WINTER 2021

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION
President’s message
Celebrating Indigenous identity
Library unveils new installation by Nadya Kwandibens
How volunteers are making sure grads receive their diplomas
Finding a holistic approach to security
New committee takes action to support students, faculty and staff
Creating access to justice is what we need now
Students petitioned for action on systemic racism in media. Here’s what Ryerson did
Yellowhead Institute’s research shapes policy
Tony Staffieri, Ryerson’s new Board chair

New lawyers for new times
A call to action
Centring Indigenous voices
Q & A

Charting progress
Book club
Life story
Alumni profiles
Class notes
Remember when?

WINTER 2021
IN AN ERA MARKED by rapid change, 2020 stands out. A year ago, we were celebrating the start of a new decade. A few months later we were all affected by a pandemic, our daily lives anything but normal.

While COVID-19 was the first obstacle, the social upheaval that followed has the potential to inspire fundamental changes in our political, economic and social landscape for generations. At Ryerson, this broader public awareness has led us to focus even more on values that are deeply embedded in the culture of the university.

This edition of Ryerson University Magazine highlights some of the ways these challenges are playing out at our university, from our Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review, and how we shape campus safety protocols, to the launch of our new law school, and the legacy of Egerton Ryerson’s relationship to the Indigenous community and residential schools. The issue also profiles the efforts of students, faculty, staff and alumni who are pushing human rights forward in a variety of ways.

I welcome this renewed focus, as I believe that universities play an important role in shaping not only the discussion but also leading by example when it comes to justice, equity and human rights. My belief in the connection between human rights and education is the result of my own life experiences.

I was born in Algeria just two days after the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end. After the war of independence from France came to an end.

What does change look like for you? For many of us, the past year has sharpened our awareness of inequality in our society and a sense that if we do not take action against bias and racism we are complicit in it. In this issue, we feature some of the many Ryersonians who are making change and leading us to make a better world.

-Taylor Molnar

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

KELSEY ADAMS
Journalism’17
Writer, Profile of Christian Hui (p.36)
Kelsey Adams is an arts and culture journalist born and raised in Toronto. She is a staff writer at NOW Magazine and has written for the Globe and Mail, The FADER, Complex CA and Canadian Art. She is devoted to elevating the voices of marginalized cultural creators.

NABRA BADR
Fashion Communication ’18
Photographer, Alumni Profiles (p.34 to 37)
Nabra Badr is a Toronto-based photographer whose focus is to create powerful images through a fashion, beauty and portrait lens, working with clients such as The Kit and Flare Magazine.

TAYO BERO
Writer, Profile of Ena Chadha, (p.37) Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review, (p.10)
Tayo is an award-winning culture writer and radio producer. Her work often appears in publications like Chatelaine Magazine, Teen Vogue, the Guardian and on CBC Radio. Covering issues spanning race, culture, feminism and the African diaspora, Tayo is committed to uplifting marginalized voices and telling unique stories.

Contributors and letter from the editor

© 2021 Ryerson University ISSN: 1713-627X • Published January 2021
Artificial intelligence, automation and a global pandemic are changing the way we work. How we approach our jobs today will be different tomorrow. One way to keep pace in the future is through continuous learning.

With over 400 online courses and dozens of in-demand certificates, you can build, change or improve your career — again and again.

Continue to adapt with the times. Start learning online this January.

---

Celebrating Indigenous identity
Art installation by photographer Nadya Kwandibens unveiled at Library entrance

THE RYERSON UNIVERSITY Library unveiled a large-scale public artwork by rising star Nadya Kwandibens last fall, commemorating the university’s engagement with the annual Native American Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference. While the conference was cancelled due to the pandemic, the university decided to move forward with the mural. →

"This way forward"
continuing.ryerson.ca

PHOTO: CAMERON ROSS
The 10-by-15.7-foot portrait is on display as part of the university’s commitment to increase Indigenous visibility and celebration on campus, educate the whole community and inspire meaningful conversations.

Through her work, Kwandibens explores what urbanization means for Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island and how living in urban areas can affect one’s cultural identity.

The woman photographed is Tee Lyn Duke, a member of an Anishinaabe dance troupe who often takes Toronto’s public transit to rehearsals in her regalia. Kwandibens says, “Duke stands still amongst waves of people,”

“The movement around her conveys a sense of existing in an entirely different world that is both past and future, as if she were a time-traveller from Turtle Island and how living in urban areas can affect one’s cultural identity. The woman photographed is Tee Lyn Duke, a member of an Anishinaabe dance troupe who often takes Toronto’s public transit to rehearsals in her regalia.”

Kwandibens.

Raising support for Black entrepreneurs in tech

Last fall, the DMZ at Ryerson University welcomed several new partners supporting the expansion of its Black Innovation Fellowship (BIF) program. With contributors like Scotiabank, Accenture, TELUS Ventures and Magna International, the DMZ aims to raise the profile of the program, broaden its scope to reach Black youth, and create more opportunities for Black women in tech and entrepreneurship in Canada.

Launched in May 2019, the BIF program creates opportunities for Black founders in the tech industry and improves Black representation within Canada’s entrepreneurship ecosystem. The additional partners will also enable founders within existing programs to receive more direct support, including time with DMZ’s entrepreneurs-in-residence and better access to grant opportunities and dedicated resources.

Isaac Glowafse Jr., founder of Dream Maker Ventures Inc., and BIF founding partner, explains the need to keep up the momentum. “The events of 2020 have been heartbreaking and tragic, but they’ve also led to the creation of a perfect storm for activism and social change. Why stop now? We will continuously look for ways to promote a more diverse and inclusive startup ecosystem, and stand in solidarity against racial injustice,” Glowafse said.

“As an institution dedicated to equity, diversity and inclusion, providing support, improving access and removing barriers for our Black community members is a key part of creating a more equitable campus community,” said Mohamed Lachemi, Ryerson’s president and vice-chancellor. “The Black Innovation Fellowship is a prime example of that kind of commitment in action—both educating leaders and allowing them to make a tangible impact in helping underrepresented entrepreneurs.”

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Expert panel to address campus safety

An independent External Panel on Campus Safety and Security has been established to direct research, engage in fulsome consultations and provide its conclusions to the president. A statement by President Mohamed Lachemi noted that the panel is undertaking the critical work of determining a holistic approach to enhancing safety and security at Ryerson and addressing the unique challenges the university faces.

The safety and security of the Ryerson community continues to be one of the university’s top priorities in order to maintain an inclusive, people-friendly and safe environment for all. The key challenge is to establish an intersectional, interdisciplinary campus safety service-delivery model that is firmly rooted...
in Ryerson’s commitment to values of equity, diversity and inclusion and to confronting and disrupting racism, including anti-Black racism. The panel includes the Honourable Harry LaForme (Chair), Annamaria Enenajor, Hamlin Grange, Arleen Huggins and Shawn Richard.

ANTI-HATE RESOURCE
New toolkit combats anti-Asian discrimination

According to Statistics Canada, more than 30 per cent of Canadians who identify as Chinese and 27 per cent who identify as Korean have experienced racial discrimination since the pandemic. To address these growing incidents of violence and hate, a group of prominent Asian Canadian leaders came together to launch the “Responding to Hate” toolkit, aiming to improve incident reporting and ultimately change the narrative by highlighting the positive contributions of the community.

