Last Dance With Calypso

EMILY ANDERSON KELLY ’10, ’17 FORGED A CLOSE BOND WITH THE NATIONAL AQUARIUM’S LATE, BELOVED SEA TURTLE
Cleveland Doesn’t Only Rock

Erik Mann ’96 and the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society introduce public school students to the beauty of classical music.
The Feb. 2 death of Calypso, the beloved 500-pound green sea turtle who charmed visitors at her National Aquarium home for nearly 20 years, was big news in Baltimore. But it was personal for aquarist Emily Anderson Kelly ’10, ’17, who hand-fed Calypso carrots and Brussels sprouts. “We’re all at a loss and utterly devastated,” she said. “She was my favorite animal to take care of.”

Staff photographer Lauren Castellana ’13 captured the cover image of Kelly and Calypso just three weeks before Calypso died. The University Photographers’ Association of America awarded the photo third place in February’s General Features and Illustrations category.
President’s Letter

I’m writing this letter on St. Patrick’s Day. You’re likely reading it in late April or early May. Those two dates are mere weeks apart, yet the space between them is significant. The coronavirus pandemic will be one of those “where were you” moments of our generation. For all of us, Towson University will be part of the “where.”

Whether you’re a student or alum, faculty or staff, neighbor or partner, TU is a part of your “where.” And in the midst of such upheaval in our everyday lives, we are fortunate to have such dedicated faculty and staff, all of whom remain steadfast in supporting our academic mission and our students’ success.

We all can agree these are exceptional times for our university, our state, our nation and our global community. While this moment requires some physical distance between us, we are all going through this together—as TU and as a global community. We are all bound together by this moment and forever will be. I’m balanced by how the TU community is sitting each other in this most important time, the resolve of our faculty and staff and their dedication to inclusively serving our student population, hearing their concerns and working to support them beyond the classroom.

Towson University has been here for 154 years, and through that time, it has faced countless challenges. While this one has been unprecedented, our community will do what it always does: unite and persevere.

So, as I sit here at an unusually sparse campus on March 17, looking to the future like many of you—unsure of where it will lead us by summer—I’m drawn to an Irish proverb: “Learning is the desire of the wise.”

In the pursuit of learning and education, I hope that in late spring we are all free to reflect. What can we learn from social distancing, telework, distance learning and the interruption of our societal norms?

For me, it was that even in trying times, TU is a place that truly encourages the dynamic growth and inclusivity of success of each individual. And it was in watching the Class of 2020, challenged to the very end of their journey at TU. The “where” in your story now includes TU. As you pursue your “why,” there’s a whole community behind you.

Go Tigers!

KIM SCHATEL
TOWSON UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

TREASURES

A Rockin’ Good Time

Say you’re walking through campus, and a pop of color catches your eye. Closer inspection reveals a rock painted bright yellow with the words “You are my sunshine.”

How could you not feel just a bit more cheerful?

That’s the goal of Towson Rocks, a student club whose members paint inspirational designs on rocks they then hide around campus and the local community. People who find the rocks can keep them or redistribute them. Each rock is labeled with the club’s name and the finder can send a picture to TowsonRocks on Instagram. Brooke Foundas, her sister Nichole and their best friend Victoria Nicholson founded the club after picking up the hobby during their days at Tuscarora High School in Frederick, Maryland.

“Our goal is to spread kindness and positivity throughout campus and the community,” says Nicholson, the club’s vice president. That message is resonating with students. Towson Rocks was named TU’s Best Student Group by The Towerlight in January.

Every other week 15 to 30 TU students paint rocks while listening to music and chatting. Fall 2019 was Towson Rocks’ first semester as a club, and it turned out the jovial atmosphere and eco-friendly paint created more than ornate rocks.

“Towson Rocks was named TU’s Best Student Group by The Towerlight in January. Every other week 15 to 30 TU students paint rocks while listening to music and chatting. Fall 2019 was Towson Rocks’ first semester as a club, and it turned out the jovial atmosphere and eco-friendly paint created more than ornate rocks.

I think one of our most heartwarming stories is when Brooke painted a rainbow rock,” Nicholson says. A girl on campus found it and shared her story through Instagram about how her sister was part of the LGBTQ+ community and that she wanted to give the rock to her sister to support her.”

We asked the Foundases and Nicholson to paint several rocks specifically for this issue, and much to our delight, they agreed. Photos of the magazine-themed rocks can be found on some of the following pages.
Welcome to TU

Patrick T. McQuown will lead TU in entrepreneurship and innovation. McQuown provides a strategic vision and direction for entrepreneurship activities at the university and oversees the StarUp at the Amaryllis as well as the TU Incubator. The role is part of the Division of Strategic Partnerships & Applied Research.

Launched Leaders

Twenty-five young women—one from each Baltimore County public high school—compete for the first, year-long cohort of the Outstanding Young Women Leaders program spearheaded by TU Presidential Scholar Nancy Grasmick ’61 and the Women’s Leadership Collective. The Outstanding Young Women Leaders program will provide leadership activities and events on campus and in the community. Each participant will meet and interact with TU administrators, faculty and students and connect with a female corporate mentor. To be eligible for the program, the young women had to meet academic, leadership and community service requirements and be nominated by their principal. Members of the TU Women’s Leadership Collective selected a finalist from each high school after reviewing applications and school transcripts and conducting interviews.

An Innovative, Strategic and Collaborative Professional

Vernon Hurte is the new vice president of student affairs. Hurte—who will report to Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Melanie Persault—serves as the university’s chief student affairs officer, a member of the president’s cabinet and an officer of the university. He provides university-wide leadership on all-inclusive services and programs that promote student engagement and success. Hurte brings more than 18 years of experience in higher education to this leadership role. He joins TU from Iowa State University, where he served as the associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students from 2017 to 2020. At Iowa State, some of his efforts included leadership of 16 departments/functional areas and campus-wide initiatives. He also served for five years as the assistant to the vice president and senior associate dean of students at The College of William & Mary.

Mr. Secretary

Greg Slater ’97 might just hate traffic more than you. Governor Larry Hogan named Slater secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation in late 2019. Previously, Slater served as the Maryland Department of Transportation in late 2019.

Capital Pride

Students, faculty, staff and alumni joined President Kim Schatzel and other university officials on Feb. 25 in Annapolis for the 21st annual Tiger Pride Day. The event connects students to key decision-making committees from the Senate and House to make concerns known on a state level. It also gives students and other members of the TU community a chance to network with legislators and their staffers at a luncheon. Tiger Pride Day is open to the entire TU community.

A Caring Delegation

Today’s College of Health Professions (CHP) students are tomorrow’s healthcare professionals. They get a little extra practice when they provided free health tips and screenings to Maryland delegates in Annapolis in February. The students offered gaps in strength testing, CPR demonstrations, gait speed timing, hearing protection techniques and tourniquet use activities for lawmakers and their staff. CHP Dean Lisa Plowfield and faculty also met with lawmakers to show students’ work as well as CHP's capabilities and qualities.

