his 75th birthday—after

battling cancer. Michael started his career with Coopers & Lybrand, receiving his chartered accountant designation in 1974 and becoming a partner in 1977. He was involved in the development of the consulting group for C&L (later PricewaterhouseCoopers) and the purchase of PwC Consulting by IBM in 2002. He retired in 2005. Michael was an avid golfer and skier. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Anne Marie; children Stacey and Kenneth; and five grandchildren.

1979

Jim Keohane, MBA, has joined the board of directors at the Alberta Investment Management Corporation for a three-year term. Jim was president and CEO of the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan from 2011 until he retired in March 2020.

1980s

1988

Monika Federau, MBA, has been appointed to the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board. Monika also serves on the board of UNICEF Canada, the advisory board at Smith and the advisory board of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation.

Bryan Pearson, MBA, Artsci'86, was inducted into Canada's Marketing Hall of Legends, which honours people who have significantly contributed to the marketing and advertising industry during their careers. Bryan is the former CEO of LoyaltyOne. He is an adviser and board member for a number of organizations.

1990s

1990



Bobby Kwon, MBA, has started a new position as president and CEO of the Canadian Commercial Corporation.

outsourced real-estate department for companies to manage their workplace strategies, lease renewals, facility relocations, property investments, sales and new developments.” Rob lives in Etobicoke, Ont., with his spouse, Sarah Renaud, Artsci’96. They have three children (Hunter, Jake and Anara) and are about to welcome a Portuguese water dog puppy into the family.



accounting and reporting, financial recovery, system implementations, internal controls and treasury in the international gold-mining sector.

2002

Chris Conway, EMBA, is the new CEO of Food and Beverage Ontario. “I am looking forward to working closely with the FBO members to ensure the association continues to be a powerful advocate and facilitator of success for all categories of the food-processor business in Ontario and globally,” Chris says.

1991

Deborah Yedlin, MBA, is now president and CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. “I am excited to serve the business community at such a critical moment and look forward to building on the chamber’s 130-year history of supporting and growing the business community,” Deborah says.

1999

Brian Kyle, EMBA, has joined the intelligent-automation solutions provider WorkFusion as CFO. Brian was previously CFO of the Stars Group, a Canadian online gaming company.

Carolyn Rogers, EMBA, has been appointed senior deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, where she will oversee the bank’s strategic planning and operations. She’ll also be a member of the bank’s governing council and board of directors. Her seven-year term begins Dec. 15.

1993

Brian Thiessen, BCom, shared a number of recent highlights with us. He was named managing partner of the Calgary office of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP and appointed as Queen’s Counsel (QC) by the government of Alberta. In 2020, Brian was also recognized with the Citizen of the Year award from Calgary city council for his work on diversity and engagement as chair of the Calgary Police Commission from 2015 to 2019.

2000s

2000

Tim Deacon, BCom, has joined the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan Board as CFO. Previously, Tim was CFO of Manulife’s global-wealth asset-management businesses.

David Howe, EMBA, died on March 15 at the age of 62. David worked as a facility and project co-ordinator for the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories in Chalk River, Ont., and previously as an architectural technologist with the federal government. He was also a 25-year volunteer with the Canadian Ski Patrol. David is survived by his wife, Debbie, and children Rebecca and Samantha.

2004

Sarah Grant, BCom, let us know that she now owns and operates Be.neat Studio, a Greater Toronto Area home organization business. Sarah says that the entrepreneur chefs and designers she promoted while working in marketing for HGTV and the Food Network, and her own need to declutter and organize, inspired her to launch the business. She’s helping busy professionals navigate life transitions—babies, renos, moves and more—and maintain calm and order in their homes. Sarah lives in Toronto’s Beach neighbourhood with her husband and two sons, ages 6 and 8. beneatstudio.com

1996

Rene Bharti, BCom, has been appointed president and board member at AmmPower, a Vancouver-based resource-exploration company with a growing focus on clean energy.

Rob Renaud, BCom, was recently appointed president of Encor Advisors, a new commercial real-estate consulting and brokerage firm in Toronto. Rob says Encor’s focus “includes acting as an

Lisa Ross, BCom, has been appointed VP and CFO of Revival Gold, a gold exploration and development company. Lisa has over 15 years of experience in financial



2005

Alexandre Lefebvre, AMBA, has been appointed executive VP of Sollio Cooperative Group, one of Quebec’s largest agri-food companies. He was also named CEO of BMR Group, a Sollio subsidiary and major Quebec hardware and building supply retailer. Alexandre was the president of Lefebvre & Benoit for close to 10 years and will continue to support that family business as president of its board of directors.

