

WAYNE STATE

A woman with a shaved head and dark eye makeup is the central figure. She wears a red and gold patterned strapless top, a silver choker with multiple rings, and silver armbands. Her arms are decorated with gold crescent-shaped scarification marks. She is standing in front of a wall with large, stylized eyes. The text 'WAYNE STATE' is at the top, 'WAKANDA FOREVER' is in the middle, and 'Fall/Winter 2022' is at the top right.

Fall/Winter 2022

WAKANDA FOREVER



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Fall/Winter 2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Alumni,

It has been great to experience the renewed energy on campus this fall, and enjoyable to see so many students and others getting their first real taste of Wayne State University and all it offers. We hope to keep that energy alive as we continue to balance the importance of a campus community with concern for the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.

I'm pleased to report the remarkable increase in Wayne State's six-year graduation rate continues, including jumps among student groups across the board as we continue to make significant strides to close the student success equity gap among students of color.

WSU's new six-year graduation rate is 60.3%, an 8% increase over last year, and an astounding 134% improvement from a low of 26% just over a decade ago.

Gains are particularly significant among first-generation (27%), low-income (18%), and Hispanic/Latinx students (31%). On the heels of a big increase last year, the Black graduation rate went up another 14% this year and is now close to 40%. That is a 420% increase since just 2011.

This work takes a lot of effort and focus from everyone across the university, but we've shown that it can be done.

Our improved graduation numbers were a factor in *U.S. News and World Report* once again ranking Wayne State as the best public university in Michigan at helping economically disadvantaged students succeed and graduate. A New York Times study indicates that an average student at Wayne State University has a family income of \$58,600, the lowest in Michigan. We do our best to remove financial barriers, when possible, and it is paying off.

Another distinction of note: Wayne State University has been named a member of the Age-Friendly University Global Network, an innovative consortium of universities dedicated to promoting equity, inclusion and opportunity for older adults. Age is an important yet often overlooked facet of the diversity spectrum. Within four years in Southeast Michigan, the total number of older adults will exceed the number of children. To truly reflect our community, we must ensure our educational offerings embrace this emerging demographic.

As always, our campus is growing and evolving. Most recently, the state legislature and governor approved \$100 million for a new Wayne State medical building in partnership with the Karmanos Cancer Institute. While in the early planning stages, the aim of this project is to enhance medical education and community health and to develop innovative research laboratories. Given the scope of the project, I am confident it will also have a transformational impact on the state's workforce and talent development pipeline — particularly in healthcare; contribute to the vitality of Midtown and the city's positive economic development; and close health equity gaps through the deepening of our partnership with Karmanos.

These are just a few examples of how Wayne State continues to fulfill its mission as a university of access and opportunity, as well as a preeminent, public, urban research university known for academic and research excellence.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Roy Wilson".

M. Roy Wilson
President, Wayne State University



Let's Eat In(sects) Tonight

By Steve Zoski





“The goal is to bite it before it bites you,” she thought.

It was 2008, and Julie Lesnik was studying chimpanzees in Senegal as part of her paleoanthropology dissertation research. As she observed the primates poking wooden sticks into termite mounds and pulling out their crawling snacks, she decided to taste a termite herself. Crunching it in her teeth, she tasted mostly dirt. And she grimaced in disgust.

That was then. Lesnik, an associate professor of biological anthropology, has since made a career out of encouraging people to eat bugs.

Until that fateful first nibble, Lesnik hadn't paid much attention to insects. But her doctoral dissertation involved the question of whether people were eating them two million years ago. Having studied animal behavior, she was looking at chimpanzees as a model.

“All my travel prior to my dissertation work was only in Europe, so I very much went into my research thinking insects were gross and having no interest in eating insects myself, and thinking it was completely normal to not eat them,” Lesnik says.

She went from trying that termite to visiting markets around the world where insects were sold as food. Fast forward to today, and Lesnik is a prominent proponent of entomophagy, the practice of eating insects. She points out the benefits — to human health and the environment — and says being open to this new source of nutrition is a counter to ethnocentrism.

In addition to Lesnik's teaching responsibilities at Wayne State, she speaks to audiences worldwide, encouraging them to give bugs a chance. In a 2021 episode of the PBS series *NOVA*, Lesnik argued that insect farming could be critical to the survival of humanity. With the need to feed a global population that is expected to double by 2050, she says, insects will be a much cleaner source of protein than meat, which is a major producer of greenhouse gases.

Nutrient dense
Benefits similar
to meat, eggs
and milk



**Environmentally
sustainable**

Require less land,
water, and feed
than livestock

**Can help reduce
world hunger**

Easily accessible,
cheap source of
food





A LEADER OF THE MOVEMENT

Humans have been eating insects for millions of years, Lesnik says, and billions of humans — more than a quarter of the world's people — are eating them now. The entomophagy movement has caught on in the United States, led in part by the North American Coalition of Insect Agriculture. The research and advocacy organization originated on the WSU campus in 2016 when Lesnik hosted Eating Insects Detroit, a conference that drew 200 attendees from 13 countries.

In her 2018 book, *Edible Insects and Human Evolution*, Lesnik emphasizes the need “to avoid portraying edible insects using fear- or disgust-triggering images or language, because insects are a nutritious food source with great value in cultures around the world, with great potential in our own culture.”

Lesnik has presented at Wayne State's Knowledge on Tap series and Michigan Science Center After Dark, where thrill-seeking guests have sampled such offerings as lollipops with a cricket center or a community bowl of mealworms. But cricket flour that is infused in snacks that are more typical of the average kitchen, like brownies and crackers, might go unnoticed if not for the accompanying list of ingredients.

“I usually will try to bring two forms, like crickets in its whole form and then crickets in cookies or something,” she says. “I've had responses like, ‘Oh, I was coming here to eat a bug and you gave me a protein bar. I really wanted to eat a bug.’ So, I've always made sure, after hearing that feedback, to have whole bugs for people who might want to challenge themselves.”

Megan McCullen, director of Wayne State's anthropology museum, says Lesnik's work has inspired her colleagues, students, and the community.

“When the museum of anthropology had an exhibit on sustainable foods, we offered visitors crickets, grasshoppers, and millipedes, mostly freeze-dried and with different flavorings,” McCullen says. “I tried them all; my favorite were the chapulines — that's what roasted, seasoned grasshoppers from Oaxaca are called.”

McCullen “even found a pizzeria in southwest Detroit that made a chapulines pizza and got one for our end-of-semester party,” she adds. “I liked them better off the pizza though — when they are roasted, they are crunchy and make a great little snack like nuts or chips; but on the pizza, the seasoning is good. but I didn't like the texture as much.”

CULTURAL BIAS ROOTED IN COLONIALISM

Lesnik argues that the stigma against accepting insects as a part of the human diet is a legacy of colonialism. Labeling people who consumed insects as “beasts,” looked upon by colonizers as less than fully human, fostered a conditioned sense of revulsion toward an aspect of an unfamiliar culture.

“Through my research of trying to understand this as a resource for the past, I realized we didn’t know it very well because we didn’t have interest in studying it,” she says. “I started seeing bias — that we ignored even studying this food because we don’t eat it.

“The bias is completely cultural and historical, and not founded on the benefits that the bugs actually provide,” Lesnik adds. “We as anthropologists have ignored it. We as westerners ignore it.”

While it took time to gain the courage to directly confront the disgust response, Lesnik says this key aspect of her outreach efforts has become second nature.

“I have been very surprised at how well people receive my feedback to them when they give me a big disgust reaction,” she says. “One thing I do try to point out is that I really don’t care if you eat it or don’t, but this reaction is the problem. So, if you can stop perpetuating the problem with your big reaction, you know, that helps the cause.

“My favorite is the kids,” she continues. “Like a lot of times, it’ll be parents will come by a table with their kids and then just kind of push them on, like they’re just not interested, but then the kid sneaks by later to try the bugs. Kids are both moldable by our reactions but also really independently curious. And so, a lot of times their curiosity will take them — but it’s so easy for us to kill that curiosity with our responses.”