The group’s founding members include Judge Maryka Omatsu, the first East Asian woman to be appointed a judge in Canada, Ryerson University’s Chancellor Janice Fukakusa, Dean of Arts Pamela Sugiman and General Counsel, Secretary of the Board of Governors and University Privacy Officer Julia Shin Doi. The resource delves into the differences between hate crimes, hate incidents and acts of discrimination, and directs victims and witnesses on how to respond to each with a list of resources. The toolkit is available for download in Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese at ryerson.ca/responding-to-hate/.

Ryerson University also continues to address this issue through an advisory committee of academic researchers and faculty members. By examining the effects of anti-Asian racism, it provides ongoing ideas and recommendations to stop the discrimination.

CAMPUS UPGRADE
New look for Gould Street and Nelson Mandela Way

Over the past year, Ryerson University has completed major upgrades along Nelson Mandela Way, Victoria Street and Gould Street as part of the Campus Public Realm Plan. Some of the new features include a concrete ramp and automated door at the north end of Kerr Hall to create an accessible entrance, an additional ramp to Jorgenson Hall and one to Kerr Hall West. Gould Street and part of Victoria Street roadways were raised to sidewalk level and paving stones were installed over a bed of concrete to make the pedestrian zone permanent and more accessible, and permanent furniture has been added along Gould Street and Nelson Mandela Way. New plants and upgraded lighting were also installed. Below the surface, cable duct banks were installed to provide pathways for future technology advancements. This work supports connectivity improvements as the campus grows. The Campus Core Revitalization project was made possible thanks to the generous contribution of $7 million in funding towards the overall budget from the City of Toronto and support from Toronto City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam.

VIRTUAL CLASS
Faculty of Science creates immersive learning experience with AR

As students prepared for remote learning last fall, the Faculty of Science introduced augmented reality and holograms to biology and chemistry online labs. It partnered with alumnus Paul Duffy (Applied Computer Science ’89), president of NextTech AR Solutions, to create an augmented reality remote education platform called Ryerson Augmented Learning Experience (RALE). The RALE virtual labs include collaborative Zoom sessions with lab technicians and student lab partners, along with AR lab exercises that allow students to project into their home the materials required for experiments.

“Students were trying to reach behind their phones to grab the objects. It gave them a greater sense of what was going on,” said Faculty of Science Dean David Cramb. “At least in Western education, we’re so visually based that anything we can do to simulate the tactile nature of the material will enhance the experience for students. Everyone would agree that you have to do science to understand it for real.”

Incorporating some form of AR in student labs is here to stay, as Cramb says the platform can be used to enhance textbook readings and lab manuals, making teaching and learning a more visual experience.

The Ryerson Augmented Learning Experience (RALE) uses AR to enhance virtual labs in the post-pandemic world.

"The RALE platform allows students to transcend time and geography," says Duffy—something that’s become a necessity in the post-pandemic culture. RALE allows faculty members to transform what would have been a 2D experience into a lab with an experiential component. What’s more, the format and flow of the learning can iteratively improve since it uses machine learning based on the data it gathers to deep learn which experiences are best for students.

—Michelle Grady

Ryerson Senate call for nominations

You can help ensure that the quality of a Ryerson education continues to rise. Ryerson’s Senate is the body that regulates the university’s academic policies and oversees changes to its curriculum. Two alumni Senator seats are up for election for 2021-2022. You may nominate another alumnus or express interest in running yourself.

For more information or to register a nomination, contact Donna Bell, Secretary of Senate at dbell@ryerson.ca. Nominations must be received by 12 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

DID YOU KNOW...
Look for our next book club!

The future of education at Ryerson starts with you

Stay connected with The Ryerson Connection, your monthly e-newsletter. Email aluminfo@ryerson.ca
Tony Staffieri, Ryerson’s new board chair, on changing the future of education

Q&A

Rodney Yip (Computer Science ’82) believes alumni have three things to give: “Time, talent and treasure.” The retired disaster recovery and business continuity product manager has shared all three with Ryerson, volunteering as a mentor, connecting students and faculty to industry, creating an award for nursing students, and more. Rodney is also leaving a gift r.v. his $7 that promises to continue his generous support well into the future. “Ryerson enabled me to hit the ground running,” says Rodney. “It prepares students, not just for jobs, but to influence society.”

Rodney is leaving a legacy through a planned gift. You can too. Contact us to find out how.

Rodney Yip is planning for students’ futures

What did you enjoy about Ryerson when you joined the board in 2016?

TS

Ryerson enabled me to hit the ground running,” says Rodney. “It prepares students, not just for jobs, but to influence society.”

What is your vision for Ryerson and the board moving forward?

TS

I’d like to focus on three areas. First, ensuring we stay relevant. That’s about innovation and disrupting conventional education. Second, improving student life by creating the campus of tomorrow. Third, maintaining accessibility and affordability. How do we attract students from all over the world in a way that’s thoughtful about integrating different world views? How do we support the students choose to stay and contribute to Canada after they graduate?

What Ryerson accomplishment are you most proud of?

RU

For students, it ranges from planned-giving-final.indd   1

Ryerson enabled me to hit the ground running,” says Rodney. “It prepares students, not just for jobs, but to influence society.”

What one piece of advice would you pass on to a new Ryerson grad?

RU

Most people want to help. Take advantage of that; in a good way. Find mentors and leaders willing to take the time to help you.

What Ryerson accomplishment are you most proud of?

RU

-change the rules. Figure out your own way of excelling at your career. For a young person, that was inspiring.

What piece of advice would you pass on to a new Ryerson grad?

RU

Most people want to help. Take advantage of that; in a good way. Find mentors and leaders willing to take the time to help you.

What is your vision for Ryerson and the board moving forward?

TS

I’d like to focus on three areas. First, ensuring we stay relevant. That’s about innovation and disrupting conventional education. Second, improving student life by creating the campus of tomorrow. Third, maintaining accessibility and affordability. How do we attract students from all over the world in a way that’s thoughtful about integrating different world views? How do we support the students choose to stay and contribute to Canada after they graduate?

What Ryerson accomplishment are you most proud of?

RU

For students, it ranges from planned-giving-final.indd   1

Ryerson enabled me to hit the ground running,” says Rodney. “It prepares students, not just for jobs, but to influence society.”

What one piece of advice would you pass on to a new Ryerson grad?

RU

Most people want to help. Take advantage of that; in a good way. Find mentors and leaders willing to take the time to help you.

What Ryerson accomplishment are you most proud of?

RU

For students, it ranges from planned-giving-final.indd   1

Ryerson enabled me to hit the ground running,” says Rodney. “It prepares students, not just for jobs, but to influence society.”

What one piece of advice would you pass on to a new Ryerson grad?

RU

Most people want to help. Take advantage of that; in a good way. Find mentors and leaders willing to take the time to help you.

What Ryerson accomplishment are you most proud of?

RU

For students, it ranges from planned-giving-final.indd   1

Ryerson enabled me to hit the ground running,” says Rodney. “It prepares students, not just for jobs, but to influence society.”

What one piece of advice would you pass on to a new Ryerson grad?

RU

Most people want to help. Take advantage of that; in a good way. Find mentors and leaders willing to take the time to help you.