Sweet Dreams

Cleaving her career path has led to a taste of success for Allison Igwe ’12.

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MISPRONUNCIATING “TOWSON”

Professor Karen Fallon, graduate program director, speech-language pathology, explains why our seemingly simple name is a tongue twister to so many.

“Towson” is essentially trying to figure out, “What is this? I’ve never heard this before.” When people hear the word “Towson” and then try to pronounce it, they will often say “TOWN-sin.” That influence of what’s coming up is called assimilation, which means that a sound becomes more similar to those around it kind of like when you assimilate into a society. You make changes based on what is around you.

When people hear the word “Towson” and then try to pronounce it, they will often say “TOWN-sin,” essentially trying to figure out, “What is this? I’ve never heard this before.”

For example, if a person came across the word “murse” when reading and they have never seen it before, they might think of a similar word they do know such as “nurse” and use it to help them read the new word by swapping the first letters.

When people read an unknown word, they often do what’s called analogizing. We try to find a match to a word we already know. When we read a word that we’ve never heard before, there’s a high likelihood that anybody who has never heard the name “Towson” too many times to count.

Usually if they’re from the mid-Atlantic region or Baltimore, they’re fine. But for anybody who has never heard the name before, there’s a high likelihood that they’re going to mispronounce it.

My last name is pronounced “FAL-zen” in foreign words or unfamiliar names.

For example, if a person came up and talked to him in that particular way.

One of the attributes of a great teacher is the ability to build quality relationships with students and recognize each for their uniqueness and talent. I think in that respect, Patrick has taught me better than anybody else why it’s so important to build a network and see the members as real people you care about.

He’s also taught me about developing self-advocacy and persistence. If you don’t get it right the first time, you don’t give up. You have to dig in and try again or you seek out help where it’s needed. You have to dig in and try again or you seek out help where it’s needed.

When I was looking at colleges, I picked Indiana University for its business program. My dad has worked in all aspects of business, and I was excited to go to a university with a great business school. Sophomore year I decided to take Intro to Special Education to fill an open slot in my schedule. It was through that class that I met Susan Klein, an education professor who became my undergraduate advisor when I switched my major to secondary special education.

Susan encouraged me and was flexible in helping me take the passion I have for advocacy and education and channel it to help students with disabilities and their families prepare for the transition from high school to a meaningful life.

It’s not just me who has benefitted by learning from Patrick. Each of my siblings has pursued some avenue that links to working with individuals with disabilities. My sister works for an agency that provides support to families who have children with disabilities. My older brother is a pediatric ear, nose and throat specialist providing service and support to individuals with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

Patrick leads by example, and we have learned a great deal from him.

This winter break I was home for the first time, you don’t give up. You have to dig in and try again or you seek out help where you need it. You have to be very humble as a teacher.

If you’ve built professional relationships, you know who to pursue to help you to get better. You also know how to step back and say, “Well, that didn’t work well. Let’s try it another way.”

But teaching isn’t just about experience; it’s also about using evidence-based practices. I really value that I can combine my personal experience and passion with my strong pedagogical foundation to work with students at the undergraduate level, inspire them and help them pursue what they want to do in his life.

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I started realizing that, just like wine or craft beer, there are a lot of varieties and differences in coffee. I started working as a CPA downtown in 2012, and I became fascinated with the idea of small-batch, craft product. I met my business partner Sarah Walker, who had been roasting coffee on a small scale. We opened in August 2018.

Q: Where did the name come from?
A: The name Vent is the idea of having a time and place to let the s*** out of the day and take in something better. We want this space to encourage people to have a conversation with a friend or take a pause for some self-care.

Q: Where do you source your beans?
A: Colombia and Rwanda are two of my personal favorites. As much as possible we establish direct relationships with the growers. We’re looking for high-quality coffees that are sustainably grown and where fair wages are paid to all people involved in the supply chain.

Q: When did you first start drinking coffee?
A: With my parents in the ’80s. It was mainly Folgers and Maxwell House, which did not taste like anything that I wanted to drink.

Q: So when did your love affair with coffee start?
A: It really wasn’t until I was an adult that

Q: What makes an actual bean or seed high quality?
A: Well, it’s complicated. A lot has to do with the altitude needed to maintain mild temperature for slow growth and a denser seed. With temperatures changing worldwide we’re seeing more varietals susceptible to pests and disease, so finding that right balance without using chemicals is the key. Even at the best farms it’s impossible to have a perfect harvest, so the beans have to be sorted after picking to remove defects. We only buy coffee rated as specialty grade as opposed to commodity grade.

Q: What percentage of your business is supplying other businesses with coffee?
A: Our wholesale is about 20% of our business. That’s the area we’re looking to grow. Right now, we’re roasting about 500 pounds a month for ourselves and others. With our current equipment and floor plan, we have the room to grow to 4,000 pounds a month.

Q: The Guinness Open Gate Brewery near BWI Airport is one of your customers?
A: A friend who works for Guinness recommended us to their head brewer. She came, tried our coffee, loved it and wanted to work with us, so for a year and a half now they’ve been ordering for collaboration beers, like coffee stouts, and for serving coffee in their taproom and restaurant.

Q: Have you tried any of the beers?
A: Yeah, all of them. My personal favorite was a double coffee stout because it was nice and strong with extra coffee and 8.8% ABV. It was so smooth and chocolatey. It’s really an honor that of all the coffee companies they could pick from, they chose to work with us.
Think you like football more than Darius Victor ’17? Consider this, “Blacking it, playing it—I love everything about it,” he says. “I love the fact that I’m good at it. The physicality of it. It’s the best thing on this earth.”

Victor, who describes himself as a “smashmouth kind of guy,” is making the most of his opportunity to play for a living. A 5-foot-6-inch, 226-pound firecracker of a running back, Victor spent the winter and early spring bulldozing New York City’s电子媒体 and film.

“Watching it, playing it—I love everything about it,” he says. “I love the fact that I’m good at it. That you have is a blessing.”

Victor chose to play at TU in part because of the program’s family atmosphere. He rushed for 3,309 yards and 41 touchdowns while earning his degree in electronic media and film.

“Playing in a regular season game, he signed with the Guardians. Whatever his future holds, Victor knows it can’t be any tougher than his past. “I’m living my dream again,” he says. “I always wanted to be a professional football player and the XFL has given me an opportunity to do that. You can only control what you can control. Put your best foot forward, and be the best person that you can be at that moment. Everything that you have is a blessing.”