CHOCOLATE CRICKET BUNDT CAKE

INGREDIENTS

1 cup unsalted butter, plus more for the pan
1/3 cup cocoa powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup water
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup 100% pure cricket powder
1 3/4 cups granulated sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
2 large eggs
1/2 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 tablespoon confectioners sugar (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat to 350 degrees F. Butter and flour a 10 or 12-cup Bundt pan and set aside.
2. In a small saucepan, combine the butter, cocoa powder, salt, and water and place over medium heat. Cook, stirring, just until melted and combined. Remove from the heat and set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cricket powder, sugar, and baking soda. Add half of the melted butter mixture and whisk until completely blended. The mixture will be thick. Add the remaining butter mixture and whisk until combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, whisking until completely blended. Whisk in the sour cream and the vanilla extract. Whisk until smooth.
4. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes. Let the cake cool in the pan for 15 minutes and then invert onto a rack. Dust with confectioners sugar and serve when cool.

Alternative "mini cakes" option: Line mini muffin pan with mini muffin paper cups, fill each cup about 3/4 full, and bake for 20-25 mins.






www.entomoanthro.org

Lesnik's website features recipes — for cricket-flour enhanced muffins and cakes, for example.

“The one thing I make regularly is like a sugar cookie that has cricket powder in it, but it also has a lot of strong flavors. I have coffee and clove and cinnamon in there as well,” she notes; “it has inviting aromas that kind of hide the cricket.” But she emphasizes that the goal of any insect-infused recipe isn't to mask distinctive flavors. “The taste still needs to be unique enough that we start associating it as its own thing that's delicious, and not just something we hide in something else.”

Lesnik says her evolution from first-time termite taster to advocate for incorporating insects into a healthful diet might serve as example of what is possible as people the world over face the need to learn how to live more sustainably.

“I try hard to tell people that their disgusted responses are valid,” she says. “But I also try hard to encourage people to rein in those responses because it's the children around you, it's those younger minds around you, that see it. And we just keep perpetuating our bias, generation after generation, that way.”

“You don't have to eat it, you know. You don't have to like it; but leave space for the future generations to make their own opinion.” 



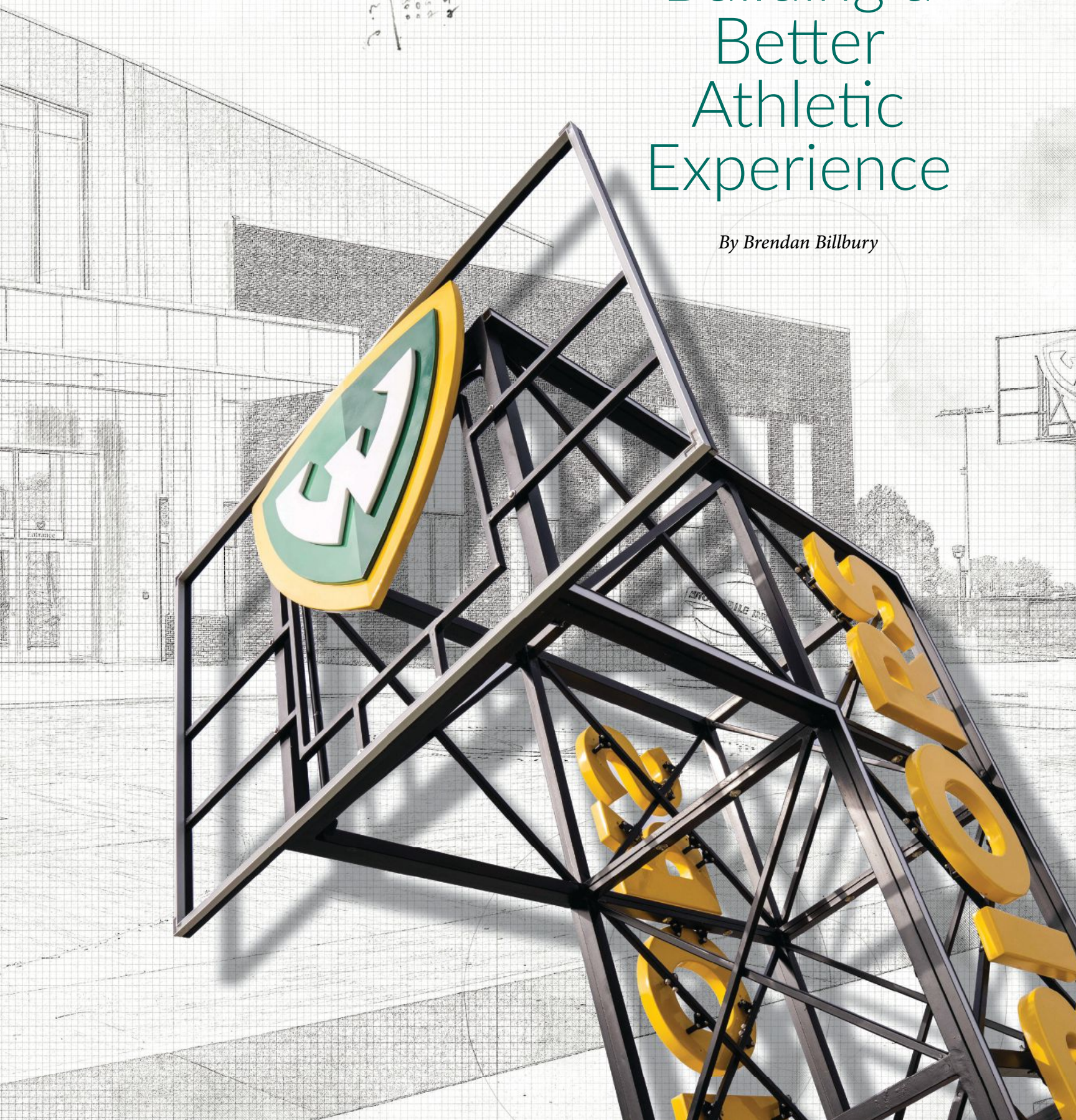
Brick

by

Brick

Building a Better Athletic Experience

By Brendan Billbury



The Wayne State University campus, set in the heart of Detroit, has more in common with the Motor City than real estate. Both also share recent histories defined by growth in response to adversity.

Since some of WSU's most significant revitalization has come from key investments in its athletics program, it is only fitting that the Pistons found a home for their minor league affiliate right in their own backyard.

Along with the Motor City Cruise, the Wayne State Fieldhouse opened its doors to the men's and women's basketball squads last year, bringing much-needed space for the student-athletes as well as nearly 3,000 seats—more than double the capacity at the Matthaei Center. Former men's basketball coach David Greer applauds not only the new fieldhouse, but all the other upgrades the program has seen over the past two decades as well.

"They have done an outstanding job across all sports," says Greer, who spent 21 years at the helm of the Warriors. "At a lot of places, football and basketball get funding and the rest of the sports just fall in line; but everyone in the department has done a remarkable job providing a championship experience for all our student-athletes."





Andrew Dold, who played basketball for WSU from 1998 to 2002, was part of the radio broadcast for the first Warriors game in the new fieldhouse. He's equally enthusiastic.

"The new buildings, additions to the Matthaei, the complete change in culture, and the vast improvements to the student-athlete experience is far beyond anything I could have imagined as an athlete in the early 2000s," Dold says.





The new home for
men's and women's
basketball squads
and the Pistons'
home for their minor
league affiliate



Sean Peters, head coach for men's and women's swimming and diving, remembers well the state of Adams Field when he arrived on campus in 1997.

"It was a natural turf field and to help with irrigation issues, the corners of the field sloped downward," he recalls. "If a wide receiver was trying to catch a fade pass from the quarterback, you'd see the wide receiver's entire body and as they got closer to the end zone, you'd maybe only see their shoulder pads and head."

Today, the field towers proudly over the Lodge Freeway as hundreds of thousands of cars pass by each day. The grass has been replaced by artificial turf, a film tower has been erected beyond the end zone, and an elevator brings coaches and the media to the press box — the days of climbing those steep home bleachers are over.





Ernie Harwell Field grabbed national attention in 2017 when Wayne State dedicated its baseball park to the legendary Tigers broadcaster. It features a Fenway-esque Green Monster and an exterior design that pays homage to Ebbets Field, home of the old Brooklyn Dodgers.

Former Warrior Frank Jeney looks back on his time with the program and is filled with pride for what Harwell is now. His freshman year, he recalls, “the old chain link fence that still exists as the perimeter fence was, in fact, the field’s home run fence.” He says “the grounds did not play well, so practices often became dangerous from a fielding perspective.”