What Ryerson accomplishment are you most proud of?
WHEN THE UNIVERSITY moved to essential services status last March in response to the pandemic, every faculty and department began to adjust to the new reality. The Mattamy Athletic Centre (MAC) was no different. When it closed along with all the gyms in the city, the Ryerson Athletics and Recreation team organized virtual recreation programming (Move Everywhere: Online) and began researching safety protocols for when the facility could reopen.

On Aug. 10, after the city moved to Stage 3, the MAC was ready to open. The team had put together a 130-page reopening plan and a 36-page risk assessment report. The plan was so thorough that other universities and colleges travelled to the facility and consulted with Athletics and Recreation on how to prepare their facilities for potential openings, said Chris Nadavallil, manager of facilities, operations and risk management for Athletics and Recreation.

When the facility was open (it closed again during further lockdowns), gym equipment was spaced six to eight feet apart. Members could book a 90- or 70-minute session to work out and numbers per session are based on provincial health requirements. After each session, the gym was disinfected with multiple electrostatic sprayers. There were no group fitness programs onsite and the change rooms were closed.

“Our students that come in are so grateful to have this,” said Nadavallil last September when the facility was open. “As a mental, emotional, physical and spiritual release for them, they have a place to come and do this. And they know it’s a safe place where people care about their well-being and safety, maintaining our protocols and making sure our environment is tip top all the time.”

The university has restricted the number of people on campus, asking people to come to campus only for essential purposes. Still some necessary services opened in September under strict protocols. Students and researchers were able to book time in the Library and the Student Learning Centre for study and research space.

Three residences opened in September with fewer students to allow for physical distancing. Only about 350 students—mostly first year, and far fewer than last year’s roughly 1,144 students—lived on campus in the fall term. Safety measures include a no-guest policy, a mandatory face-mask policy, closed common areas, increased cleaning protocols, and hand-sanitizer stations.

The majority of Ryerson’s classes are online, however, a few offered in-person opportunities during the fall term. For example, Image Arts held a first-year Image Arts studio class, with students coming to the Image Arts building for a six-hour class once a month.

A number of research labs on campus have opened since March, after detailed planning for how each space would adhere to public health directives. Elements of the plans include physical distancing provisions and enhanced cleaning. Building systems, facilities and services continue to support essential research activities.

Campus life carries on during the pandemic, but in a minimal way, with most activity taking place in the virtual world.

—Colleen Mellor

On campus during the COVID-19 pandemic

We asked award-winning photographer Kiana Hayeri, Image Arts ’11, to document the campus one day in early October. Here’s what she saw.
Creating the law school society needs now

BY WENDY GLAUSER, Journalism '05

Photographs by Janick Laurent

New lawyers for new times
the week before the very first courses begin at Ryerson’s Faculty of Law and the inaugural class of 170 students are gathered for a Zoom session on leadership. The panel includes a dozen guest speakers, who are advocating for changes in criminal law, disability accommodations in the workplace, Black representation in legal leadership and more. A student asks Jordana Goldlist, a criminal defence lawyer who was once homeless and now fights for youth in the justice system, how she would define a leader. Leadership comes down to “character, as opposed to skills,” she replies, and that for her, a leader is simply someone who is “led up with the status quo and won’t back down, even if the cause is unpopular.” She reminds the class that 100 years ago, as a woman, she wouldn’t have been able to go to law school. “We’ve made changes in society because people have stood up and ignored the noise and focused on doing what was right.”

Ryerson’s law school wants to educate students to be more than just lawyers, and its inaugural class is a diverse group of future leaders who have a passion for social innovation. The aim of the school is to train lawyers who will advocate for reforms and increase access to legal representation using technology and entrepreneurship.

While some in the profession have worried about an overabundance of lawyers, Anwer Saloojee, assistant vice-president, international at Ryerson, who took on the project of designing the law school back in 2015, found that there is a vital need for lawyers who represent marginalized people in society, and can mobilize technology to serve clients who can’t afford tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. Alarmingly, research shows that more than half of Canadians self-represent in family court, and the number of Canadian defendants without lawyers in criminal and civil law cases is on the rise.

Why the next generation of lawyers need a solid grounding in technology and entrepreneurship

Donna Young, the founding dean of the law school, was drawn to the school’s four pillars: equity, diversity and inclusion; access to justice; innovation and entrepreneurship; and sound academics with innovative pedagogy. “It sounded like the answer to a lot of people’s questions,” she recalls. While other law schools are working to incorporate innovative business models and social justice, “it’s hard to move an established institution,” says Young. “If this is built into your founding principles and documents, then you don’t have to push against any cultural norms. That was really attractive.”

Young has grappled with law’s access problem throughout her career. When she worked at the Ontario Human Rights Commission, there was a two-year wait for a case to proceed. “That’s not access,” she says. “Training lawyers who are willing to represent low-income and marginalized clients is vital to increasing access.” But providing services has to make financial sense to be sustainable, which is why Ryerson is teaching law students about socially innovative business models.

“We believe that combining our focus on legal technology and access to law enables us to train lawyers who think differently about providing legal services to clients, to make it more affordable,” explains Saloojee. Ryerson’s ability to instruct students on the opportunities posed by technology is bolstered by the Legal Innovation Zone, the world’s first legal tech incubator, which was developed by Ryerson and other partners in 2015 and is housed at the university.

The law school incorporates a coding intensive, a mandatory social innovation course, and small mentoring groups with legal practitioners. While the school won’t expect students to code their own programs, it’s designed to offer skills that can help them promote access to justice. Students will learn to answer questions like, “What kind of data do you need to collect and process in order to arrive at proper conclusions in legal software?” What kind of protections will you build into an AI (artificial intelligence) system to ensure a claim isn’t wrongly denied?” explains Sari Graben, associate dean for academic, research and graduate studies at the law school.

One first-year student, Upama Poudyal, is already in the process of rolling out an app that connects people to lawyers. Rather than simply searching for lawyers online or asking for referrals, users will be able to fill out a digital form with questions such as what language they want their lawyer to speak, how much they can spend, and more. Based on the answers, the app will recommend a lawyer. “If we’re going to live in a fair society, then everyone should be able to access legal resources, especially when they’re going through traumatic events such as divorce, criminal proceedings, or even real estate transaction issues,” Poudyal says.

Young says that society also needs more lawyers who understand technology to help the government regulate fast-growing technologies. “Facebook has become this kind of behemoth that is in some ways more powerful than government. It’s also been responsible for enabling misinformation on the grandest scale, and is just one example of a technology company trying to avoid regulation,” she says. “We need tech-savvy lawyers to figure out legislative ways of dealing with newer technologies.”

Lawyers who represent the population they serve

The law profession’s diversity problem is well known. Only 19 per cent of Ontario lawyers consider themselves racialized, despite racialized Ontarians comprising nearly 30 per cent of the population; women represent less than a third of judges; Indigenous and LGBTQ2+ people and people with disabilities are woefully underrepresented.

To attract students with diverse life experiences, Ryerson decided to take the top two years of students’ GPAs, rather than all four years. The move recognizes the reality that students who are less privileged are more likely to face circumstances, like health or family issues, that can affect their performance in school.

In addition, the admissions process puts emphasis on students’ attitude toward equity, diversity and inclusion. The school also interviewed candidates, becoming the first law school in Canada to use a mandatory online interview, which very few law schools in North America do. Among the questions asked was, “What role does privilege play in people’s lives?” says Saloojee. Along with their LSAT, GPA, letters of recommendation and personal statement, the interview “enabled us to have a much more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the applicant.”