There are no jackets involved—Members Only. green or otherwise—but four basketball players joined an exclusive club this season. Nukiya Mayo posted 22 points in a loss to Iowa in November, while Keonna Jones hit a third-quarter jumper in a win over the College of Charleston on Feb. 16 to secure their spots. Q. Murry became the third Tiger to do so when she tallied 13 points in a win at Hofstra. On the men’s side, Brian Folbi’s layup in a loss to William & Mary made him the 27th men’s basketball player to score 1,000 points in two years or fewer.
hey start arriving two hours early, flocking from up to 50 miles away—a testament to the magic of this place and the dearth of others like it. A few people want to be the first to play Mario Kart or Jenga after the doors open at 6 p.m., but most are just excited to be there—after all, it’s the first time they’ve seen each other in two months. Those without a $35 laminated membership card line-up to buy a ticket before they sell out, and familiar faces greet new ones by asking politely but pointedly, “Who are you?” Some people carry bags of chips and pretzels or six-packs of soda (booze is prohibited, but thank goodness, Star Wars gear is not). Others clutch drawing supplies and chessboards that they’ll set up in a quiet corner.

Which isn’t going to be easy to find on this late February evening. The steady stream of people who step off the elevator on the second floor of Towson University’s Institute of Well-Being—the place to be on Friday nights, judging by the gaggle of mostly young men packed into the waiting room—are met with chatter and chuckles. And a camaraderie that envelops them like a cozy weighted blanket. “We’re all just here to enjoy the atmosphere and the company,” says Chris Hicks, 37, a neatly trimmed mustache framing his 100-watt smile. Like the 50 other people who’ve gathered at the Hussman Center for Adults with Autism, Hicks is on the autism spectrum. Diagnosed in 1995, the Pikesville man has been coming to the social group since it began meeting twice a month in 2012. “The hardest part of having autism is, sometimes it’s hard to meet people,” he says.
CHRIS HICKS, 37

It’s ironic that while more people are being diagnosed with autism than ever before—7.8 million people, or 1% of the global population—they often feel completely alone.

One of the most commonly diagnosed developmental disorders in the United States, autism is characterized by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors. Even as the number of people diagnosed is increasing—1 in 59 kids is now on the spectrum, up from 1 in 160 just 20 years ago, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—autistic people are four times more likely to experience loneliness than the general public. Of the 900 autistic young people surveyed in 2018 by the United Kingdom-based National Autistic Society, 79% said they felt socially isolated, the deleterious mental and physical effects of which are akin to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, researchers said.

During a 12-month period, almost 46% of young adults on the spectrum never got together with friends, according to another study published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, and half of them never received a phone call or were invited out to socialize.

That the Hussman Center, which opened its doors in 2008, offers such a simple antidote for alienation and exclusion—providing a safe, welcoming space for autistic people of all abilities and their neurological peers to engage—is nothing short of extraordinary.

“A lot of people don’t understand autism; my dad didn’t understand for a long time,” says Ryan Sammons, a soft-spoken 29-year-old who is partially deaf. “They think because I’m not really social and don’t always understand them I don’t want to interact.”

“But when I’m here, I’m not alone,” says the Baltimorean, “and that makes me feel happy. Everyone has a desire to belong, but connectedness and community—long defined through a narrow neurological lens—take many forms. Sometimes it’s a touch, a smile, a silent game of tic-tac-toe, a conversation or just the comfort that proximity provides. It’s being seen, which is just as powerful as being heard.”

“When they’re at the Hussman Center,” says Sharon Glennen, director of the Institute for Well-Being, “everyone belongs.”

There are two ideologies when it comes to autism, both of which stem from a desire to improve the lives of people on the spectrum—but in very different ways. Some see autism as a set of symptoms to be fixed, cured, erased from the gene pool. Others argue that neurological variation, like racial, ethnic and gender diversity, add to the richness of the human tapestry. They view perceived weaknesses as strengths in disguise and believe that the unique writing in autism can inspire scientific discoveries, works of art and innovative solutions to some of our world’s most pressing problems.

“Neurodiversity,” a term that emerged in the late 1980s but is only now beginning to seep into discussions of diversity and inclusion, is at the heart of the Hussman Center’s mission: to build a more equitable, empathetic society that embraces people who think, learn and communicate differently.

“We are looking at autism through a social justice lens. We aren’t denying the difficulties that people on the spectrum face, but we [content] that many of those barriers stem from attitudes that we still need to change,” says Zosia Zako, manager of programs and education at the center, who also on the spectrum. “It isn’t about fixing the person, it’s about changing the social architecture.”

At TU, that starts with students. This term, 70 students representing myriad majors, from deal studies to business to anthropology, are enrolled in Zaks’ Individuals on the Autism Spectrum course. The class fulfills the university’s diversity requirement and is mandated for some programs, like the disability studies minor. The most promising students are also recruited for the College Autism Peer Support program, which pairs TU students on the spectrum with an undergraduate mentor.

Students must complete 20 hours of service learning. They help out at the center’s weekly classes for autistic adults, including art, cooking, fitness, robotics and stress management, which have drawn nearly 1,200 participants since 2016. Students are also required to attend at least two Friday night social groups.

Their charge—listening, learning, engaging, empowering—starts with becoming comfortable with people on the spectrum. Some, like freshman Corey Sparks, whose younger brother is autistic, jump right in, while others dip one toe at a time into what
and superheroes like Buzz Lightyear, the Ghostbusters.

Ryan Sammons

history, country participating and enjoying themselves that even if people don’t connect or think they’ll feel sorry for them. “Some think for a few, it was a nervous one.

Inspired by the people she’s met at the Hussman Center, I was talking to Sam about his challenges, but—I know this sounds strange, he gave me a gentle nod. “You have something important to tell me,” my son said.

When I told Sam that, due to a childcare issue, I had to take him to the social group one day, he gave me a gentle nod. “You have something important to tell me,” my son said.

Emily Freas’s first experience with people on the spectrum came in high school, where she worked with a nonverbal classmate. “I was hesitant at first,” says the occupational therapist major. “I wanted to help him navigate his challenges, but—I know this sounds strange, he gave me a gentle nod. “You have something important to tell me,” my son said.

“I have something important to tell you,” my son said.

As Rosemary Davis of Bel Air, Maryland, says of her sons Eric, 28, and Nick, 25: “They’re accepted for who they are and don’t have to worry about being seen as ‘off.’”

About 40% have average to above-average intelligence, though some don’t make eye contact, others do not engage in playful, imaginative play. A relative newbie, having joined the Hussman Center’s social club just last fall, she was ushered in two ways: her gender traits are four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than females, according to the CDC and her therapist. An accomplished trumpet player, Baer was agitated before the performance, snapping at her mom—“My son’s a groupie and loves him.”

Unemployment, learning disabilities and comorbid conditions. And make no mistake, those struggles are very real for people on the spectrum and those who love them.

“Different, Not Deficient”

BY ADRIENNE FRANK

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“He’s a social club!?” she asked curiously but barely conversed as we sat in traffic.