2006

Paul Mochrie, AMBA, has been appointed Vancouver’s city manager. Paul joined Vancouver City Hall in 2011 as general manager of human resources and in 2015 became deputy city manager. As city manager he oversees a \$1.6-billion municipal operating budget and 7,700 employees.



Somen Mondal, MBA, let us know that his company, Ideal, a talent-intelligence software provider, was acquired by Ceridian, a human-capital management-technology firm. The deal gives Ceridian customers access to Ideal’s diversity, equity and inclusion-intelligence system.

2007

Michael Schauch, AMBA, is excited to share the release of his audiobook, *A Story of Karma: Finding Love and Truth in the Lost Valley of the Himalaya*, following the publication of the book last year. The story chronicles the journey of Michael and his wife, Chantal, into a remote Himalayan valley and how his failed attempt to scale an elusive mountain led him to meet a little girl, forever changing all of their lives. An excerpt from the book was published in the fall 2020 issue of *Smith Magazine*. michaelschauch.com

2008

Kimberley Preiksaitis, BCom, MSc’13, PhD’18, an assistant professor of marketing at Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y., tells us that she recently sojourned in France for three weeks—two for research and one for travel. “I spent two weeks volunteering and co-living at Chateau de Lalande, which is well known for their YouTube channel, *The Chateau Diaries*.” She explains that she and her colleague, **Alex Mitchell, PhD’18**, are studying the sociality of the collective living space at the chateau as well as the role of the YouTube show in the restoration and revitalization of the historic property. “My husband, Mike, joined me for the last week of travelling. We really loved the mix of old Roman ruins and medieval buildings in the southwest of France, particularly the cities and towns of Périgueux and Saint-Émilion. The natural beauty of hiking in the Pyrenees is also unforgettable!”

2009

Michiko Ozaki, BCom, shares that after graduating from Smith, she returned to her home country of Japan and started working in asset management. She has spent the last 12 years in equity investment, eight of those in her current job as a portfolio manager with JP Morgan



Asset Management. Michiko and her husband, Kento, Artsci’09, met during their frosh year at Queen’s. They married in 2013 and have two children.

2010s

2010

Jill Duncan, BCom, and her husband, **Warren Duncan, BCom’12**, welcomed twins Ford and Oliver, born 10 minutes apart, on Feb. 25. “We’re adjusting to a family of four (five with our fur baby!). It’s chaotic at times, but I wouldn’t have it any other way!” writes Jill, who works in asset management at Starlight Investments. Warren is the CFO of Filament Health.



Michael Heaven, EMBA, died at age 61 in his North Vancouver, B.C., home on May 3 after a five-year battle with cancer. Michael had a successful and diversified career, holding positions from automation engineer to CEO. He was the author of 20 patents spanning several fields. He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Roberta; daughters Laura, Marissa and Jessica; and his parents.

Vik Kohli, EMBA, tells us that he was promoted to vice-president of safety and reliability at Enbridge. In this role, Vik is responsible for company-wide safety, environment and lands services for both operations and projects, as well as establishing cross-company governance for functions delivered through each business unit.

Ashley Martin, BCom'10, MSc'12, was named one of 2021's "Best 40 Under 40 Professors" by *Poets & Quants*. An assistant professor of organizational behaviour at Stanford Graduate School of Business, Ashley was nominated by students for her empathy, passion and ability to make Zoom classes engaging.

2011



Roshan Kalra, MBA, Law'12, and his spouse welcomed their first child in January. "His name is Devyn Nath Singh Kalra, and I'm already jealous of his full head of hair!" Roshan writes. "It has been the greatest joy of my life to be a father and I look forward to watching his future success!" Roshan and his family live in Edmonton and he practises law as a partner with SB LLP. "I was fortunate

to join the firm in its infancy stages and have watched us triple in size in the last decade through strategic acquisitions and targeted recruitment," he explains.

Arshbir Malandra, AMBA, joined OSL Retail Services as the vice-president of data strategy and business analytics.



She has 15 years of analytics and management experience and her career includes working at XM Satellite Radio, Unilever and Rogers Communications. She says she's looking forward to driving OSL's data and analytics strategy forward.

Cameron Wickham, BCom, has been appointed executive vice-chair, CEO and corporate secretary of Spyder Cannabis Inc., a Canadian cannabis and vape retailer. Earlier this year, Cameron became a director, the CEO and corporate secretary of Prime City One Capital Corp., a capital pool company.

2012

Varun Bindal, MBA, says he was recently promoted to the role of managing director (partner) with Accenture Strategy.