When softball player Jordan Sinclair came to campus in 2003, his sport’s facilities were just as run down as the nearby football and baseball venues. The field “was just the diamond with the fence and then one metal set of bleachers behind home plate. That was it.”

Sinclair recalls that “repeatedly in the early 2000s, the metal pieces of the bleachers would get ripped off and stolen by scrappers. So not only did we only have one set of bleachers, but half of the time it was missing a portion.” Today’s field is one of the best in the country, with bleachers wrapping around the backstop and extending to first and third base.

In Mike Horn’s opinion, one of the most crucial upgrades to the sports campus was the state-of-the-art weight room at the Athletic Performance Center, built in 2018.

“That’s the biggest thing that affects every team,” the head men’s golf coach notes. The nearly 12,000-square-foot structure serves as a strength and conditioning center for all 18 Wayne State varsity programs — “and we have the best setup that I’ve seen for a school at our level,” Horn says.

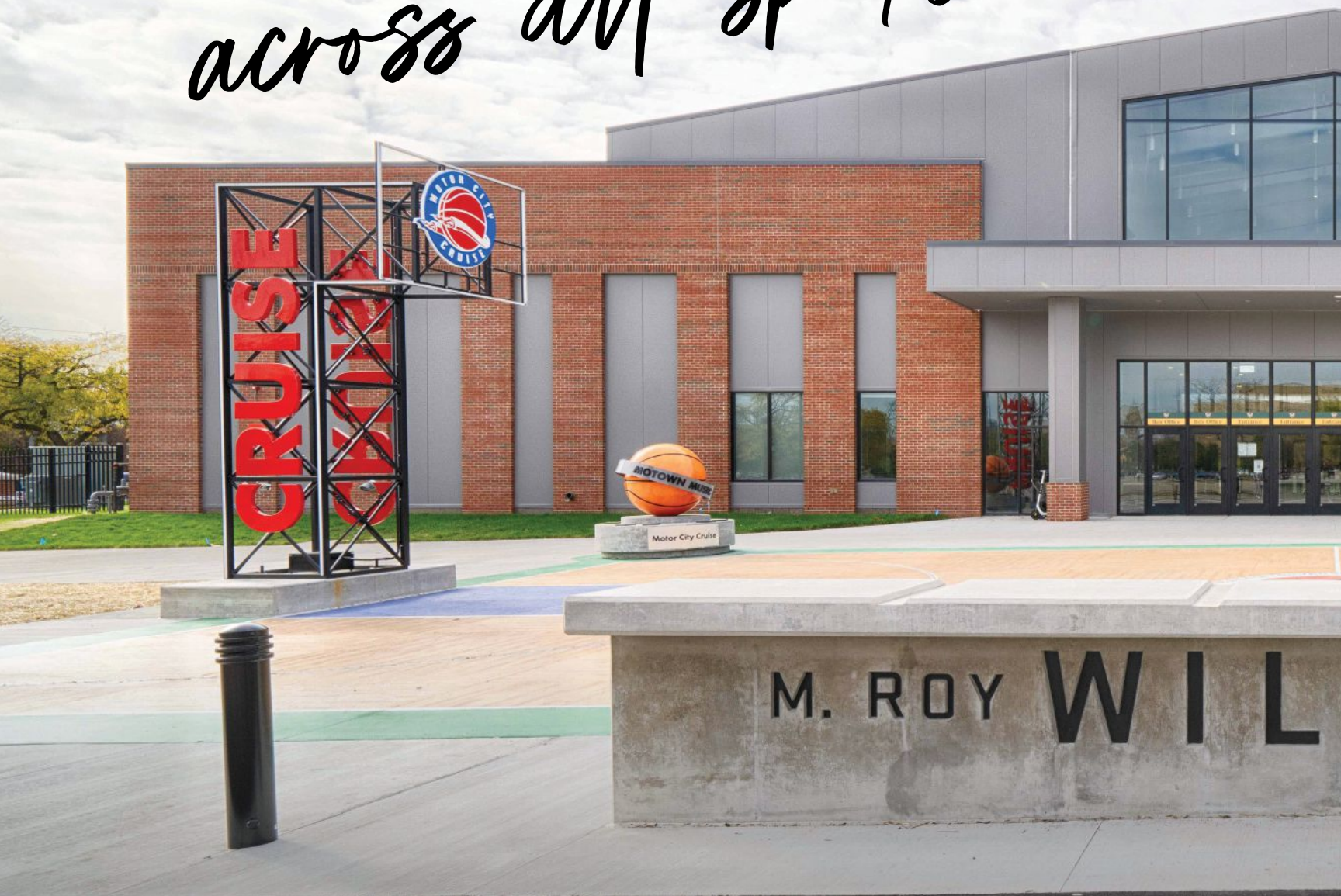


These major upgrades have done more than boost the sense of pride among alumni and current student-athletes — although that, in itself, is an accomplishment that athletic directors across the country would envy. But the possibilities that all this visible progress holds for recruitment efforts is lost on no one.

To compete with other programs in signing student-athletes, coaches in the past would choose to avoid certain areas when prospects visited the athletic campus. Today, coaches lead potential recruits proudly around Wayne State's facilities, showing off all the advantages the university has to offer them.



"They have done an
outstanding job
across all sports."





SON PLAZA

MOBILE INDUSTRIES

WARRIORS

The ALTEREGO


A tale of hope, strength
and vulnerability





By Katie McMillan





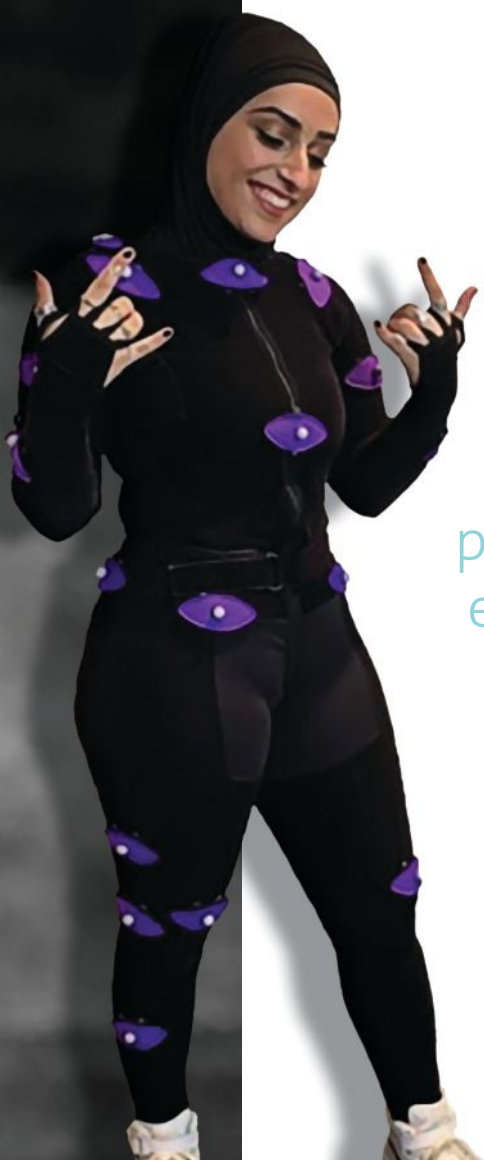
fter a summer of singing in disguise and a fall making music from her closet, Israa Darwich says she's feeling at the top of her game.

For good reason. The Wayne State University senior recently made an impressive showing on Fox's *Alter Ego* competition and followed it up with the debut of her second EP, "Slip Away."

Darwich, who also plays the piano, ukulele, and guitar, was scouted by producers who discovered her music on Instagram. Following an audition process, she was invited to compete in the *Alter Ego*'s first season at the TV City Studio in Los Angeles in the summer of 2021.

The show, which was based on the premise that talent cannot always be judged by outward appearances, featured contestants who sang off-camera while their digital avatars were projected onto the stage. Hosted by Roci Diaz with musical judges Alanis Morissette, Nick Lachey, Grimes, and will.i.am, *Alter Ego* is not on Fox's current schedule.

Wearing a motion capture suit backstage to animate her avatar, Night Journey, Darwich ultimately placed fourth among 20 contestants.