“Buddy, being different is your superpower,” said Christopher, as Owen lit up and beamed.

“I have something important to tell you,” my son said.

The audience averted a bust, then engaged with apples as Baer, beaming, welcomed her nose with satisfaction, pride and joy Molly Baer was among friends.

Adrienne Frank is an author and editor who lives in Bel AIR, Maryland.
A PEEK AT SARAH ELFRETH’S CALENDAR reveals a cacophony of colors. Blocks of color-coded events dominate each day, often overlapping.

From her desk in Annapolis’ Miller Senate Office Building, the Maryland state senator’s chief of staff, Johntel Greene, rattles off the calendar system with practiced efficiency. Elfreth ’10 will definitely be attending events in green. Purple indicates community-focused events. Yellow, a hold on her time. Days from January to April, when the Maryland General Assembly is in session, are the most packed. Typically, Elfreth starts her day around 8 a.m. with 15-minute meetings and stays busy with session and committee meetings until well into the evening. She often eats dinner with her fellow legislators. But scrolling back in the calendar shows there is rarely any relief.

Take one Monday last July. Elfreth kicked off the day drinking coffee with Anne Arundel County’s new fire chief, Trisha Wolford, then toured Anne Arundel Medical Center to discuss alleviating overcrowding in the emergency department, attended a farewell lunch with her summer interns, then hopped on a conference call on how to better support small businesses in Maryland. There’s no offseason in Maryland politics.

Just 30 years old when she was sworn into office in 2019, Elfreth is the youngest woman ever elected to the Maryland Senate, has plenty of time to make her mark in Annapolis. But she’s not the patient type.

“How did I get here?” The question echoed through Elfreth’s mind as she took her place in the Senate chamber for the first time on Jan. 9, 2019. But it was just a moment of temporary incredulity. Elfreth’s journey to public office was marked by years of dedication, from her time as an Honors student at Towson University to her campaign for state Senate, during which she knocked on more than 12,000 doors to talk with District 30 residents.

“I didn’t have an ounce of imposter syndrome when I got here, because I worked so hard to get here,” she says. “That also felt like, now that I’m here, I’ve got to prove myself. I only have four years to make an impact. What am I going to do with those four years?”

She’s off to an ambitious start. Her first year in office, eight of the nine bills Elfreth introduced.
“I didn’t have an ounce of impostor syndrome when I got here, because I worked so hard to get here.”

**Pamela Wood,** a political reporter for The Baltimore Sun, notes that it likely aided the success of Elfreth’s political career. “She really benefited from having that mentorship,” Wood says, “and later working with him on legislation, provided Elfreth with valuable experience running a successful campaign and working across the aisle.”

“I got here, because I stayed in touch. ‘Her path, watching her blossom, reminds me of the value of being a teacher,’ McCartney says. ‘It reminds me that when I invest my time, my energy, my efforts into teaching, it’s going to bear fruit with Towson students. And she would be at the pinnacle of that. Watching her career develop, it’s just been very professionally rewarding’.”

Elfreth received a political science degree from the University of Maryland. She is the first woman to serve as a state senator from Maryland and the youngest person ever elected to the state Senate. She is also the first openly gay person to serve in the state legislature and the first woman to be appointed as a justice to the Maryland Court of Appeals. Elfreth is a member of the Congressional Women’s Caucus and the first openly transgender member of the Maryland General Assembly. She is the first openly transgender person to serve in elected office in Maryland and the first openly transgender person to serve as a state senator in the United States. She is a member of the New Riders for Health and the Baltimore Cannabis Justice Network. She is a co-founder of the Transgender Democratic Caucus of Maryland and a member of the Baltimore chapter of the National Organization for Women. She is a member of the Baltimore chapter of the National Organization for Women. She is a member of the Baltimore chapter of the National Organization for Women. She is a member of the Baltimore chapter of the National Organization for Women. She is a member of the Baltimore chapter of the National Organization for Women. She is a member of the Baltimore chapter of the National Organization for Women.
“Instead of sitting in my quiet office, I actually find Elfreth hanging out at Galway Bay, an Irish bar and restaurant on Maryland Avenue. ‘For the most part, I try to take Saturdays and Sundays during the session to rest and recharge, which is difficult because there are always really great community events going on.’”

“She has a standing appointment with her therapist. ‘There’s a kind of weight that this position requires,’ she says. ‘To do it well is to feel and empathize with a lot of different people, and want to make everybody happy. In a place where everything is almost zero sum, it’s very difficult to achieve that.’ Sitting down with an impartial party has allowed her to talk through the pressures and competing interests inherent in the job. ‘It’s something you get used to, having to always wear makeup to the grocery store because I might run into somebody there,’ she says. ‘It can be funny, you know, when someone honks at me from across the street and waves. Or asks to take a selfie with me or have a Guinness and write at the bar,’ she says.

Elfreth’s success is a product of hard work and key mentorships. With that in mind, she makes a point to give back to young people. ‘Almost every class in the fall, Elfreth’s Honors Public Policy and Advocacy class in the fall,’ she says. ‘It was exciting to discuss my political ambitions with her.’

With Elfreth as a professor, Bundy says she learned how to effectively communicate and work with delegates. ‘Almost every class she would bring guest speakers, and she taught us how to advocate for issues I’m passionate about.’

Bundy presented a legislative bill at the Maryland Honors Council Conference in February that she wrote in Elfreth’s class on how to use restorative measures in schools to help dismantle the school-to-prison pipelines. It was just one of the many opportunities gained through Elfreth’s mentorship of which Bundy took advantage.

“Her class challenged me to think outside of the box and enhanced my critical thinking, writing and analysis skills. I’ll continue to challenge myself to become the best version of myself through what I learned.”

When a group of Boy Scouts visited the State House in January, one asked how legislators get bill ideas, and when they know if an idea is good. “I tried to explain that there’s really no such thing as a silly idea, as long as you can convince your colleagues that it’s the right thing to do,” Elfreth says. “A parent came up to me a couple of days later at an event and said that her son was talking about that idea on the car ride home.”

These are the types of small but meaningful interactions that inspire Elfreth. “Whether they’re 8 years old or 80, I’m only as valuable to my community as I am at listening to them,” she says. “So I try my best to meet with as many young people as possible and get ideas from them about what they think I should be working on, and get them inspired to try to solve problems in their community. I talk about how I started as a young person, too, and how everybody has a role to play in democracy.”

Rebecca Knecht is a communications strategist in University Marketing and Communications and Baltimore magazine contributing writer.
The Cleveland Classical Guitar Society introduces public school students to music.

The lesson begins with a review of proper posture. "Think of yourself as a puppet on a string, and the thread continues through your neck, the top of your head and goes all the way to the ceiling," says the teacher, Erik Mann ‘96.

The student, 14-year-old Marcello Cirilo, is clutching a guitar, his eyes trained intently on Mann. He arches his back and puffs his chest forward.