To alleviate some of the financial burden associated with law school, Ryerson is actively building a robust scholarship program with a goal to provide some financial assistance to at least half of its law students in the coming years. Most of the available awards and scholarships are for people from historically underrepresented groups, including Indigenous and first-generation students, while others are available for those who demonstrate an interest in entrepreneurship and social justice issues.

Having lawyers who know what it’s like to be discriminated against will bring more comprehensive perspectives into the practice of law, Young says. “On a system level, the legal profession....
will benefit enormously from an influx of people of colour, women, LGBTQ+ folks, and people living with disabilities.”

Shaneté Brown, a first-year student and the recipient of the McCarthy Tétrault LLP entrance scholarship, recalls the adults in her life telling her she should be a lawyer since the age of nine. When she took a law class in high school, she “fell in love with it” and was fascinated by how people had pushed lawmakers over the years to adapt and change laws with changes in societal values.

As a Black woman, Brown is part of an underrepresented minority in law. While Black people represent one percent of the student population at many established law schools in Canada, in Ryerson’s first-year class, 8.3 percent identify as Black. Brown’s perspective is also unique because one of her family members was incarcerated. “I have a different understanding for the circumstances that might have led people down a certain path in life, an understanding that a person’s actions might even be more reflective of the society that we built, rather than reflective of an individual’s characteristics,” she says.

Launching amid a pandemic

Young admits she had many sleepless nights when it became clear in the early summer that Ryerson would be launching its law school almost entirely remotely. “The fear was that we would not be able to develop the kind of community that we really need when building a new law school,” she said. With established schools, there is the existing infrastructure of clubs, mentorship supports, “upper year students who can help first year students.”

Help shape Ryerson’s future

Call for nominations: Ryerson Board of Governors

Serving on the Ryerson Board of Governors is an exciting opportunity to help shape the financial and strategic priorities of the university. In the summer of 2021, Ryerson alumni will elect one of three alumni-member representatives on the 24-member Board. Nominations will be reviewed by the Ryerson University Alumni Association, who will produce the final roster of candidates based on a Board-approved skills matrix. Get involved and make your voice heard.

For more information about the nomination and election process, please visit ryerson.ca/governors/elections. Nomination period closes on Wednesday, February 10th, 2021 at 12 p.m. (EST).
STUDENTS PETITIONED FOR ACTION ON SYSTEMIC RACISM IN MEDIA

HERE’S WHAT RYERSON DID

BY

CONNOR GAREL
Journalism ‘19

+  

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
YAZMIN BUTCHER
Fashion ‘14
Xavier-Carter had long witnessed the mainstream media’s active perpetration of racial biases and systemic racism, and named it a symptom of white reporters, who make up the better part of Canada’s media sphere, lacking a vital sense of compassion and an understanding of anti-Black racism. “It’s just not in their psyche,” she says. “They’re living in their whiteness and have certain biases that may eventually turn up in their reporting.”

Worried that her voice might not be enough, Xavier-Carter reached out to a few other students—Tiffany Mongu, Rosemary Akpan and Sara Jabahkane—to ask how they felt about Neil’s email. The four began texting, then FaceTiming, then wrote a letter outlining their shared concerns with the media. “We demand that a Black-Canadian reporting course be implemented into the journalism curriculum at Ryerson,” the petition read. To illustrate the urgency of the situation, it cited a 2010 Ryerson study which found a wealth of racist, stereotypic narratives in national print media and a dearth of Black journalists in leadership roles. When I first saw the petition, about an hour after it was published June 9, 2020, on change.org, it had already amassed 1,000 signatures; days later, it had rocketed past 3,000. It was viral on Twitter.

Several big-name journalists and alumni of the program were sharing and signing it. Former students, from Ryerson and elsewhere, were leaving comments beneath the petition about their own experiences in the program. “This is what I want to see when something isn’t right,” Mongu says. Mongu wasn’t surprised by the response. “There’s such a lack of care in how our stories are so often reported,” she explains, before launching into a catalogue of recent examples. When Kobe Bryant died in a plane crash last January, Breakfast Television mistook him for the pilot of the victim rather than wait for a more appropriate image. Criminalizing him even in death. “What will people think about this young man when they see this?” Mongu asks. “That he deserved to die because of the myth that Canada has no history of racism and slavery.”

“None of this is new,” Mongu says. “And each year, we’re educating students who will be the future of journalism, who are going to go out into the field and actually do this work. So it’s important to properly train them so they don’t make these same mistakes. Black people shouldn’t be the only ones telling these stories.”

Ryerson’s response to the petition was swift. A few days after it went up, the school announced that award-winning journalist and bestselling author Eternity Martis would be developing and teaching a new course called “Reporting on Race: The Black Community in the Media,” which began last fall. "Ideally, Black students will leave this course feeling seen and validated."
the gaps in public knowledge she’s observed; Patricia Hill Collins and Robyn Maynard are required reading in her syllabus. Libaan Osman, a fourth-year student, says taking the course was a “no-brainer.” Though the journalism program does offer a mandatory class that covers some material related to anti-Black racism, he never saw it pierce as deeply as he’d hoped it might. Plus, there were never any Black professors around, so as one of the few Black students in the program, he often felt his experience went unconsidered.

“At times, I’ve wondered whether this program actually sees me as a student, moments when I’ve looked around and haven’t felt recognized,” he says. The “Reporting on Race” course is one of the first times he has felt seen, and he’s found himself consistently impressed with the reading materials and guest speakers. “It’s the one course I’m always excited to go to. If you look at the world’s landscape right now, this whole [Black Lives Matter] movement is probably bigger than it ever has been. And even though it might seem like it’s dying down a bit now, I think this course helps to keep that conversation going. It keeps it alive.”

It wasn’t too long ago that I, myself, was a journalism student at Ryerson. Some moments were precious to me, but others I spent in classrooms where white professors admitted they didn’t know racism existed in Canada, or where entire lectures about photography could pass without the acknowledgement that subjects with darker complexions require different lighting. I don’t recall any substantial lessons about anti-Black racism. The faculty is mostly a blur of white. It’s difficult to summarize the vast and many-headed consequences of this alienation: how it produces a profound sense of imposter’s syndrome, how it makes you feel perpetually out of place, how unwelcoming these rooms feel, how it obscures whatever future you might have. When I admitted to Martis that, in spite of all this, I failed to act, she commiserated with me, lamenting that acting and bringing attention to the problem never crossed her mind, either.

“But we’re in this revolutionary moment of the anti-Black racism movement right now where everyone is a whistleblower — where everyone is demanding accountability not just from police but from other institutions, too,” she says. All of these calls to action are exciting. That Ryerson even heeded the recommendations of its students, she says, speaks volumes. But there’s still more room to grow. Courses like this are still elective. The faculty is still disarmingly white. “This,” Martis says, “is just the beginning.”
The Yellowhead Institute’s Indigenous-led research shares critical perspectives and policy analysis

BY MICHELLE GRADY

**CENTRING INDIGENOUS VOICES**

Since its inauguration in June 2018, the Yellowhead Institute has taken its direction from Indigenous communities and sought to fill a void of Indigenous-led critical policy perspectives in Canada. “By and large, the field of Indigenous policy and law is dominated by non-Indigenous folks. So the entire purpose for Yellowhead’s existence is to reframe those discussions and centre Indigenous voices,” says Executive Director Hayden King. The first of its kind in Canada, the think tank provides almost exclusively Indigenous perspectives to support Indigenous self-determination and influence policy.