"I was able to prove myself wrong about what I could or couldn't do. I packed to come home right away and ended up staying through the finals."

"After competing on the show, I feel more confident now than I ever have," she says. "I was able to prove myself wrong about what I could or couldn't do. I packed to come home right away and ended up staying through the finals. It was truly a life-changing experience."

MY ALTER EGO'S NAME IS

NIGHT JOURNEY



'STRENGTH AND VULNERABILITY'

Darwich worked with producers and designers to create Night Journey's look, complete with an elaborate, cage-like skirt and combat boots.

"I knew I wanted to be a warrior," Darwich says. "My avatar was designed to be a blend of strength and vulnerability."

Her musical performances featured songs recorded by Selena Gomez, Jewel, Alessia Cara, and Nelly Furtado. As a contestant, Darwich had the opportunity to work with her first vocal coach and developed friendships with other performers on set.

"The whole vibe was friendly and supportive," she says. "Even though it was a competition, we were still rooting for each other because we all really believed in the concept that it's what's on the inside that really matters."

Darwich, a public relations major from Dearborn Heights, says the platform and anonymity offered by *Alter Ego* created a welcome opportunity to share her mental health journey in a way that defied many common stigmas. Darwich lives with bipolar II disorder, which is characterized by extreme emotional highs and lows. As Night Journey, her theme was the ability to draw light from the dark. Her message: for the many of us on a silent journey toward stronger mental health, there is hope even in the darkest of times.

"Having lived with this, I know that the future always has something for you to look forward to, and I think that's something everyone could be reminded of more often." Given that mental health issues are "so stigmatized," she adds, "I thought that it was a perfect topic to bring to the show, which is based on an appreciation for one's truest self. You don't always see a mental health condition."

As a creative outlet and a form of therapy for years, "music has helped me to overcome so much," she says.



A CHANCE TO CHANGE MINDS

Darwich is Muslim Arab American woman, and she saw her appearances on *Alter Ego* as an opportunity to challenge, in a major media spotlight, some of the stereotypical representations of her faith, ethnicity, and gender.

“You don’t see many — if any — women who look like me on television,” she points out. “So being able to be myself and have that level of visibility was huge. It’s taught me — and I hope others — that you can do it, even if you think you can’t.”

Darwich released her second EP, “Slip Away,” in November 2021; her first, “Skeletons,” was released earlier that year. She taught herself how to master and mix her own songs — in a closet.

“It was a lot of trial and error,” she said. “I’m continuing to improve and excited to grow as an artist.”

Darwich says her *Alter Ego* experience has also helped her grow professionally and academically. “As a public relations student, it’s really helped me to gain experience doing interviews, being around cameras, thinking about presentation and visualizing a mission, and public speaking. I know I’ll use those skills,” she says.

“Most importantly, I’ve learned that when you have self-doubt, you can push through.”^w

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push through.”





BROAD STROKES

Wayne Law Clinics, Professors Explore Population Health Law

By Meg Mathis

While “public health” may be a familiar concept, a new area in the practice of law advocates for something different — population health. That term paints legal rights and health outcomes in broader strokes, focusing less on the individual and more on people who fall within a particular group or category.

Two unique initiatives at Wayne State University Law School are exploring the concept of population health in the context of two groups: cancer patients and the LGBTQ community.

At Wayne Law’s Legal Advocacy for People with Cancer (LAPC) Clinic, director Kathryn Smolinski ’11 is an authority in the area of population health law.

“When you think about populations, individuals diagnosed with cancer is a population,” she says. “The number of cancer survivors and those affected by cancer — their caregivers, family members — is a huge population.”

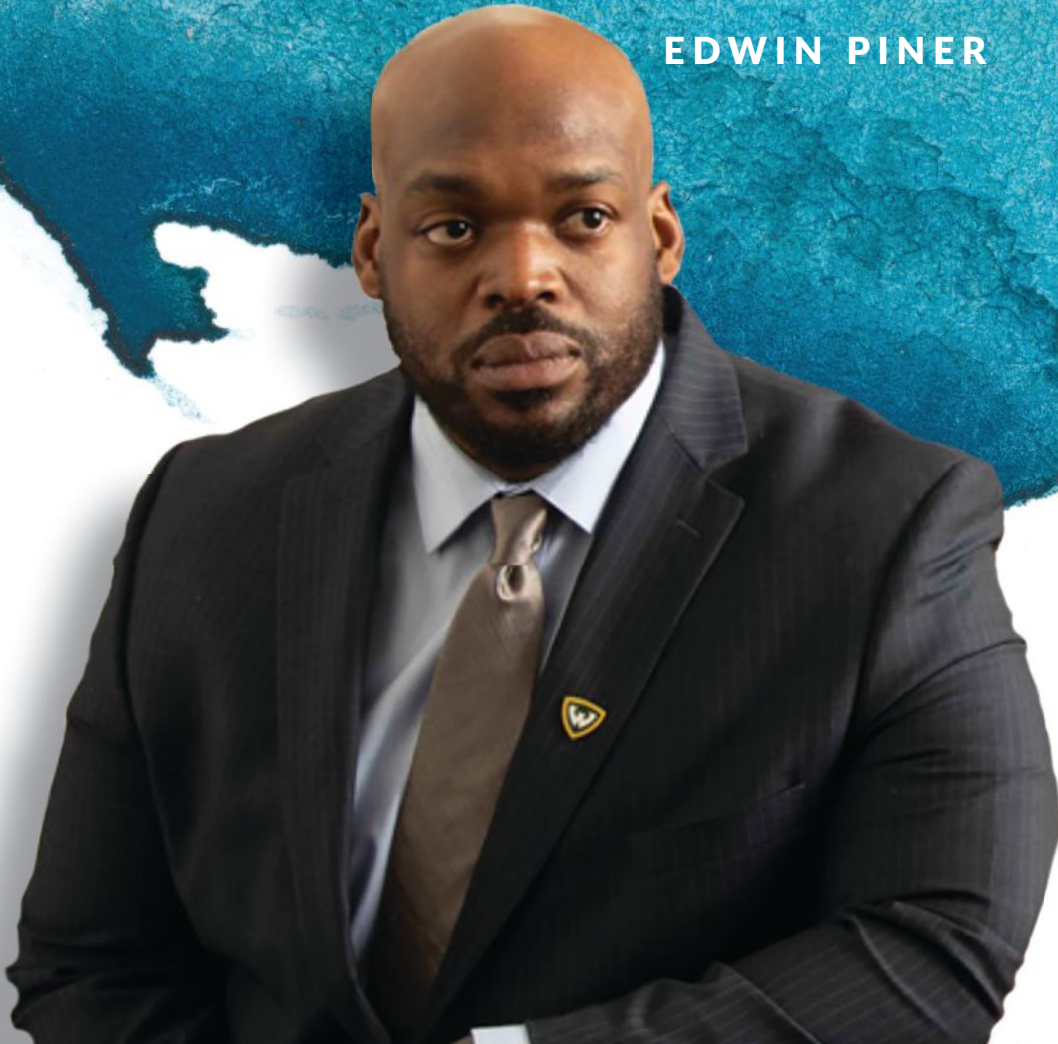
Smolinski, who founded LAPC in 2012, was charged last year with piloting Wayne Law’s newest clinical program, the Community Advocacy Clinic (CAC). There, she saw an opportunity to continue to work for the cancer segment. Designed to meet the needs of part-time students, the CAC features an evening classroom component where students develop substantive law and policy skills to address legal needs among populations, ultimately completing an advocacy project for a community partner over the course of the semester.

“Given that we were in a time of Zoom teaching,” she says, “I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to [pursue] a national partner.”

Smolinski teamed up with Triage Cancer, a national nonprofit organization that provides legal resources to people diagnosed with cancer and their caregivers. In winter 2021, Triage Cancer founder Joanna Fawzy Morales joined Smolinski in co-teaching the three-credit CAC class.

"The Community Advocacy Clinic is really big on reflection. Feedback is something a lot of people don't give, and the clinic challenged me to communicate what I've learned and how I feel about certain things."

EDWIN PINER



“It allowed us to be able to work with students who had an interest in the work that Triage Cancer is doing,” Morales says. “The clinic is really an amalgamation of skills-based learning, as well as substantive law that pertains to cancer rights.”