Next, Mann asks Cirilo to play a scale, which he executes flawlessly. "Wow, that's fantastic," says Mann, who's genuinely impressed.

The two are sitting in a room in the Salvation Army in East Cleveland, Ohio. The building, a shiny jewel nestled in a neighborhood that's seen better times, sits seven miles east of the Rock ‘N Roll Hall of Fame, whose members include legendary guitarists Duane Allman, George Harrison and Jimi Hendrix.

They played classic rock. This is classical guitar.

Cirilo sports a patchy mustache he began to grow two years ago, right around the time he started taking free lessons through the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society’s (CCGS) education program. His calm demeanor matches the style of music with which he’s become enamored. Next, he plays a hauntingly beautiful—but not mistake-free—version of “Spanish Romance,” a staple of the genre.

“How were you able to memorize it so well?” asks Mann, the executive director of the CCGS since 2009.

WORDS BY MIKE UNGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT SHIFFLER
Growing up in Burtonsville, Maryland, Mann struggled to form friendships. "I didn't have many social skills," he says. "I was a strong student but definitely ended up slipping by because I really didn't have any way to connect with other people. I was starting to feel the wrong crowd a little bit. When I started taking guitar lessons, the ability to play with other people, or play by myself and kind of close myself off from the world, saved me."

He was drawn to the classical style of guitar because of the variety of moods and emotions in the music. "Every basic tenet of human existence lives within classical music," he says. After earning his music degree from TU, he taught at some music stores and performed at restaurants and weddings. In 2000, he enrolled in the Cleveland Institute of Music, from which he earned a master's degree. "Cleveland has one of the greatest art scenes in the country," says Mann, who fell in love with the city in which he later fell in love with his wife Ellen. "We've got one of the world's best orchestras, one of the country's best art museums. The parks system here is amazing. It's pretty comparable to Baltimore in a lot of ways."

In 2009, he started running the CCGS as a volunteer. Under his stewardship, it has grown such that now he's one of three full-time employees at the nonprofit, which also has full- and part-time teachers. One of them is Andy Poxon '15, who taught Cirilo and Katie Stubblefield, the youngest face transplant recipient in the United States. "A lot of our students have unique family situations," Poxon says. "The guitar gives them an escape, a way of expressing themselves and something to focus on."

The education program was born in 2012 after Mann and others noticed an alarming lack of opportunities for kids in Cleveland to make music. "We've got the second-highest child poverty rate of cities that are 250,000 residents or larger," he says. "The schools mostly don't present opportunities for kids to learn instruments. The kids have a whole lot of barriers. There's the cost of lessons, the cost of transportation. Basically, we exist to remove all those barriers."

The guitar society provides free lessons and equipment to over 600 middle school students at 18 sites around the city. Cirilo, who listens to Spanish music with a dash of Metallica thrown in, is one of them. "Mr. Erik invited me one day and I started seeing other people play," the eighth-grader says. "I started liking the guitar more and more. I started getting better. Then he took interest in me and started giving me lessons. I was confused at first, but then he was showing me the notes and keys, so I started liking it. I started hearing different sounds."

The impact on students often goes far beyond music. Andrea Moss is assistant principal at Luis Munoz Main Dual Language Academy, where there's a CCGS residency. "We've seen grades improve, we've seen behaviors improve," she says in a video produced by Cleveland Metropolitan School District. "We've seen social and emotional development just from participating in this program. They're learning to work together more. You see relationship building. Kids are talking more, sharing more. Discussing music in a different way. We've seen great strides.
in attendance. We’ve seen academic growth, because there is a correlation between learning to play a musical instrument and growing in mathematics and science.”

Shirley Dillard has noticed that growth in her grandson, Marcello. She credits his classical guitar lessons for an improvement in his attitude.

“He was headed down the wrong path,” she says. “When he took interest in the guitar, his focus changed. He was much happier. It’s played a big part in him becoming the young man that he’s becoming. He even practices on his own. I’ll tell him only to practice for about an hour because he’ll get a headache if he practices too much. Sometimes I have to tell him to put it down. I’ve even seen an improvement in his grades since he’s been so involved.”

The CCGS, which also sponsors a renowned concert series in Cleveland, receives money for its education program through grants and private donations. Its top funder is the Cleveland Foundation, the first organization of its kind in the world. Founded in 1914, its arts mastery initiative aims to fund organizations, like the CCGS, that provide training for the city’s kids in music, dance, theater and other arts.

“I like to say some organizations have magic, and the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society has magic,” says Courtenay Barton, program manager for arts and culture at the Cleveland Foundation. “They’ve figured out how to reach youth, how to instruct them in a way that they demonstrate rapid progress. They become engaged. Youth are, perhaps somewhat contrary to what people may think, good judges of character. I think the reason youth respond to Erik Mann is because he has that sincerely naturally, as well as knowing his craft. Putting those two things together is what I think makes the magic.”

Cirilo is soft spoken, which mirrors the way he plays. But don’t mistake that for a lack of confidence. He’s measured in the way he approaches the guitar, letting out a slight chuckle when he makes a mistake rather than becoming discouraged.

Mann asks Cirilo to play “Spanish Romance” once more, this time with rubato, a form of slowing down the tempo to impart more emotion into the piece.

“To the listener this sounds very expressive,” Mann tells him. “It may take a while to work out, but if you try it for a bit you’ll be able to do it.” Cirilo says okay, meticulously places eight of his fingers on the guitar in the correct positions, then proceeds to play it perfectly.
Bill Glauber '79
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

BEST GOLF COURSE
Brown Deer Park
THEATER
Pabst Theater
MUSEUM
Discovery World
MUSIC FESTIVAL
Summerfest
SWANKY BAR
The Outsider

When Bill Glauber moved to Milwaukee in 2005, he had a feeling of déjà vu. “I thought, ‘I’ve seen this before. Isn’t this Baltimore?’” he recalls. “It’s the same kind of town. The people are great, it’s easy to get around.”

“I covered his funeral. It was held at the Riverside Theater, and they had an open bar. That tells you about them.”

When Bill Glauber moved to Milwaukee in 2005, he had a feeling of déjà vu. “I thought, ‘I’ve seen this before. Isn’t this Baltimore?’” he recalls. “It’s the same kind of town. The people are great, it’s easy to get around. Winter only lasts from April through March.”

“That slight exaggeration is definitely more Wisconsin than Maryland, and, in fact, Glauber, a former Baltimore Sun reporter who now writes for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, says the Cream City actually offers many great outdoor activities. “If you’re coming to Milwaukee in the late spring or summer, bring your bathing suit and your golf clubs,” he says. “Brandyard Beach is right on Lake Michigan. There’s volleyball, a tiki bar, a custard stand. If you like cold water you can swim.”