In just over two years of operation within Ryerson University’s Faculty of Arts, the research team has been remarkably prolific. Collectively they’ve produced 90 briefs, special reports, and community tools and resources, including a major paper, *Land Back*, about how Indigenous Peoples have been dispossessed from land. The team is currently at work on *Cash Back*, which looks at economic development through a restitution lens.

For so long, says King, federal or provincial bureaucrats or consultants did the Indigenous policy work. But since the ’70s, Indigenous leaders have been calling for an organization like Yellowhead to provide analysis and research that offered alternatives to what the federal, provincial and territorial governments were proposing. And since stepping onto the scene, the institute has done just that: create policy briefs, infographics and toolkits to function as a sense-making filter between complex policy ideas and the communities they affect.

Not only do they speak to communities, but they reflect community perspectives back at government: their analysis and research is saturated in perspectives that have gone unheard. “There’s the saying coined by disability activists in the ’80s that goes, ‘nothing about us without us.’ It’s become a cliché, but it aptly summarizes my perspective,” says King.

“You cannot be making policy without the people who are directly affected by that policy. When we do our research and analysis, it’s critically important for us to be tapped into the community for their guidance, feedback, advice and criticism on where we should allocate our resources or what topics we need to be covering.”

They’re not speaking into a vacuum, however. Officials are listening. “I’m not sure how many organizations like ours can say that they influence federal policy directly and regularly, but our inaugural research report was on the federal government’s rights framework. This was a sort of broad self-government plan, and we were a major part of the campaign that pushed back against that framework. Ultimately, that legislation was shelved. I can cite three or four more concrete examples like this. So I’m proud to say that we’ve had a substantial impact on Indigenous policy in Canada.”

As the institute moves into its third year of operation, the team is widening their scope. King says their latest associates Megan Scribe, Lindsay Nixon and Anne Spice represent Indigenous voices that will take Yellowhead in entirely new directions.

“Indigenous policy has traditionally been the realm of Indigenous male leaders and academics. So I think our new colleagues’ work, which centres Indigenous women and queer, trans and Two-Spirit young people who have really been marginalized from policy and governance discussions, is going to help reframe what we think of as policy and law. It may not be recognizable to the traditional voices in organizations and in policy, but I think it’ll be work that helps to refocus voices that rightfully belong in these discussions.”

---

**BY THE NUMBERS**

90% of Yellowhead’s policy briefs are written by Indigenous authors
100% of Yellowhead’s artists are Indigenous
5/6 of the institute’s board members are Indigenous
100% of the 20 research fellows are Indigenous

---

*PHOTOGRAPH BY STAN WILLIAMS*
Members of the Ryerson University Alumni Association (RUAA) board of directors raise a glass in celebration after a successful annual general meeting. This was the first virtual AGM, with participation from across Canada, including Halifax, North Bay and Vancouver.

Maurizio Rogato
Urban and Regional Planning ’02
Transition Team Chair

Find out more at ryerson.ca/alumni/ruaa.
Staying grounded

Frank Walwyn (Business Administration ’89) has fond memories of his time at Ryerson, which drove his volunteer efforts. A partner at WeirFoulds LLP and one of Canada’s top lawyers, Walwyn says he relies on what he learned at Ryerson in every fil.

Ensuring diversity and inclusion is one of Walwyn’s passions. He supports Ryerson’s Diversity Institute and was on the committee recommending honorary doctorate recipients. And he is active within the legal profession, raising awareness of diversity issues and moving them forward.

“My hope is to give back and to make some small difference by doing so,” he says. “I am convinced we only need leadership and direction to nudge us into action.”

Fitting volunteer work into a busy professional environment is a challenge, but Walwyn recommends it.

“The trick is to stay focused on what is important to you. Even a half-hour a month volunteering in a food bank will make a difference. I guarantee you will feel better for it. You will learn from people with different life experiences, and they will keep you motivated. Volunteering helps you stay grounded and real.”

—Sue Horner

Ryerson writes

Three Ryersonians, three great books to add to your reading list

1. CATHERINE HERNANDEZ
Theatre Performance ’99

Award-winning author Catherine Hernandez’ latest novel, Cross Hairs, tells an unforgettable and timely dystopian story of a queer Black performer and his allies who work against an oppressive regime that is rounding up those deemed “Other.”

2. ETHAN LOU
Journalism ’15

Little did he know that a visit to his ailing grandfather in China would set journalist Ethan Lou on a journey with an itinerary dictated by a global pandemic. In Field Notes from a Pandemic, Lou chronicles the spread of COVID-19, and why this pandemic will forever change the world.

3. MENA MASSOUD
Theatre Performance ’14

The Aladdin, Jack Ryan and Reprisal star’s new book, Evolving Vegan, feels almost as much like a travel guide as it does a cookbook. His mission? Massoud wants readers to know that they don’t have to go “cold-turkey”—their move to a vegan lifestyle can be a gradual transition.

Memories of Ryerson

While COVID-19 interrupted our plans to celebrate alumni anniversaries in 2020, we couldn’t let the occasion go unmarked. We mailed anniversary pins to graduates of ’55, ’60, ’65, ’70 and ’80 and asked you to share your reflections on university days gone by.

› “Exiting from an authoritarian suburban high school and beginning journalism studies at Ryerson resonated like a prison break. Ryerson proved more than a school in which to shape a future. There were 75-cent, three-course Chinese lunches at the Kwongchow in Chinatown. Friday night dinners at Mary John’s on Gerrard. And square hamburgers and pineapple pie at the Coq D’Or, the occasional class, and many teammates were my family away from home and we got to travel to Quebec and from one end of Ontario to the other.”

—Jeremy Ferguson, Journalism ’65

› “I remember how excited I was to move to Toronto and start at Ryerson in September 1977. I was coming from the small town of Lindsay, Ont., so city life was a whole new experience for me. I met two lifelong friends at Ryerson—Paula Martin (Coleman) and Heather McDonald (Strem). I also played for the Ryerson Ewes Basketball Team. This was a wonderful experience as my teammates were my family away from home and we got to travel to Quebec and from one end of Ontario to the other.”

—Shern Matsuba-Roedl, Secretarial & Administrative Studies ’90

› “My best memory of my years at Ryerson was the amazing fashion shows the fashion students produced on a regular basis.”

—Johanna Sandul, Fashion ’80

See more messages and memories which are compiling into a video available on facebook.com/yalumni/video.
WHEN I MOVED to Canada from Jamaica, I was struck by how different everything was—the cold winter, the accents—it was all new to me.

When I got here, I remembered what my parents would always say to me: excellence is a great equalizer. At the time, I believed that to be true even for a Black person or a closeted gay person.

Finding my voice
How Al Ramsay empowered himself and the queer community

Gaining acceptance for myself didn’t happen overnight. I had my own journey of self-discovery. After arriving in Canada, I still felt ashamed about who I was and continued to live a dual life. Throughout university, I lived in Brampton with my folks and took the GO Train back and forth to Ryerson, graduating with a bachelor of commerce in 1999. When I got a job in diversity and inclusion at TD Bank, I eventually came out to my colleagues before coming out to my family and friends. In a way, I became a new person then.