While learning about the legal issues, such as disability benefits and estate planning, that the cancer community must navigate, students were paired with attorneys at Triage Cancer to develop the interviewing and counseling skills necessary to serve clients.

“The clinic is really big on reflection,” said Edwin Piner ’21. “Feedback is something a lot of people don’t give, and that challenged me to be able to communicate what I’ve learned or how I feel about certain things.”

By the clinic’s end, each student had completed a project to be used by Triage Cancer, with deliverables ranging from draft legislation and quick-reference guides to modules for the nonprofit’s cancerfinances.org resource. Piner constructed a website module to guide people with cancer through information on their housing rights. Classmate Daniel Ayyash ’22 created an educational video, “Triage Cancer Explains: Privacy Choices After a Diagnosis,” that discusses the issue of disclosure as it pertains to members of the cancer community.

“Any of us can go pick up a book and read the laws, but not everyone understands them or even has the desire to do that,” Ayyash says. “Trying to make it digestible and understandable for a layperson is super important because they are rights and benefits everyone should have access to.”

“It allowed us to be able to work with students who had an interest in the work that Triage Cancer is doing.”

JOANNA FAWZY MORALES





As a student attorney in the Community Advocacy Clinic, Daniel Ayyash developed an educational animated video for Triage Cancer that focuses on privacy choices after a cancer diagnosis.

MOVING UPSTREAM

Boiling down complex legal issues into actionable information for the general public can be a tall order. But, as Morales observes, it's increasingly necessary. Even before the pandemic, Triage Cancer had created the infrastructure to deliver online programming, ranging from virtual events to animated videos, that is designed to meet users where they are.

"Many of these legal issues, like insurance or employment issues, are not exciting; they're not things that people want to learn about, but they're things that people need to learn about," she points out. "We're trying to preempt some of the legal challenges that people face downstream by making sure that they have information."

That level of proactivity is critical, says Heather Walter-McCabe, who recently began a joint appointment as an associate professor in the Law School and the School of Social Work. "That's the primary goal," she emphasizes: "to do as much as we can moving upstream to keep the issues from becoming a problem in the first place."

"Population health really does work — looking at prevention through changing the structures that cause health inequities and illness, but then also looking at when those things don't occur, looking at access and minimizing what disparities do exist in the population," she says.

One area of particular interest to Walter-McCabe is the impact of health equity laws on the LGBTQ community.

"The LGBTQ population — or people in the many groups under that rainbow umbrella — experiences inequitable health outcomes," she

says, citing a particular piece of evidence: a disproportionate rate of suicide. "There's a growing body of work for health-outcomes researchers trying to look at the impact that policy can have."

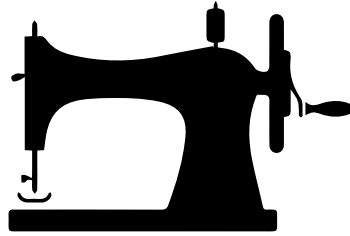
In an effort to provide clearer links between policy and health outcomes, Walter-McCabe has been building a national database of laws that impact LGBTQ populations. She's looking to see if and how each state provides protections in matters such as housing, employment equity, and discrimination, with close attention to when these laws have been implemented and how they are enforced.

After two years of work, she has coded nearly 5,000 statutes and regulations — and estimates she's just over halfway through the first batch of data. "We'll then be going back and doing more looks per jurisdiction to encapsulate what's going on in each state," she says, noting that localities in more restrictive states may have enacted specific protections for human rights.

Walter-McCabe expects the database to be publicly accessible in the next couple of years, but the work will be ongoing. She's formed contacts with leading researchers in the fields of sexual orientation and gender-identity law and policy to help guide her to the best and latest data on health equity in LGBTQ populations.

"It's a longitudinal study," says Walter-McCabe, who began the project as a visiting scholar with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Law Program. "It's going to need to be continually updated."☞





T A I L O R E D T R A D I T I O N S

By Jacqueline Lee

Graduation came and went, and Kimberly Gaeth '10 had no plans on the horizon. When her roommate approached her about traveling to China to teach, it was both intriguing and feasible for Gaeth to accompany her — but she had no idea that it would set the course of the rest of her life.

Gaeth relocated to China, where she taught English at a university near Beijing for two years. Her class included several Tibetan students, and her interest in Tibet's culture and people grew immensely.

"I love their artistry, clothes, music," Gaeth says. "The way that Tibetans will just

burst out into song — it's really interesting and nice."

She spent her time abroad learning and exploring before deciding to pursue another of her passions. "I returned to Michigan to attend Wayne State for library science, hoping that I would someday be a librarian in China," Gaeth says. "I wanted to return to experience Tibetan areas of China."

Her wishes came to pass. After earning her master's degree, she resumed her career in China as an educator, world traveler, and — soon thereafter — a wife and business owner.

FINDING LOVE AND CREATING SOLUTIONS

While teaching, Gaeth told a Canadian friend that she was ready to meet that special someone. That came to pass, as well: in Xining, the capital city of Qinghai province, in 2010.

“We were introduced by a mutual friend and hit it off right away,” she says. “We were married there in 2012. Our first daughter came in 2013 and our second five years later.”



As Gaeth and her husband, Konchok, traveled Qinghai with their children, they noticed that they were seeing traditional Tibetan textiles and tradespeople less frequently.

“Fewer people were regularly wearing their traditional robes,” Gaeth recalls. “At the same time, as a foreigner I was mindful that visitors and tourists to the area absolutely love traditional Tibetan robes, but find it impractical to buy one and take it home because there are few opportunities to wear them in their home countries.”

The couple’s desire to revitalize the Tibetan tailoring trade, made possible by their ability to offer a practical and well-designed alternative, birthed their Tibetan blanket business.





TIBETAN ROBES: THEN AND NOW

Throughout their history, Tibetans have worn robes as a shield against cold temperatures and high winds. But these robes are more than a source of warmth and protection — they are also an expression of Tibetan culture.

“Robes have come to be so much more than coats,” Gaeth says; “acting as personal blankets, baby carriers, sun visors, and dancing uniforms. My husband can tell where a person is from just from the style of robe and the color of the sash that they are wearing.”

Gaeth notes that the materials used in Tibetan robes change with the times and with contemporary fashion. “Modern robes that young people enjoy wearing are made with multicolored brocade and synthetic wool or flannel,” she explains. “We use the same materials that are used in making modern Tibetan robes for our blankets, to make sure they can meet the demands of our modern lives. The designs of the blankets, however, are similar to those found on traditional robes.”

TSOKO THE TAILOR

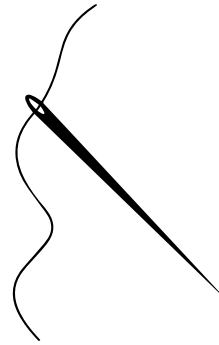
For many years, Gaeth and her husband looked for seasoned tailors in Qinghai. Konchok's brother introduced them to one who came highly skilled and recommended.

"Tsoko is a tailor and a farmer who has to find a balance between both jobs," Gaeth says. "Life for her, and for many women in Tibetan areas, is difficult. Culturally, Tibetan women are meant to manage the home and family while Tibetan men are meant to go out and bring in an income. Women like Tsoko are expected to somehow do both."

Gaeth explains that Tsoko's life was particularly challenging: in addition to her two jobs, she is a single mother of a teenage son and cares for her elderly mother. For this reason, Gaeth and her husband wanted to offer her steady, meaningful work with fair compensation — equitable working conditions that they extended to other craftswomen on the Tibetan plateau and have made a top priority for their business.

"When I am told about how Tsoko's life has improved," Gaeth says, "I feel so grateful to have been a part of that."





SOURCING MATERIALS AND MAKING SALES

Gaeth and her husband travel to Linxia, a city in Gansu province, to source materials for the blankets. From there, they deliver the materials to Tsoko along with orders containing customers' requested sizes and color patterns. Tsoko fills the orders using old-fashioned sewing machines and other simple tailoring tools.

"It is important to go in person and inspect the materials to make sure to get the best quality available," Gaeth says. "We find the best modern materials because most traditional materials are too delicate for use in contemporary homes, where they will likely be washed frequently."