“The expert on all things beer is Kathy Flanagan of our paper,” Glauber says. “Her recommendation is Lakefront Brewery. She calls it the most Milwaukee experience you can have. Tours run all day, they’re hilarious and the beer pours generous.”

“You’ll need some food to balance that buzz. The term ‘Milwaukee cuisine’ no longer means just brats, though you’ll find hundreds of tailgaters grilling the sausages in the parking lots outside Miller Park before Brewers baseball games. Bartolotta’s Lake Park Bistro, part of the family’s restaurant empire, is one of Glauber’s favorites. “Joe Bartolotta died in April 2019,” he says. “I covered his funeral. It was held at the Riverside Theater, and they had an open bar. That tells you about them.”

And the city in which he lived.

“Save the Date
Be sure to mark your calendar for Homecoming 2020, which will take place Saturday, Oct. 17. The Alumni Association canceled several events during the coronavirus pandemic. For a current list of upcoming events, visit alumni.towson.edu/events."

Tiger Mentor Network
Connecting for career development just got easier: Now that Tiger Mentor Network has launched, alumni can serve as mentors to current students and seek professional advice from fellow graduates. Participants can choose their level of commitment and select preferred areas of engagement. If you are interested in sharing your own professional experience or looking for guidance from someone in a similar field, visit mentor.towson.edu to get started.

Alumni News

Becoming a Social Tiger
Are you one of Towson University’s biggest fans? Do you use social media—whether Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn? Become a Social Tiger and you could be rewarded for sharing the latest TU news and information with friends and family.

Joining this passionate circle of alumni and TU community advocates is quick and simple. As a member you will hear firsthand about university and alumni news and upcoming events. By sharing information on your social media channels, you’ll earn points for a chance to win fun TU prizes. It’s an easy way to volunteer and a great opportunity to share your love for TU.

Spotlight on the SoCal Alumni Alliance
The SoCal Alumni Alliance creates opportunities for Tigers to connect on the West Coast. The longest-running regional alliance, SoCal alumni have enjoyed happy hours, networking events and a Dodger game. Most recently, they held a delicious crab feast hosted by Discovery Channel’s “Undercover Billionaire” Glen Stearns ‘87, which was planned by Stearns and fellow volunteer committee members Brett Glirian ’98 and Pat Maxon ’87. Over 60 people whose grad years spanned five decades—attended the event in Newport Coast, savoring authentic Maryland crabs flown in from Baltimore.

If you’d like to join the SoCal Alumni Alliance or are interested in other regional alliances in New York City or Washington, D.C./Northern Virginia, visit alumni.towson.edu and click the Groups tab.
CALIFORNIA WEEKEND: Through the generosity of Shelly Strong ’90, EVP and head of physical production at Amblin Partners, TU alumni were treated to a private screening of 1917 on Jan. 17. The fun continued at brunch in Santa Monica on Saturday and culminated with a Sunday brunch in San Diego.

ALUMNI ALLIANCE EVENTS: Both well-established and brand-new alliances began the year with fantastic events. The TU Marching Band Alumni Alliance played with the pep band during a men’s basketball game before enjoying a catered reception, while the Business & Leadership Alumni Alliance hosted their kickoff event on campus.

BOSTON BRUNCH & BASKETBALL GAME: Alumni met in Boston for a brunch generously hosted by Kathleen McQuiggan ’90 at her home. Afterward, the group headed to the Cabot Physical Education Center to watch the TU women’s basketball team take on Northeastern University.

PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW: Alumni living in Baltimore and Philadelphia experienced the beauty of a Mediterranean garden during their visit to the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show on its opening day. Beforehand, they attended a special lunch at Maggiano’s Little Italy.

1940s

YVONNE JANE BELT ’40 celebrated her 100th birthday on Oct. 21. Belt continues to live independently, plays bridge and mahjong and participates in civic and educational outings of the retirement village in which she resides.

1950s

EILEEN BRODERICK MAKAR ’59 attended her 60th class reunion in September and appreciated seeing old friends and reliving the college days.

1960s

BILL SHARKEY ’67 won a music teacher for 40 years in public and private schools locally and abroad. Sharkey is an active performer and teacher and has produced a children’s book titled Can You Put Dapens on a Goana?

1970s

LISA GILLEN FLANNERY ’71 is the community outreach coordinator for Carroll Hospice, covering Baltimore City and Carroll, Frederick and Baltimore counties as well as York and Adams counties in Pennsylvania.

1980s

BOB CAMERON ’82 has been a social worker with New Milford School District for the past 27 years. Cameron also is an adjunct field instructor for Eastern Washington University School of Social Work. Cameron won the Washington Association of School Social Workers’ 2015 School Social Worker of the Year and was named chief marketing officer for TU students soon.

ANTHONY BROWN ’85, ’95 is a local minister and recording artist. Brown started the Dream It Foundation, which raises scholarship funds for college freshmen and recently celebrated its 12th anniversary. The program also began offering scholarships for TU students soon.

LANE O’REILLY ’85 is a family physician and assistant professor of family and community medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. O’Meally has earned the Degree of Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

2010s

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MITCHELL PLATT ’89 was installed as secretary-treasurer of the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) board of directors at its 2020 World Conference and Career Expo. Platt was first elected to the board in 2016.

STEPHANIE STRAPPELLI ’89 was named chief marketing and experience coordinator at Moeller Wealth Advisors, a financial planning and investment company. Strapelli also volunteers with Associated Catholic Charities and the John Carroll School.

1990s

ANTHONY BROWN ’85, ’95 is a local minister and recording artist. Brown started the Dream It Foundation, which raises scholarship funds for college freshmen and recently celebrated its 12th anniversary. The program also began offering scholarships for TU students soon.

In 2008, I wrote a song entitled “Dream,” which reminded persons to pursue their passions. We were coordinating a concert to introduce the song and my producer suggested we give out some educational scholarships. That year we gave out three scholarships totaling $750. Within a few years we were a registered nonprofit with a commitment to support the educational dreams of young people.

ANTHONY BROWN ’85, ’95

Thanks for reading TU Magazine online.

Check back with us here throughout the spring and summer to read new stories about the people and places we love.

#TUproud
“I love being a business owner...our employees are part of our family. We know their spouses and children. Our company benefits from each of their individual talents creating award-winning products that will represent small businesses for many years to come. We have personally benefited with a fuller life having worked with these individuals every day.”

JENNY COLLINS ’87

ALYCE HEATHER KIRK ’98

is writing a play called Les Chansons de Les Guerres (Songs of the Wars). Kirk will produce and direct the play, which focuses on the juxtaposition of war’s public relations and recruitment campaigns and the documented atrocities of the Civil War, World War I and World War II.

LOU GARCIA ’99

is the newest shareholder of Timmons Group. Garcia has over three decades of experience in consulting and project management.