I was hired by the bank in 2005 to create its community relations program, building the brand in diverse communities. I helped launch TD’s first same-sex couple ad in mainstream media. Despite a lot of backlash, we stood firm in our principles, which helped us become a leader in this space.

Eventually, I led the creation of TD’s LGBTQ2+ customer strategy that brought the company recognition as a leader in the financial industry across North America. As a result, I led the executive ranks to further help the organization evolve other diverse customer segments.

In my current role (associate vice-president, sales and strategy and head of LGBTQ2+ business development at TD Wealth), I’m grateful that I can lean in and use my authentic voice because of the support of my leaders. I take every chance I get at the leadership table to discuss diversity and inclusion. Not everyone has the opportunity or the environment to make a difference. My job is to make sure that we authentically embed diversity and inclusion here. As exemplified in my case, the Black experience and the LGBTQ2+ experience is unique.

Recently, I’ve had many conversations about the Black Lives Matter movement and have been involved in educating my colleagues. I feel very lucky for the support I have in my personal and professional circle. I want people to be intentional in their actions, use their platform and privilege to make impactful change and help dismantle systemic racism. I remain hopeful about our ongoing fight. —Interview by Tiffany Mongu, Journalism ’20

— Ryerson University Magazine / Winter 2021

Students need more help this year

Be it financial, academic, mental wellness, or otherwise, more students than ever need support. The Ryerson Fund helps students access the different tools, equipment and resources they need to be successful.

Your gift can make a difference in the life of a student. Together, we can make a challenging year a little easier.

Join your fellow alumni by giving to the Ryerson Fund today.
ALUMNI DIARY

FOR CHERYLL CASE (Urban and Regional Planning ’17), urban planning is about people, not buildings. As founder and principal urban planner of CP Planning, an organization that specializes in community building, she helps communities reimagine spaces to work better for them.

“I feel like a lot of times in [urban] planning, there’s a lot of attention on the final product and what it’s going to be—and not enough focus on the people, the conversations that need to take place and the relationships that need to be formed,” says Case.

Since co-authoring a 2017 report, titled Protecting the Vibrancy of Residential Neighbourhoods, Case has been an outspoken advocate for affordable housing, inclusive planning, and applying a human-rights lens to planning projects.

She believes the core of a human rights-based approach is an understanding that inequality and marginalization denies people their rights and keeps them in poverty. She firmly believes planners have the power to shape how cities work.

There’s a shift in how the industry views affordable housing, she says, citing the federal government’s National Housing Strategy Act, which in 2019, recognized adequate housing as a fundamental human right.

Her firm prioritizes cultivating relationships with marginalized communities, non-profits and community groups before building and reimagining their neighbourhoods to ensure their input.

For example, one of the many things the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted in the city is the issue of food insecurity. Case is a big supporter of FoodShare Toronto’s push to convert the city’s golf courses into urban farms, which would allow community members to grow their own produce.

“What really drew me to planning specifically is its role as a facilitator,” says Case. Last year, she held a workshop that envisioned a city through feminist perspectives.

“What would a city look like if it was told through a feminist narrative and was built with feminist intentions and feminist interests?” she says.

Planning needs to evolve from the concept of planning in the “public interest” to a practice of planning through a human rights approach. “The concept of public interest has traditionally meant the white homeowner, the white male homeowner with the wife. Not the single woman, not the immigrant,” she says. A human rights approach, Case says, has changed planning processes that have discriminated against women and people with disabilities.

The legacy of applying this approach to improve health, equity and inclusion shows that planning is a “powerful space” that can make cities better places to live.
Personal experience fuels policy research

PhD student aims to advance health equity for people living with HIV

BY KELSEY ADAMS, JOURNALISM ‘17

FOR CHRISTIAN HUI, lived experiences cannot be separated from his professional work. Instead, he leans into his identity as a racialized, queer, HIV-positive settler to inform his academic research.

A PhD student in Ryerson’s Policy Studies program and a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship recipient, Hui earlier completed undergraduate and master’s degrees in Ryerson’s social work program. For his doctoral studies, he is embarking on a multi-layered research process, called privilege intersections, to co-create sustainable health equity policies.

“The core of my work is to examine the power relations and historical events that led to the oppression and marginalization of specific communities,” Hui says. “Racialized and Indigenous people, trans people, people who use drugs, sex workers and even cisgender heterosexual people who make up a smaller portion of those affected by HIV will be considered in the research.”

Hui learned he was HIV positive when he was 25 years old. Later, he sought support from Toronto’s Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS), an organization providing culturally safe services where he felt at home. “As opposed to feeling ashamed when I sought out services at mainstream organizations, I began to thrive with ACAS and started volunteering.”

What some in his field might consider a bias, he considers a strength that allows him to reflect the needs of his communities. “Some people may argue I’m not objective, or that I’m biased, yet I’m proud that it’s lived experiences and values that inform and fuel my work.”

Putting community at the centre of change

Ontario Human Rights Commissioner

Ena Chadha takes the helm at a critical time, investigating the root of inequality in systems of power

BY TAYO BERI

Born in New Delhi and raised in Brampton, Ont., Ena Chadha remembers her family being extremely community-oriented growing up. But it was time spent at Ryerson pursuing her journalism degree that solidified the path she would eventually take—as a human rights lawyer for over 25 years and the current chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

“Ryerson has always been a community that was much more energetic on issues like social justice, poverty, immigration,” she said. “Those were all issues I was interested in as well.”

Chadha has taken the helm of the OHRC at a crucial time, given its inquiry into Toronto Police Services, a force that has received criticism for years of violent interactions with the city’s Black, Indigenous and racialized communities, and people with mental health concerns. The OHRC recently worked extensively with researchers to examine these incidents of violence.

The goal is to enact tangible results, Chadha says, something activists and community organizers have been clamoring for over the years. “It’s about enacting proactive change to our current policing models, and how policing interacts with other human services,” she said. “Making sure that we fix the gaps in the system that are currently leading to either underservice of certain racialized groups or over policing of certain racialized groups.”

Just before taking on the one-year chief commissioner position, Chadha was appointed by the province’s education minister to serve as a co-reviewer of the Peel District School Board, in 2019. The review was tasked with looking at systemic discrimination in the school board, specifically, anti-Black racism.

“I think what people don’t realize is the effect of systemic racism and discrimination, and how damaging and long lasting that effect is in creating many of the crises that we deal with today.”

From concerns with how curriculum fails to reflect Canada’s different cultures, to a lack of racialized teachers in the classroom, she and her team identified issues to remedy the inequitable dynamics they created.

When thinking about what makes her work worth doing, it comes back to community. “The most fulfilling part of my work as a human rights lawyer is when there’s a positive change for an individual person, or I know it’s helped a community.”
Class Notes

UPDATES FROM ALUMNI ON PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL MILESTONES

1950s

Ralph Cameron
Electrical Technology '55

“It’s hard to believe where the time went. The changes Ryerson has undergone since 1955 are formidable. May those surviving keep well. I hope they are all enjoying retirement as I am. I’ve been married 55 years and plan to move to an apartment next year. I recall being on transmitter duty at CJRT the night of Hurricane Hazel, and returning home with flooding and downed trees.”