"As a person who loves colorful shiny things, my favorite part of the business is the trips to the brocade shops," she continues. "I am always overwhelmed by the rainbow of shiny, jewel-tone fabrics at my fingertips; there is nothing more beautiful. A close second is seeing the finished blankets and photographing them before they are sent to their new homes."

Most of Gaeth's orders come from foreigners living in China or customers abroad who have some kind of connection to Tibet. She advertises on WeChat (Weixin), the popular Chinese social media app, where she showcases a series of designs that have been popular over the years.

LOOKING AHEAD

Gaeth's life abroad has brought about several unexpected but very fulfilling opportunities.

Although she enjoys running her blanket business with her husband, Gaeth still wanted to use her degree in library science. And it seems that her chance to do so finally arrived.

"My family and I have recently moved to Beijing, where I have become the lower primary school English librarian teacher at a well-known bilingual academy," she says. "It is so exciting that my dream of being a librarian in China has finally come true!"

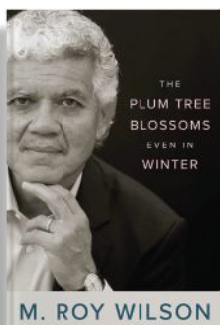
But Gaeth remains committed to amplifying the value of traditional Tibetan arts and crafts, and takes pride in learning about and sharing what she knows about the

culture. She is aware that amid rapid global change, original handicrafts and many other traditional Tibetan activities are being abandoned to the older generations, and says she will continue her work to help preserve them through the creation of items that are not only culturally meaningful, but practical as well.

"We hope that many good things happen when blankets are purchased," Gaeth says. "One hope is that the tailoring trade can come to be valued again in the Tibetan community. Another hope is that customers will be reminded of colorful Tibet and Tibetans whenever they snuggle with their blankets." w



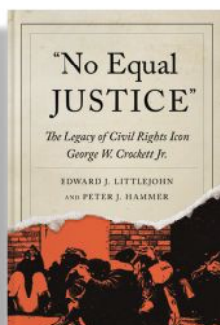
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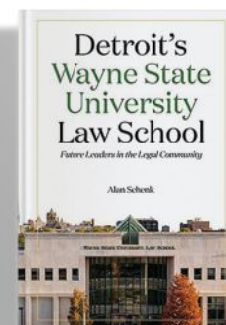
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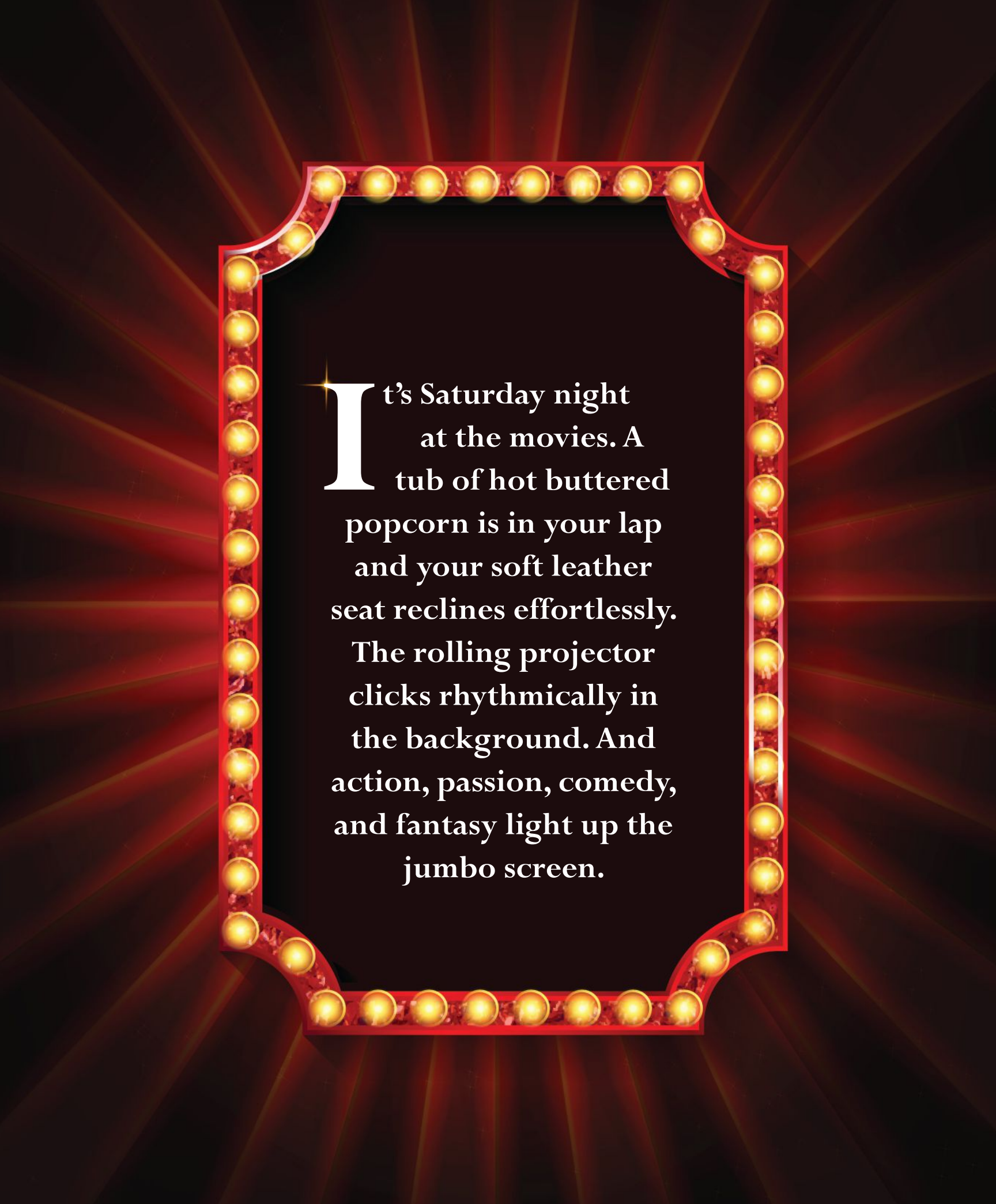




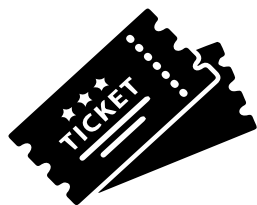
The MAGIC *of* MOVIES

By Jacqueline Lee





It's Saturday night
at the movies. A
tub of hot buttered
popcorn is in your lap
and your soft leather
seat reclines effortlessly.
The rolling projector
clicks rhythmically in
the background. And
action, passion, comedy,
and fantasy light up the
jumbo screen.



Paul Glantz '80, co-founder and chairman of Emagine Entertainment, is a major player in this dynamic industry. But the big screen — Emagine is now among the top 10 theater chains in North America — wasn't his primary career plan.

"My initial entry into the theater business was rooted in pragmatism as opposed to a desire to conquer the industry," Glantz says. "But everything that transpired between 1980 and 1989, when my then-partner and I acquired a one-screen theater, prepared me for my ultimate foray into entrepreneurship."

Equipped with knowledge of finance and insurance, Glantz saw an opportunity

to sidestep corporate bureaucracy with the purchase of a small business. That early venture — a single-screen, 265-seat movie theater in Michigan's Independence Township — would become the foundation of something much greater.

Clarkston Cinema "did not support our growing family at the time," he acknowledges, but "I became a student of the industry." With the opening of Cinema Hollywood at Birch Run in May 1997, "the understanding of the business gained in operating the Clarkston served as a springboard to the current day incarnation of Emagine Entertainment."





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THE MAGIC OF MOVIES





CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY, LUXURY AMENITIES

Emagine is widely recognized as an industry innovator. According to Glantz and his team, it was one of the first theater chains in the world to convert to 100% digital projection, and the first to introduce ultra-high definition 4K projection to the Detroit market. The chain also boasts three of the first 100 Dolby Atmos immersive sound systems worldwide.

In addition to cutting-edge technology, Emagine's theaters offer a luxury experience that incorporates reclining chairs, gourmet snacks, reserved seating, in-seat service, valet parking, and cocktail bars. In 2021, Emagine broadened its reach with the launch of live music events and, inside its Emagine Royal Oak venue, the Caesar's Sportsbook Lounge, offering multiscreen, live game viewing and gambling.