KATHERINE DANLEY ’97

was elected to the board of directors of the Dramatists Guild to represent the western United States. Danley sits on the council with luminaries Christopher Durang, Tina Howe, Tony Kushner, Alan Menken, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Marsha Norman. Danley will help guide and implement national policy and initiatives affecting playwrights from the smallest basement theaters to Broadway.

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MINDY ARNOLD ’01, ’10

is the founder of Gavin, a digitally minded public relations and marketing agency that recently acquired brand strategy and integrated design services company Hiebberg Designs. Arnold also is the co-owner of The Left Bank Restaurant and Bar in York, Pennsylvania.

CAL BOWMAN ’03

joined ThinkStack, an organization that designs and delivers technology and security solutions, as vice president for strategy and innovation.

FLORENCE FALATKO ’03

recently taught STrEAM education in Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates.

MARCUS LEE ’09

Catching on to Yoga

In the most pivotal moments of his life, Marcus Lee, founder of PureFire Yoga in Bethesda, often felt like he could succeed if one person believed in him. At TU, it was assistant football coach Don Zimmerman who gave the wide receiver an opportunity. Lee seized it, becoming the program’s all-time leader in receptions with 225. While training his senior year, a few teammates suggested they try a hot yoga class. Lee went along, assuming it would come easily to him. The last thing he expected was to feel like he “was literally going to die in a down dog” within the first five minutes. “I fumbled around for 90 minutes and laid on the ground in Savasana—the final pose—and I remember thinking, ‘Thank God I made it,’” Lee says. He was hooked. Lee connected instantly with his instructor, Sid, not only because he was a former college football coach but also because of his approachable teaching style. Sid’s continued encouragement kindled Lee’s desire to try teacher training. After a few years of teaching part time, he took a leap of faith and immersed himself in yoga as a full-time teacher working at Down Dog in Bethesda, Maryland. In September 2018, he and a business partner opened PureFire Yoga.

Just a year and a half in, he has plans to expand the studio, where the thermostat is set to 95 degrees for hot power yoga classes. What began as the belief of a few has developed into the support of an entire community.
So much history is buried right under our feet. The smallest artifact can reveal the history of the people that lived there or reveal trade from a foreign country that we didn’t know existed. Archaeology is like one huge jigsaw puzzle that if you have patience and dedication you can put the pieces together.

DENNIS JUTRAS ’06 won the 2019 National Association for Gifted Children’s District Coordinator of the Year Award for his work in Baltimore City Public Schools.

JOSEPH RECTOR ’03 is the CEO and cofounder of Children’s District Association for Gifted Schools.

DENNIS JUTRAS ’06

In Memoriam

Image: Joan Marcus

BREAKING BOUNDARIES ON BROADWAY

MUSICAL theater has been part of Shapiro Ahmed’s life for as long as she can remember.

“...I was always a singer or a scene or a dance move that I could do that felt like it was incorporating the stereotypes I was feeling in the moment,” says the Perry Hall, Maryland, native.

“[It] was so helpful in script analysis and understanding another person’s choices incorporating the emotions I was feeling in the moment,” says the Perry Hall, Maryland, native.

Shereen Ahmed ’15

Participating in Loch Raven Reservoir.

Four light for people who, like me before I had this opportunity, didn’t think it was possible.”

SHEREEN AHMED ’15

February 28, 2020

In this new role, Renz is responsible for oversight of agency resources from Fort Meade, Maryland.

Threat Program at

Robert J. Krabbe ’53

in Maine.

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1886

Our first campus photographer was George L. Smith, who taught science from 1875 until 1892. He is the namesake for Smith Hall. One of the items in our collections is a photograph album he created for the school’s first principal, M. A. Newell. It includes pictures of the original Baltimore-converted building, the faculty and many of the class years posed outside.

1980

About 150 years later, university photography hired students to take photos for campus publications. Students would check into the department, pick up a work ticket and a camera and go off to their assignments.

1996

Kerry Taylor joined TU as director of photographic services. For 23 years, he shaped how prospective staff and alumni see TU.

On My Playlist

Patrick McAvinue picked up the fiddle at seven years old. A Baltimore County native, he studied with pianist Tim Murphy, trumpeter David Ballou and violinist Jeffrey Howard at TU after college. McAvinue formed the acoustic roots quartet Charm City Junction and taught group and private music lessons. In 2017, he moved to Nashville to join the multi-grammy-nominated bluegrass group Dailey & Vincent and was named the International Bluegrass Music Association’s Fiddler of the Year. He is featured on the album Blueprint 2020, which was released in March.

ASK AN ARCHIVIST

Hey Felicity...

Q: Did Towson University start as a women’s college?

A: TU has always enrolled men and women. However, because it started as a school for teachers and teaching was historically a female-majority profession, we have always had a higher number of female students. During World War I and World War II, the number of male students grew very low. In June 1945, not a single man graduated.

Have a question for Felicity? Email her at fknox@towson.edu.

Rearview Mirror

FROM THE DESK OF FELICITY KNOX ’94, Library Associate to Special Collections and University Archives

On My Playlist

Patrick McAvinue, Class of ’11

During his senior year at TU, McAvinue played the fiddle and mandolin in more than 100 shows with bluegrass group Audie Blaylock and Redline. Here’s what he was listening to back then.

Revelator | Tedeschi Trucks Band (2011)
My No. One for the record. They formed in 2010, then took them in December 2011. It was one of the best concerts I’ve ever been to. A full personal, live-in-the-room experience.

OK Computer | Radiohead (1997)
Radiohead is one of my favorite rock genres. I love Laura Nyro, who has a totally different take on the instrument. I wish he had a brighter orange too.

Eternal Interlude | John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble (2009)
John Hollenbeck is a composer and impresario who comes to Towson when I was a student and taught as part of the Boll and Helen Mury Jazz residency. His saxophone/rhythm large ensemble is absolute other-than-I’ve-ever-heard.

What I love about this album is it sounds like they just put a couple of mics up in their living room and went to town. They are two of my favorite Americana/acoustic country/ bluegrass artists I listened to in college.

Aero-Plain | John Hartford (1970)
A friend of mine gave me this album the year I graduated. It’s total spaghetti and all the alternative-country. He was welcoming upstream from the conventions of classic country music.

In 2011...

In Nashville, McAvinue is a regular onstage at the Grand Ole Opry when he’s not touring the country with Dailey & Vincent. This is some of what he’s into these days.

Live at the Apollo | James Brown (1966)
This brought his influence and style to the Yardbirds and all the Yardbirds that would become the guitarist/singer artist—who he wrote all the songs on this album. He’s a couple of hits on the late 50s, and he records in 1962. This is the last song he recorded and it was really an underground—

Theatre of the Unheard | Darrell Scott (2000)
He was basically laying out of this 50s and singing on Broadway and then he formed Delia—the gentrified swing artist—who he wrote all the songs on this album. He gets a couple of hits in the late 50s, and records in 1962. The songs are underground.