Varun leads the company's business-strategy operations with resources clients in Western Canada. He lives in Calgary with his wife and 3-year-old son.

Rob Hoy, BCom, has joined Shiftsmart as vice-president of partner experience, where he is responsible for the recruitment, onboarding and engagement of workers on the Shiftsmart platform, which matches skilled workers with companies.

Colin Moore, MBA, Bsc(Eng)'10, has been appointed president of IM Exploration, following the company's acquisition of the private mining-exploration company Momentum Minerals, of which Colin was a co-founder and director.

Meena Rajput, MBA, got married in July. "It was a beautiful outdoor ceremony held only two days after Ontario opened up into Phase 3 of COVID restrictions," she writes, adding that some of her fellow alumni from the class of 2012 were in attendance. Meena and her husband also recently moved into a home in Mississauga, Ont. She works in consulting while pursuing a holistic-nutrition certification.



Kat Wong Too Yen, BCom, tells us that after six years at EQ Bank, she recently joined Perch (myperch.io), a real-estate technology startup in Toronto.



Kat heads up marketing efforts at the company, which, she says, recently closed a seed round of funding and is "now focusing on scaling." Perch also recently ranked No. 3 on the "Top 27 Hottest Toronto Startups" list of FoundersBeta.

2013



David Sinkinson, MBA, Artsci'11, let us know that he and his wife, Ana, welcomed the arrival of Sofia Rae Sinkinson on July 4. “Baby and mother are doing great!” he writes.

2014

Andrew Dawson, BCom, moved to Amsterdam in early 2020 as global-strategy manager for tea with Unilever. Now he manages a global brand expansion as the global Tazo brand manager. Andrew tells us that he recently returned from a two-part trip to Switzerland. The first part was spent training for his scheduled May 2022 climb of Denali, the highest mountain in North America. The second part of the trip took him to the summit of the Matterhorn. To date, Andrew has climbed three of the Seven Summits (the highest peaks on the seven continents): Kilimanjaro in Africa in 2010 with his dad, **Mike Dawson, BCom'78**, and family; Aconcagua in South America in 2017; Elbrus in Russia in 2019; and Mont Blanc in France in 2020. “People debate what the tallest mountain in Europe is, so I climbed both,” he says.

Lulu Liang, BCom, is now CEO of Girlboss, a multimedia company that creates content for women. “I’m thrilled to be leading Girlboss’s mission to help ambitious women achieve their own definition of success,” she says. Lulu was previously CEO of the global beauty brand Luxy Hair. She was on the cover of the fall 2020 issue of *Smith Magazine*.

Kayson Quach, MIB, writes: “I have always wanted to start an online business in the food industry. Therefore, as a side project, I built an e-commerce business selling Asian



groceries all across Canada named Haisue.” Then, last year, he and **Hany Audeh, MIB'14**, met for dinner and decided to become partners in the business, with the goal of turning Kayson’s side project into the leading e-commerce platform in Canada for Asian groceries. “Check out our website at Haisue.ca!” he adds.

2015



Maia Ingram, MBA, and her husband, Daniel, welcomed their daughter, Charlotte Sidney Ingram, on Dec. 23, 2020. The family lives in Port Elgin, Ont., and Maia tells us that

she enjoys spending time with Charlotte and working at Bruce Power on projects related to medical isotopes.



Desislava Nikolova, EMBA, writes: “Thrilled to share that I have joined Philips as the professional services and solutions delivery leader for Canada.” Desislava lives in Toronto.

Eguono Onoyowwi Omotayo, MBA, was recognized with the 2021 “Catalyst Honours Champions Emerging Leader Award” from Catalyst Canada for her commitments to advancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace and her community. Eguono is the director of product, enterprise client relationship management at CIBC and founder of Teo Consulting, a career-coaching company.



Sanchit Sachdev, MBA, has published his first book, *Kanya*, is a sci-fi novel that takes place in the 2050s in the midst of a world war. “It’s about the purposeful journey of a girl, from poverty to successes, who uses business management frameworks to navigate through the Algorithm of Nature,” explains Sanchit, who lives in Toronto and works



in the advisory and deals group at PwC. He's also busy building a health-care tech startup for the child surrogacy market that, he says, "helps donors and recipients for greater success in birthing new lives."

2017

Jason Banducci, MBA, has been appointed vice-president of corporate development for Nevada-based Millennial Precious Metals. Prior to joining Millennial, Jason was VP of investment banking at Stifel Financial Corp., where he covered the mining industry and advised clients on a wide range of strategic initiatives.