While this range of upscale features gives Emagine a competitive edge, Glantz insists that it is a dedication to service that sets his team apart from traditional theater operators.

"We are bound together at Emagine by a culture of service," he says. "It is our unending quest to provide our guests with an exemplary out-of-home entertainment experience. This entails everything from our commitment to cleanliness to the hospitality that we demonstrate at every touchpoint with our patrons."

REVIVING AN ENTERTAINMENT RITUAL

Lining up with family and friends at the movie theater to catch the latest film has been an American entertainment ritual since the early 20th century. The advent of 21st-century streaming services has revolutionized that pastime, however, offering audiences vast new options for viewing movies at home and on demand.

Through it all, Emagine Entertainment has remained a leader in the game.

“Our industry has faced indirect competitors since the advent of television, and pundits continue to insist that it is doomed,” Glantz observes. “However, much like the introduction of DVRs — which allowed more content to be produced — we are seeing that trend again today. Apple and Netflix are now producing films that they are licensing to theaters.”

Glantz argues that there is plenty of room for streaming services and movie theaters to coexist, adding that going to the movies is an experience distinct from watching a film at home.

“Much like everyone has a kitchen in their home yet people still patronize restaurants,” he says, “we think there will remain a market for those that want to see a film in a theater.”





PANDEMIC PROBLEM-SOLVING

COVID-19 forced the theater industry to adapt to other unexpected changes, including the accelerated growth of in-home digital streaming. Like other industries, the theater business was hit hard by the pandemic and, even as restrictions have lifted, many would-be moviegoers remain uncomfortable in crowds.

Glantz reflects on this “horrific” time: “Being deprived of the ability to operate our business and seeing the toll it took on our society was truly awful,” he says. But at the same time, “I do not think I ever worked as hard in my life trying, along with our other senior leaders, to hold it together and remain optimistic about the future.

“Of course,” he adds, “nothing could have been more gratifying than welcoming back our guests when the restrictions on our industry were lifted.”

Business has mostly returned to its standard, with Emagine Entertainment doing very well — Glantz says July was the best month in its history. There are plans to expand beyond the Midwest soon, with Emagine’s successful, cost-efficient strategy of refurbishing long-loved theaters in strong markets.

“I am very optimistic about the future of our business. I think we will see a complete return to normalcy by 2024,” Glantz predicts. “We look forward to bringing happiness to those that enjoy watching movies on the big screen.” ♡

IVY HARALSON

WAKANDA FOREVER

By Shawn Wright



*“Fearlessness means taking
the first step, even if you don’t
know where it will take you.”*

Chadwick Boseman

IVY HARALSON

It wasn't until Ivy Haralson arrived on the set of Marvel Studios' *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, dressed in full costume as one of the elite Dora Milaje female warriors, that she realized it wasn't a dream.

"I couldn't believe I was there. I remember walking off the set for the first time, thinking, 'This is amazing.' I could hear the Black Panther music playing in my head. And anywhere we walked at that point in costume, people were excited to see us," she says. "It was finally all coming together. For me, it was a very surreal experience."

But to reach the fictional East African Kingdom of Wakanda, Haralson had to take many steps — and perform many stunts — around the world.

Originally from southwest Detroit, Haralson was in elementary school when her parents moved the family to Belleville, Michigan. Growing up, sports — not theater — was her passion, and acting didn't take center stage until her senior year in high school. Little did she know where combining the two pursuits would ultimately take her.

"At that time, I became really interested in plays and started to learn about the theater program at Wayne State," Haralson says. "I realized I didn't

have to go super far to get a great experience, especially with potentially being able to perform at the Hilberry Theatre, where I had the opportunity to do a few shows as an undergrad. When I got here, I knew I made the right choice. I remember thinking, 'This is where I belong.'"

During her time in the Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance — from 2009 until 2013 — Haralson appeared on the Bonstelle Theatre stage as Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Catherine in *Pippin*, and a member of the Dynamites in *Hairspray*, among other roles. She also appeared on the Hilberry stage as Harpo Marx in the musical *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine* and as Peaches in *The Cider House Rules*.

"Everyone who speaks about Ivy comments on her work ethic, creativity, kindness, and generosity," says Mary Anderson, chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance in the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, about her former student. "She's an incredible star, but she's also an ensemble player because she's all about making everyone else on the production look good, too."

After college, like many other aspiring stage actors, Haralson left for the bright lights of Broadway. She had a few callbacks for the musical *Book of*

Mormon and did some small play readings, but nothing serious materialized. Soon, she fell out of theater, started bartending, and went on to managing bars. But she remained connected to her theater friends — one of whom saw an audition for a superhero stunt spectacular and encouraged Haralson to try out.

“All of my theater friends said, ‘You’re the athlete; you must go. You have to do this.’ One of them even told me if I didn’t go to the audition, we couldn’t be friends anymore,” Haralson laughs. “I was hesitant, because I’d been out of the game for so long. I wasn’t acting; I wasn’t performing. But my friend said I needed to go do this.”

I WAS MADE TO DO THIS

The push paid off. The auditions were demandingly physical, but Haralson made it through several rounds of cuts to the end, and gained confidence with each success. “I haven’t done any of this in years, and I’m still able to get this far,” she told herself at the time.

She credits WSU’s Department of Theatre and Dance for introducing her to what turned out to be a crucial skill.

“They had Jay Burkhart from the Fight Factory in Chicago come do a seminar on stage combat,” she recalls. “It was the first time in my life I realized I could be athletic and perform. It was then I knew I was made to do this.”

Haralson won the role of superhero Storm on Marvel Universe Live’s European tour. “Not only was it my first-ever job, but I was able to tour all over Europe,” Haralson says. “That was the first chapter.”

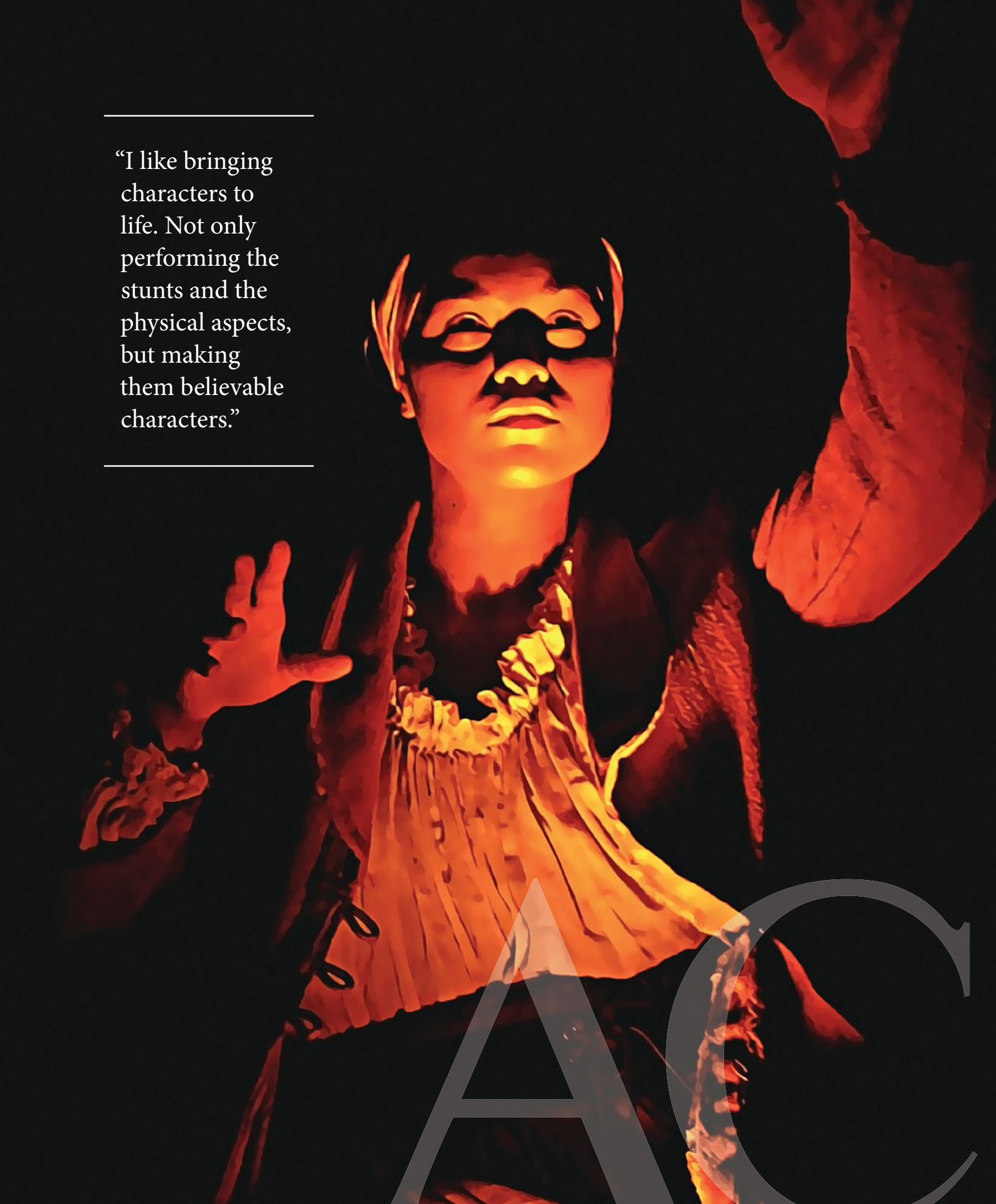
Doing stunts on stage with a microphone taped to the side of her face had her drawing on more of her WSU training. “I’m very thankful to Michael Barnes for all the voice and breath work I did with him, because that helped me perform in the live shows,” she says. “It’s the reason I know how to control my breath and my energy.”