William Green
Electrical Technology '55

“At 85-years-young, I am active veteran in the Veterans Men’s Probus Club, and an executive of our committees in our local Rotary activities, am a member of two Ryerson’s 100th Anniversary. Email pmentor@ryerson.ca.

1960s

Don Laughton
Hotel, Resort and Restaurant Administration '65

“I spent 40 years in business, then volunteered for more than 20 years, including heading up the creation of the Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, chairing Community Living Mississauga, and volunteering full-time for 18 years at Kerry’s. I was named Mississauga’s Citizen of the Year in 1990.”

Fred Messacar
Mechanical and Industrial Engineering ’63

“I graduated at the tender age of 19. Ryerson graduates were greatly sought after as technicians of the highest calibre. I was hired by Canada’s largest paint company and became the senior systems designer, analyst and programmer of the corporate mainframe. I have been retired for 27 years. My most important successes are my three daughters, seven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Success and happiness do exist in the heart more so than in the workplace.”

Renton Patterson
Electrical Technology '65

“After graduation, I worked at CGE and later became a teacher of electricity. My high school students converted an MG sports car, a boat, and then a brand new 1977 Dodge Aspen station wagon to electric drive. I subsequently purchased a 2012 Nissan Leaf electric car, a Princecraft RBRite electric pontoon boat and finally a 2018 Tesla Model 3. My sincere early belief in electric transportation has been vindicated.”

Alan Bender
Business ’69

“Married, with two amazing kids, and three amazing grandchildren, I’m currently celebrating 48 years in business interiors, specializing in healthcare, corporate, commercial interior design, build, renovations and furnishings.”

James (Jim) Hopkinson
Electrical Technology ’65

“I married after graduation. We raised two daughters and now have a grandson. I joined the engineering department at Allis Chalmers in Guelph and then worked in the field with their dealers, later joining one of them for the rest of my career. I’ve been retired for 20 years. I’ve enjoyed singing barber shop harmony as a hobby for the past 50 years.”

Don Lawrence
Architecture ’65

“After graduation, I spent four years with various architectural firms, and branched out into sales with the manufacturer Modernfold. I later co-founded Lawrence-Paine Limited and we were the Modernfold distributor for 25 years. I sold my interest in 2003 and retired. My wife and I moved from Toronto to Lakefield, where we pursued golf, curling, boating and travel. I also drove a school bus for Lakefield schools for 13 years. Sadly, I was widowed in 2009, but I still pursue my interests, including taking a seven-week trip to Australia and New Zealand this past winter, arriving home just in time to enter 14 days of quarantine.”

Brian MacLellan
Business ’60

“I’ve been retired for 25 years after a 35-year career with my first employer, John Deere Limited, in Hamilton, Ont. I married my beautiful wife, Hope, in 1962. We have two beautiful children, Sandra, and David, and are proud grandparents of five university graduates. Our grandson, Madison Trueman, recently graduated in business from Ryerson on the president’s honour list. I’ve continued curling, now going on 65 years, participating in provincial and Canadian championships.”

1970s

Anthony Bishop
Hotel and Restaurant ’70

“I was delighted to receive my 50th anniversary Ryerson Alumni golden pin. I worked in my chosen field for 56 years, and joined the City of Toronto’s Parks, Forestry and Recreation department in 2006, where I am still employed at age 74, as a customer service rep. I’m also teaching chess. I worked for the Leafs for five years as editor of the souvenir program, along with the Blue Jays, Argos and Winnipeg Jets. I served 13 years as feature sportswriter with TV Guide and travelled around the world to cover eight World Cups and five European soccer championships. I still have my stories from the daily Ryersonian student newspaper from the 1960s.”

Richard Boulton
Journalism ’70

“I married after graduation. Nick worked at Algoma Steel and retired after 35 years of service. He drove a school bus for 15 years after retirement, and taught aviation hydraulics at Sault College for four years.”

Madison Trueman, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in July.

Top 5 webinars are available on the RU Connections Youtube channel.
1980s

Ann (Billick) Mittag

Ryerson, graduating in 1980, worked as a television and film producer in the 1980s. She sold a TV series to NBC in 1987, and her feature film debut was in 1996. She was also a grandmother of three.

Jeff Golchar

Jeff is a retired elementary teacher, and his wife, Rachael, and they had two adult children and now live as empty nesters in Aurora, Ont., with their rescue dog, Monty.

Felix Mifsud

After graduating from Ryerson with a degree in Industrial Engineering, Felix started his career at Etobicoke until 1996 when the company closed. He was then hired as a server at a local restaurant and unable to cook. He later worked as a freelance graphics designer for many production companies, stations and networks.

Jacqueline Simm

Theatre (Dance) ’75

A retired elementary school teacher, Jacqueline has returned to her passion: dance. She occasionally teaches ballet classes, assists choreographers as a rehearsal director, serves on the board of KeshéDance and assists various artists with their grant applications.

John Simpson

Urban and Regional Planning ’75

A former automotive engineer, John has retired and now spends time in Alberta and I took on an oilseed processing business. I married my wife, Rachael, and we had three kids. We then moved to Alberta where I worked for a canola processing business. After 12 years, we moved to Alberta and I took on an AVP role with Richardson International. After 10 years, my current role is AVP of corporate engineering in Winnipeg.

Rogier Pigeon

Civil Engineering ’92

In April, I retired from the city of Niagara Falls fire department as a captain and fire prevention officer. I previously held the position of senior plan examiner with the building department.

Randolph Sidoo

Chemical Engineering ’96

I spent 10 years in Trinidad and Tobago as operations manager of an edible oil processing facility. I married my wife, Rachel, and we had three kids. We then moved to Australia where I worked for a canola processing business. After 12 years, we moved to Alberta and I took on an AVP role with Richardson International. After 10 years, I am also an environmental geologist and a watercolour artist.

Lori Molnar

Gerontology ’97

I am also an environmental geologist and a watercolour artist.
young leaders. I completed a masters of engineering at the University of Toronto and an executive MBA degree at Queen’s University. I’m presently the director of transportation and planning at 407 ETR."

Mabel Kane
Nursing ’07
“1 returned to school late in life. I earned a master’s in education from York University and continued to teach adult learners. I published a book for women, Beauty-fall: control your physical, mental and spiritual self through menopause.”

Elisa Levi
Nutrition and Food ’01
Awarded the Brodie Medical Learning Leadership Award by the Canadian Medical Association, Elisa works as a dietician and is in medical school to become a family physician. As an Anishinaabe member of Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, she helped develop the First Nations guiding principles for the use and implementation of Canada’s new food guide. She also helped develop an Indigenous cancer strategy and plans to work with rural patients.

Liz Roelands
Theatre ’08
Liz was awarded a Daytime Emmy for her work on the Canadian children’s show Dino Dana. She shared the Best Special Effects Costume/Makeup/Hairstyling win with special effects and makeup artist Karlee Morse, and costume designer Christine Toye. The win is her second Daytime Emmy.

Alexa Jovanovic, Fashion ’16, speaks at Tech Toronto, wearing the Aille Denim denim jacket with Braille beading.

Maggie Macpherson
Radio and Television Arts ’13
Maggie is a photographer with CBC Vancouver who won the Personality Award in the 33rd annual National Pictures of the Year competition, for her portrait of Stephen (Red) Robinson, a former resident of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer Park tent city.