Leo Bailey, AMBA, shares that he became the full-time diversity and inclusion director at Interac Corp. in April. He also became a member of the 2021-2022 Queen's Black Alumni Chapter executive team, taking on the role of VP of finance, sponsorship and fundraising.



Katie Callery, MMIE, has launched Sunday the Label, a collection of maternity and nursing wear for modern motherhood. She

tells us that Sunday "designs stylish, thoughtful pieces for before, during and after your pregnancy journey. And all our piece are made right here in Canada." sondaythelabel.com

Scott Miranda, MBA, married Mandy Ghuman on July 17. With gathering restrictions lifted in Quebec, the pair (who met shortly after Scott finished his MBA and moved to Montreal) was able to celebrate with close friends and family. Scott is a delivery manger with Plusgrade, a travel-technology firm.

Brandon Villeneuve, BCom, and Christina Goodfellow were married at Ban Righ Hall on July 31. Brandon says they chose Ban Righ after seeing the hall beautifully

transformed for Comm Prom'17. The pandemic did not put a damper on their celebration and they were joined by a safe number of family and friends. The couple lives in Kingston where Brandon coaches fencing at Queen's and Christina works at Kingston General Hospital.

2018

Indu Brar, EMBA, has been appointed senior vice-president, customer-technology services, North and Central America for Accor. She's responsible for the hospitality group's technology strategy in the region. "It is an incredible opportunity to help our hotels thrive in an era driven by technology and empower our teams as we continue to reinvent and transform in order to anticipate, meet and exceed stakeholder expectations," she says.

Omid Oujani, EMBA, died on Feb. 26 at age 50. Omid spent the past 10 years working as a project manager and strategic partnership lead with Chevron. He is survived by his wife, Roya, parents and three sisters.



Li-Han Ruth Huang, EMBA, tells us that since graduating from Smith she has gotten married, moved into a new home and received a work

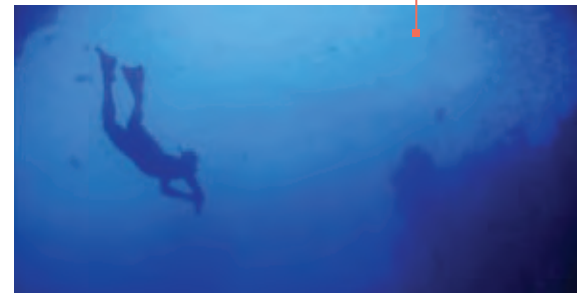
promotion. Most recently she got a new puppy, a Maltipoo named Boba.



2019

Mustafa Ansari, MMIE, shares that after graduating from Smith, he founded the first community-based Rotaract Club in Kingston. He was president of the club for one year and is now the co-district Rotaract representative for District 7040 and looks after Rotaract operations in eastern Ontario, western Quebec, northern New York and Nunavut.

Michael Benzinger, BCom, writes: "This summer I found myself with a bit of time off in between jobs. Peru had always been high on my bucket list and so I took the opportunity to visit Peru and Ecuador over a month in the summer. Highlights of the trip included watching the sun rise over Machu Picchu after a five-day hike through the Andes and snorkeling in the protected waters off the Galapagos Islands."



ALUMNI AWARDS

Three alumni were recently recognized with awards from the Queen's University Alumni Association. **Sharon Ranson, BCom'80**, was honoured with the Alumni Mentorship Award; **Heather Evans, BCom'16**, received the One to Watch Award; and **Jim Leech, MBA'73**, was given the Alumni Achievement Award—the association's highest honour.



Victoria Granova, AMBA, was recently honoured as one of *Canadian Security* magazine's "Top 10 Under 40". Victoria is a senior information security consultant

at CIBC responsible for major incident response. She is also the founder of the CyberToronto Conference, an annual conference for cybersecurity professionals.

Oghenemine Jarikre, MMIE, has launched a startup, Redeem Clothing Recycling. People who donate used clothing can earn rewards with participating partners. The company won the Rise Up Pitch Competition in the startup category, she was nominated for an RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Award and was accepted to the Fashion Zone at Ryerson University. Oghenemine lives in Toronto and says she spent the past summer "checking out restaurants, working on my startup and enjoying the not-so-great weather."