Barnes, an associate professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance, also directed her in a few performances. “Ivy was always a joyous person to work with. She was one of those students who came into class and threw herself into the material,” he recalls. “She was always in tune with her body, so she was able to incorporate things well and quickly.”

But Haralson’s stage career appeared to come to an end as quickly as it began after she broke her ankle while on tour with the Marvel Universe Live circuit. “I was extremely disheartened,” she says. “I had always dreamed of this moment and then this happened.”



“I like bringing characters to life. Not only performing the stunts and the physical aspects, but making them believable characters.”



With assurances from show's organizers that they'd give her an offer if she was ready to go back to work in time for the next contract round, Haralson went home to heal — and to add a few new skills to her repertoire. In the end, however, that offer didn't materialize.

"But the beauty of it is I started doing things I wasn't before, like acrobatics and gymnastics, with the idea I would get offered a contract," she says. "But because I didn't, I was able to get a different job. A little while afterward, I was offered a contract with Mirage Entertainment, another live-stunt show entertainment company."

Haralson went to Dubai for three months of knife fights, bullwhip tricks, rappelling, and more. "I was like, 'Whoa, this is a lot!'" she jokes. "But I ended up saying yes to that. I learned a lot in Dubai."

After that contract ended, Mirage sent her to China, where she made huge leaps and bounds. "I was just an athlete before that," she says. "Now, I'm trying to learn things such as acrobatics and all of these specialty skills that I have no background in. China's where I started to really grow the most."

It's also where Haralson would embrace more of the "bad guy" roles. In China, for example, the role of the show's main villain was written for a male actor. But after seeing Haralson perform, the producers asked if she'd play the lead. She knew they were serious when they brought a woman in to completely re-record the character's voiceover.

"That's when I realized I was different than most stuntpeople — in that my background is acting. My favorite part about doing stunt shows is the acting," she says. "I like bringing characters to life. Not only performing the stunts and the physical aspects, but making them believable characters."

But a far cry from the roles she played back in Detroit.

"When I was at Wayne State, I was always cast as an ingénue — a nice and happy girl. But when I got into stunts, it was the complete opposite. I've always been asked to play bad guys," Haralson says. "And to me it's a compliment, because the bad guys are the ones who make the heroes look good. They know how to react, and they know how to act. I love that about my job."

After eight months in China, Haralson's contract ended. Back in New York, on a whim and with some encouragement, she accompanied a friend who was trying out for a new Cirque du Soleil show. Haralson wasn't on the list, but was asked to audition anyway. In the end, she and her friend were the only two offered the gig.

The Cirque du Soleil show ended in March 2020, just as the pandemic began. Haralson moved back home to Michigan to be with her parents and consider her next steps.

"I think one of the main ingredients to Ivy's success is her genuine curiosity and sense of discovery," says Anderson, the department chair. "She sees that every opportunity that comes her way is an opportunity to discover something about that experience, herself in the experience and what she has to offer."





MARVEL



WAKANDA AND BEYOND

In January 2021, a friend of a friend called Haralson about a job in India — a Bollywood film.

“It was my first movie as far as stunts go, because I had only done live shows up until that point,” she says. “And that was wild, another culture shock. I was able to go all over and see India during a time when there were absolutely no tourists in the country because of COVID.”

After filming wrapped she began work on *Liger*, a second Bollywood film. “One of the girls in the production and I were talking about what was going on back home. I mentioned I really wanted to get on *Black Panther 2*,” Haralson says. “It was going to be in the summer, so I needed to put feelers out to figure who was coordinating that movie.”

She ended up connecting via Instagram with Aaron Toney, a longtime Marvel Studios stunt performer who has doubled as Anthony Mackey’s Falcon since *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* and had stunt roles in *Black Panther*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and other films.

“We had messaged back and forth in the past, but Aaron and I weren’t close or anything. I figured I would just reach out,” Haralson says. “I messaged him and asked who was coordinating *Black Panther 2* so I could submit my stuff and at least put myself out there.” That coordinator, as it turned out, was Toney himself. Shortly after that a congratulatory email arrived: She was one of the Dora Milaje.



“When the first *Black Panther* movie came out and I learned who the Dora Milaje were, I knew immediately that it was what I was meant to do with my life,” she says. “If ever there was something I had been working toward that culminated into one person, it would be a Dora Milaje.”

Marvel’s Dora Milaje (pronounced “DOR-ah muh-LAH-jay”) are not enhanced individuals; they have no superpowers. Their fighting skills

come from years of training with weapons and armor made of near-indestructible vibranium, a fictional metal in the Marvel universe. And to become elite Wakanda warriors, Haralson and her fellow Dora Milaje underwent similar intensive training.

“During the production, we trained like crazy,” she says. “We ran every morning, anywhere from one mile to two miles in Atlanta. Outside.

“When the first *Black Panther* movie came out and I learned who the Dora Milaje were, I knew immediately that it was what I was meant to do with my life.”

In the summer,” Haralson shaved her head every day for the role. “We did a lot of different drills to get our legs strong and become comfortable with the weapons. It became a studiowide known thing that the Dora train every morning, running around the studio.”

Filming for *Wakanda Forever* began in June 2020 — just a few months after the onset of the pandemic. In August, the mounting tragedy of the pandemic

was further weighted with the death from colon cancer of *Black Panther* star Chadwick Boseman at age 43. As stunned castmates and fans mourned, work quickly began on script revisions that would reflect the enormous loss. Rather than recasting Boseman’s King T’Challa role or using CGI to render his character in the sequel, director Ryan Coogler restructured the story to memorialize the actor.

“I remember when I found out he passed away. I was crying. He gave a lot of us the opportunity to see someone who looks like us as the hero,” Haralson says. “Being on set without Chadwick, you could feel it. You could feel that it was heavy, but it was a feeling of, ‘We must do this for him. We must uphold the legacy of what this is and what it means to people to have hope that it will continue, even though a big part of it is missing.’”

Even prior to the November 2022 release of *Wakanda Forever*, Haralson’s career snowballed. In February 2022, after putting away her Dora Milaje costume, she flew to Spain for six weeks of work on a Peacock reboot series of the film *Vampire Academy*. Then it was off to Hungary for another Peacock show, *The Continental* — a prequel to the successful John Wick film franchise starring Keanu Reeves.

“One of the big things I realized when I went to New York after leaving Wayne State was how many of the successful Broadway actors were just showing up,” Haralson says. “We can be perfectionists as performers, but sometimes you must be OK with looking dumb in order to grow.”

“It’s difficult, but that’s a big theme in my life,” she adds. “The only way I’ve ever grown is that I must be OK looking silly and continue to put myself out there.” ♡

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