24K Magic | Bruno Mars (2016)
My wife really loves Bruno Mars and got me into him. He’s like a modern-day James Brown. He’s like hot stuff but totally accidental. I also love the fact that he’s a self-made man. It’s not like a record label got behind him.

9 | Cashmere Cat (2017)
Cashmere Cat is an EDM artist from Norway. I heard him for the first time by accident. We got into Charlie Puth’s songing on this album. The track “Euphoria” features Kygo Hill. The way he puts together these sounds feels like a classical composer. I’m not into EDM in general, but there’s a tip going on here.

On My Playlist

In 2020...

Short Trip Home | Edgar Meyer & Joshua Holland (1999)
This has been one of my favorite albums since day one. It’s a really amazing album, and the music is just beautiful. The melodies tend to be neat and simple, but when you take a closer look, it’s a lot more complicated than it appears.

On My Playlist

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In Nashville, McAvinue is a regular onstage at the Grand Ole Opry when he’s not touring the country with Dailey & Vincent. This is some of what he’s into these days.

Live at the Apollo | James Brown (1966)
This brought his influence and style to the Yardbirds and all the Yardbirds that would become the guitarist/singer artist—who he wrote all the songs on this album. He’s a couple of hits on the late 50s, and he records in 1962. This is the last song he recorded and it was really an underground—

Theatre of the Unheard | Darrell Scott (2000)
He was basically laying out of this 50s and singing on Broadway and then he formed Delia—the gentrified swing artist—who he wrote all the songs on this album. He gets a couple of hits in the late 50s, and records in 1962. The songs are underground.
I remember seeing Matt in my classes and around campus. He was so mysterious, suave and cool. I always wondered who he was. I met him at Bill Bateman’s in 2013. It was a social night for LKT, a coed media production fraternity. He was sitting next to one of my good friends, so we just naturally started talking.

Since we were in the same club, we would see each other all the time. The first time I remember really talking for him, he came over to cook with me for a club potluck. We were having so much fun singing at the top of our lungs. When he left, I literally fell over to cook with me for a club potluck. We were having so much fun and put my hands on my heart. I felt like a Disney character, and I wrote a tweet along the lines of, “I’m smiling so hard right now.”

I met him at Bill Bateman’s in 2013. It was a social night for LKT, a coed media production fraternity. He was sitting next to one of my good friends, so we just naturally started talking. We were friends for a year. I knew she was the one early on, even before we got together. It was mainly because I felt like I could be myself around her. It was a different energy than I’ve ever felt before. What I love most about Glory is that she laughs at all of my jokes, even if they’re corny. She’s really loving and caring and loyal.

I went to Towson specifically for the electronic, media and film programs. I was in the group that Glory was interested in joining, LKT. We bonded over YouTube. When we started dating, we thought it’s only right to have a channel together. In the beginning it was just for fun. When we reached 1,000 subscribers, we were starting to treat it more seriously, and it felt more like a business than a hobby. I don’t mind having our relationship online; we realized this is really fun and we have something special.

The proposal was very nerve-racking. I went to Towson specifically for the electronic, media and film programs. I was in the group that Glory was interested in joining, LKT. We bonded over YouTube. When we started dating, we thought it’s only right to have a channel together. In the beginning it was just for fun. When we reached 1,000 subscribers, we were starting to treat it more seriously, and it felt more like a business than a hobby. I don’t mind having our relationship online; we realized this is really fun and we have something special.

The proposal was very nerve-racking. I knew I wanted all of my closest family and friends to witness it. I couldn’t have asked for a better proposal; it was perfect. Except for my Korean— I tried to propose in Korean. That was probably the worst idea ever. We knew our wedding video was going up on YouTube. Our audience was a huge factor in us getting married—without them we wouldn’t have been able to afford a wedding. We had indoor fireworks, smoke, crazy intricate things. I loved seeing all the reactions, in person and online. The whole thing was just perfect.

I want you to experience the same love and joy that I feel for Glory. I love her. I love us.
Wedding Gifts for a Cause

Douglas Erdman ’80 and his wife, Therese, were especially humbled and proud when their son, Travis, married his wife Lisa in June 2018. The couple used the occasion to raise support and awareness for autism. Travis’ younger brother, Ross, is on the autism spectrum. Not only did Ross act as a co-officiant of their ceremony, but the bride and groom also asked guests to make gifts in their honor to the TU Douglas and Therese Erdman Work Skills Program Fund at the Hussman Center for Adults with Autism (or another charity) in lieu of traditional wedding gifts. The couple educated their guests about the Hussman Center through their wedding website.

The Erdmans established the Work Skills Program Fund through the Hussman Center in 2012. “My parents saw the need for Ross and other young adults on the spectrum to have structured opportunities for continued engagement with their communities after matriculating from high school,” Travis says. “The Erdman Work Skills Program Fund teaches social and vocational skills and gives confidence to Ross and others on the spectrum.”

Wedding guests were receptive to the gift request. The newlyweds were ecstatic to learn $25,000 was raised for the fund. “We are so thankful to our family and friends for their generosity,” Travis says. The Erdmans were thrilled and honored to learn their son and daughter-in-law decided to support a cause so meaningful to their family. Douglas says, “Travis and Lisa’s thoughtfulness will make a wonderful contribution to the future of so many young adults in the autism community.”

To support the TU Douglas and Therese Erdman Work Skills Fund at the Hussman Center, visit www.towson.edu/ErdmanFund.
Emily Anderson Kelly ’10, ’17 isn’t scared of her work environment. That wouldn’t be remarkable except that to do her job, the senior aquarist dives with sharks, stingrays and hundreds of colorful fish in the Black Tip Reef exhibit. Kelly feeds krill, flakes and pellets to the fish, but the sharks eat mostly squid—dropped into the water from dry land (see page 1).
Gifts to the TU Fund fuel our momentum.

Your unrestricted gift to the TU Fund makes the biggest impact for our campus community. In addition to supporting every area of our growing university, the TU Fund now awards grants to proposed initiatives that enhance student learning and expand campus programs. Projects receiving grant support advance TU’s eight Presidential Priorities and raise the profile of our institution.

To support the TU Fund, visit www.towson.edu/giving or call 1-866-301-3375.
Pass along any duplicate copies to a friend and advise us of error by sending back your mailing label.

Parents: If this issue is addressed to a son or daughter who no longer maintains an address at your home, please send the correct address to Alumni Relations, Towson University, 8000 York Road, Towson, MD 21252.

CALLING ALL TU ALUMNI

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

To improve the alumni experience, Towson University is conducting a survey open to all who have completed an undergraduate degree, graduate certificate or graduate degree at the university. After taking the survey, you will have the option to enter a drawing for one of several Amazon gift cards. Go to towson.edu/alumnisurvey