Joshua Manansala
Nursing ’19
“I am a registered nurse at St. Michael’s Hospital. I work in different inpatient units throughout the hospital, and am a part of St. Michael’s COVID-19 Assessment Centre Team. This pandemic has provided me with so many opportunities to learn and grow, both personally and as a health-care provider.”

Mike Aukai
Master’s of Social Work ’13
Mike is a PhD student at McGill University in kinesiology sciences, focusing on Indigenous ice hockey.

Danielle Gauer
Criminology ’15
“After attending law school in Ottawa, I obtained my L.L.M in Maritime Law at the University of Miami. Married in France in 2018, my husband and I live in Miami and recently had a baby boy. I am working at a national litigation firm practising maritime law.”

Alexa Jovanovic
Fashion ’16
Alexa Jovanovic is the founder of Aille Design (pronounced: eye), an emerging fashion brand that is changing society’s perspective on inclusive design by creating fashion forward pieces with Swarovski Braille beading. The Braille is fully legible and the phrases describe the garment’s colour, style, fit and care content to allow Braille readers to fully envision the piece. Products are created alongside a diverse team of blind, visually impaired and sighted fashion lovers which allows Alexa to maintain a desirable fashion-forward aesthetic, foster community and advocate for the importance of inclusivity in mainstream products. To learn more, follow @ailledesign on Instagram and shop the collection at ailledesign.com.

Katia Taylor
Image Arts ’01
“I have been successfully running my Toronto-based photography business for the past 17 years. I specialize in weddings, families, maternity, and newborn portraiture. I also photograph corporate events and headshots. I have been married for 11 years and have an eight-year-old daughter.”

Alexandra MacAulay
Aboriginal Studies
Journalism ’11
“I have had a number of careers and travelled to 25 countries. I worked for the Toronto Star, Montreal Gazette and Global News, and moved into communications consulting where I worked with various companies, including a year in Guyana with Cuso International. I pursued a master’s degree in international studies in London and now work for Global Affairs Canada.”

Maggie Macpherson, in her costume, poses at Tech Toronto.

In memoriam

Yvonne (Bonnie) Brennan
Journalism ’97
Bonnie died Jan. 5, 2020. Her career began at CHCH-TV Hamilton and CBC Television in Toronto. She later served as executive director of the National Catholic Communications Centre, and director of the Office of Public Information of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. She also served as a member of the Religious Advisory Board of the CBC. Bonnie was awarded a Gabriel by the Catholic Broadcasters Association of the USA, and a Papal medal for her work in religious communications. After retiring in 1990, she continued working as a communications consultant and worked on several projects for the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Douglas Leach
Electrical and Computer Engineering ’58
Douglas died January 15, 2020 at age 81. Douglas and his wife were avid sailors on the Ottawa River, the Thousand Islands and, later intracontinental waterway systems, spending several winters around the Bahamas before returning to Canada. Douglas made significant contributions to Radio Amateurs of Canada as well as several Ottawa clubs.

Ken Mackay
RTA ’60
Ken died April 12, 2020. After graduation, Ken joined the Canadian Forces Network at its headquarters in Merz, France, as an announcer and producer. The network re-broadcasted CBC radio programs and produced news, weather and sports of interest to Canadian forces stationed in Europe. Later, Ken worked as an executive producer of programming for TVO. He also taught at various Ontario colleges.

Natalie (Niesink) MacLaurin
RTA ’15
Natalie died April 9, 2020 at age 56. She was the beloved wife of Jay MacLaurin with whom she devotedly shared more than 35 years of friendship and marriage.

Harold Mann
Business Administration ’15
Harold died July 6, 2020 at age 59. He met his wife Karen Mann, Retail Management ’85, at Ryerson, and they married in their second year. Harold and Karen worked seven days a week, all summer long, with Dickie Dee ice cream bikes to pay for their schooling and their wedding. Harold began his career with Imperial Tobacco and later worked in computers and networking systems in Toronto, then in Atlanta, Georgia. The couple had three children, eventually settling in Bobcaygeon. Harold was a founding partner of OptionPay Inc. and Real Time Merchant Services.

Carol Shaye Markusoff
Urban and Regional Planning ’84
Carol died on July 4, 2020. She enjoyed a long career in the public service, first in Toronto and later in Winnipeg. She retired in 2013 after serving as the Manitoba Ombudsman.

Christine Julien-Saulnier, Journalism ’01
"I published a book for women, Beauty-fall: control your physical, mental and spiritual self through menopause.”

Alexa Jovanovic
WHILE NO ONE can predict what will happen with the COVID-19 crisis, we can draw on history for an understanding of how previous generations survived pandemics. The 1918 “Spanish Flu” was amongst the deadliest in history: killing an estimated 50 to 100 million worldwide, roughly five per cent of the global populace, including nearly 55,000 Canadians.

Schools, businesses and public places were closed. Facemasks and social distancing were mandatory, though some refused to follow the rules. Quarantines were enforced. Just as in 2020, marginalized populations were ravaged. Indigenous communities faced a mortality rate five times the national average. Connaught Laboratories in Toronto developed a vaccine by late 1918, but offered consumers no guarantee it would work.

When the virus dissipated, Canada emerged a different country. A federal Department of Health was created. Some communities were destroyed, or changed forever. But Canadians also proved resilient: developing stronger senses of community through volunteerism and collective action.

Still, there are crucial differences between the pandemics. In 1918, there was no public health insurance, diets were poorer, and sanitation standards were lower. Vaccination programs were in their infancy, while antiviral drugs and other frontline technologies used today were non-existent.

And despite advances in medicine, the old ideas of basic prevention — social distancing and quarantine — remain the best defence. We’ve learned that only through patient and concerted action can we manage the historical realities of pandemics.

—Arne Kislenko

Arne Kislenko is a professor of History at Ryerson University.

Children at Victoria Park Forest School in Toronto practice blowing their noses in 1913.

REMEMBER WHEN?

No surprise, most of us won’t celebrate this many.

It might surprise you to learn that in 2016, there were over 8,000 centenarians in Canada. As Canadians, we’re fortunate to enjoy a high life expectancy, yet no one ever really knows what the future will bring. So if something were to happen to you, would your loved ones have the financial reserves to be able to pay bills and cover living expenses? Alumni Term Life Insurance can help. It can be used in any way your loved ones need and now comes in two plan options – Term Life and Term 10. That’s a financial safety net for your family, any way you slice it.

Get a quote today. 1-888-913-6333 or Manulife.com/ryerson

Underwritten by The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company.

Manulife and the Block Design are trademarks of The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company and its affiliates, and are used by them under licence. ©2020. The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company. All rights reserved. Manulife, PO Box 670, Stn Waterloo, Waterloo, ON N2J 4B8.

** Conditions, Limitations, Exclusions may apply. See policy for full details.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. Visit Manulife.com/accessibility for more information.

1918 vs. 2020: A look at pandemics in Canada

History professor traces the lessons learned from previous generations.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES
We’d love to hear from you!

Send an update to Class Notes and we’ll include your news in the next issue.
Online: ryerson.ca/alumni/classnotes
Email: ryemag@ryerson.ca

Update your contact info so we can tell you about alumni benefits and events.
Online: ryerson.ca/alumni/updates
Email: recordsupdatesua@ryerson.ca

To subscribe to online edition:
ryerson.ca/magazine-subscribe