Emily Liu, BCom, has been working for Deloitte in Toronto since graduating and was recently promoted to consultant in June. At Deloitte, she's led the Google marketing practice and also facilitated numerous paint nights for the analysts and consultants club and the women's club within her practice. She and **Christine Chen, BCom'19**, started Wandercolors, which sells digital artwork based on Emily and Christine's exchange and travels. wandercolors.com

Carolina Lopez, MIB, tells us that after returning from studying and working abroad in Sydney, Australia, she changed careers and is now in the private investment sector in Ottawa where she works with startup and scale-up companies on fundraising. "Readjusting to life in Canada and undergoing a massive career change during a pandemic has made the last year and a half an eventful one. I am currently waiting for the keys

to a new home (first home!) for 2022 and have pending travels to Colombia and California with my boyfriend."

2020s

2020

Uche Ezike-Dennis, EMBA, died at age 45 on May 13 after being diagnosed with lung cancer in September 2020. She loved people, singing, salsa and the outdoors. She is survived by her husband, CI; her children, Ifeanyi, Ikenna and Izunna; and her parents.



Ika Janiszewski, MIB, is living in Spain and writes, "Excited to finish up my double degree at Esade in Barcelona with my fellow MIB colleagues Janane and Sakif (**Janane Nagasivakumaran** and **Sakif Chowdhury**, both MIB'20).

Michael Parker, MBA, is living in Toronto and was recently promoted to team lead in commercial business development for Salesforce, a position that will allow him to continue to hone his customer-facing skills while also mentoring young talent for the Fortune 500 company. "My Queen's MBA experience



gave me the confidence and professional tool box necessary to exceed in the tech world, something I never would have even considered pre-MBA."

2021



Cicely Dickson, EMBA, Artsci'12, and husband Graham welcomed a son, Charles Huck Dickson, on Jan. 11.

Daniel Benjamin Jolic, BCom, says he's been travelling around Yukon and northern B.C. while working as a transportation planner with the Yukon government. Daniel is returning to school this fall for his master in political management as the inaugural recipient of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission Scholarship in Political Management at Carleton University.





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FIRST PERSON

“We invited in people from the settlement sector who serve refugees, we invited in refugees, as well as people in the tech sector, to get a better sense of what is missing in the community,” Nasri says of the project’s beginnings.

There are more than 79 million refugees and displaced people worldwide today. With climate change, that figure will rise to 143 million by 2050, says the World Bank. Demand for Techfugees’ services will only go up.

Among the group’s recent activities: Techfugees Lebanon is connecting refugees with remote work opportunities. (In a post-COVID world, many jobs can be done from anywhere, after all.) In Nigeria, Techfugees is setting up an online market for displaced people to sell their handmade crafts. One of the biggest projects is called #TF4Women. Led by Techfugees in France, it helps refugee women land tech jobs in Italy, Greece and France. It’s supported by companies such as L’Oreal and Cisco.

In Toronto, Nasri loves making strategic connections across organizations and sectors. “I’ve always liked being creative in solving my own problems, in navigating life’s challenges,” he says. He was drawn to Smith’s Master of Management Innovation & Entrepreneurship (MMIE) program because of a desire to use his problem-solving skills on a bigger scale. Today, he works at one of Toronto’s Local Immigration Partnerships, where he brings people together to deliver better services to newcomers—from employment support to health-care access.

He’s also enjoying his adopted city. “In my neighbourhood, and all across Toronto, you’re exposed to so many different people, different experiences, different ways of doing things,” Nasri says. “I was in the library one day and talking with someone about our immigration experiences. One of us was here for just a few years and the other for more than 20 years. So, we got to see all that we have in common, as well as how things have changed over the years.” ■

Making Connections

Mounir Nasri, MMIE’20, Artsci’19, is using technology to help refugees make a new home in Canada.

By Andrea Gunn

Six years ago, Mounir Nasri came to Canada as a refugee from Syria. He escaped that country’s civil war and still recalls landing in Canada, his new home. “There was definitely a lot of uncertainty. But it was exciting. It was a new opportunity to move forward in life.”

In between Syria and Canada, Nasri studied computer science in Lebanon. There, he heard of a fascinating organization called “Techfugees” that uses technology to help refugees. Founded in 2015 in response to the European refugee crisis, Techfugees now has chapters around the world.

Thanks to Nasri, one of those chapters is in Toronto. Techfugees Canada, which

Nasri co-founded, develops solutions to benefit newcomer-refugees trying to find their way. “The way I see it,” he says, “technology is not the main solution to this complex problem. Rather, it can be a way of making processes easier, specifically for refugees.”

Techfugees Canada recently launched a housing network pilot project with Romero House, a Toronto settlement organization. Together they’re creating a digital service to connect refugee claimants to housing. By identifying people willing to provide accommodations, Techfugees’ volunteers will populate a vetted list for Romero House’s clients to find places to live.

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