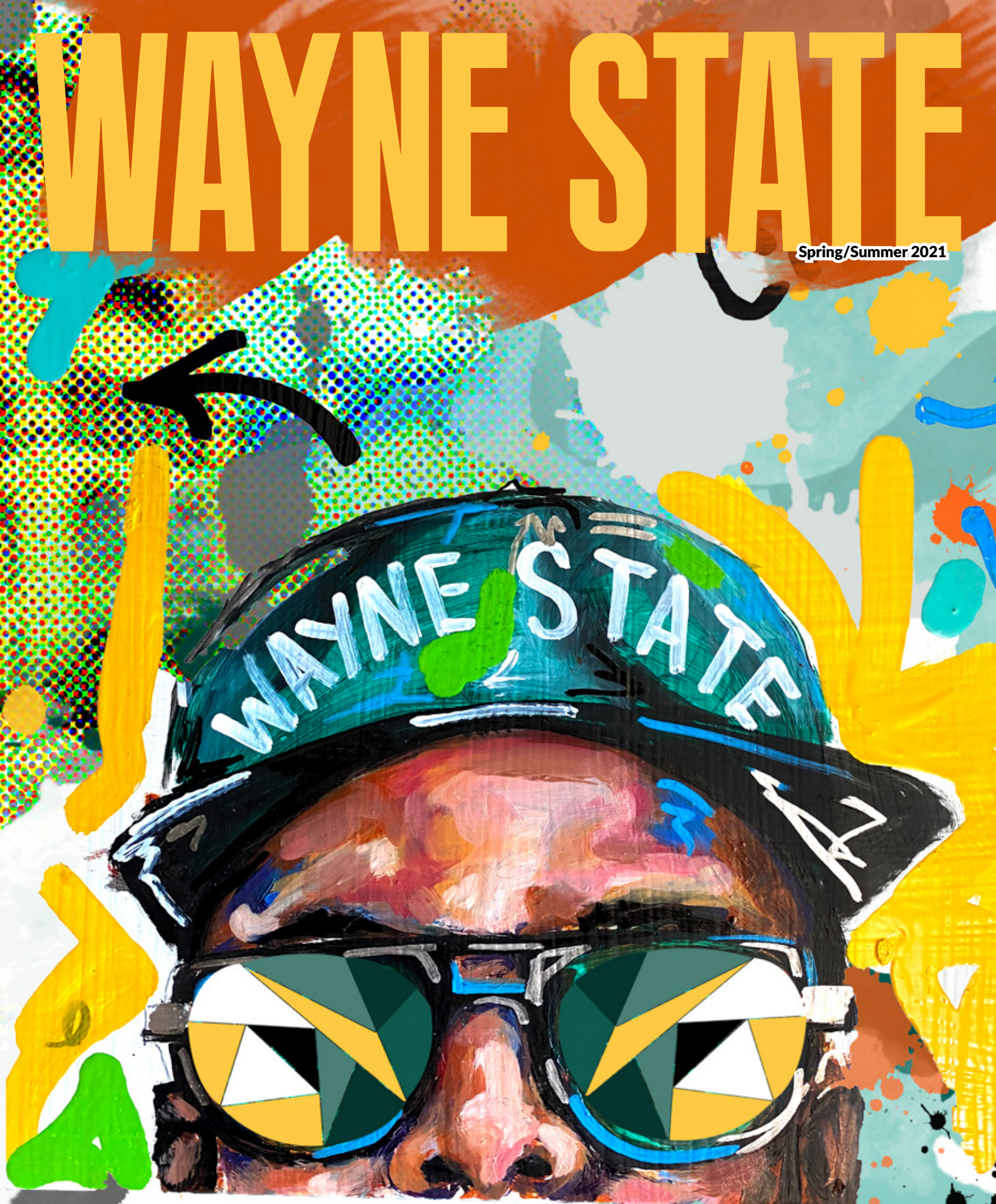


WAYNE STATE

Spring/Summer 2021



Share your words of wisdom

You left Wayne State with more than a degree.
Here's a chance to tell today's students what
you really learned.

RON SHELL '66, M.S. '72

Years later, you will realize that your college experience was one of the best experiences in your entire life. Don't rush through this time of freedom, growth and fun!



MARIA E. PEREZ '80

Be open to every opportunity that comes your way, and always remember that chance favors those in motion.



YOUNGKEY CHUNG '10, M.A. '11, M.D. '15

Be kind and make friends everywhere you go — you never know when your paths will cross in the future!



Participate at alumni.wayne.edu/connect/advice.



ALUMNI.WAYNE.EDU

LOOKING AHEAD TOGETHER

With the arrival of spring comes an optimistic sense of renewal at the Tierney Alumni House. Across the Wayne State campus, we are slowly but surely seeing more and more in-person activity. As this edition of Wayne State Magazine goes to press, the Alumni Association is already busy celebrating its newest members – our 2021 graduates! Their academic achievements inspire us and we can't wait to see what they do next.

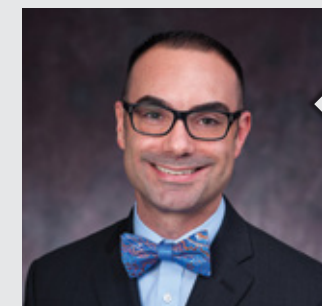
Since the last edition of Wayne State Magazine, perhaps you've joined us for alumni trivia night or reconnected with us during a virtual networking event. Maybe you've participated in the Warrior Book Club or one of our diversity, equity and inclusion dialogues. We are grateful for all that you are doing to support your alma mater and stay connected to the alumni community, so thank you.

Through the Alumni Association scholarship program, we just recently awarded more than \$120,000 in student financial aid to an incredibly impressive slate of deserving students that represent a diverse array of academic disciplines. Alumni from many professional fields continue to offer their time and expertise to help our students succeed too. From our semester-based industry mentorship programs to special student programs featuring alumni, our students continue to make critical connections with alumni that will help them for years to come.

Although we may not be hosting in-person events or traveling to see you as soon as we'd like, we are still here as a resource and point of pride. In early June we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of graduation – the "Golden Jubilee," as we call it - for the classes of 1970 and 1971. This summer, we will offer more virtual social events for alumni, along with more substantive program offerings featuring Wayne State experts.

Please continue to meet us at alumni.wayne.edu to see all we have to offer; and as always, if you have ideas for us to consider, I invite you to let us know. We want your suggestions on how we can best ensure that the Wayne State alumni experience is positive and that what we offer remains interesting, meaningful and useful to you.

Wishing you and yours continued safety and wellness,



Peter R. Caborn

Peter R. Caborn
Associate Vice President,
Alumni Affairs & Advancement Services
Executive Director, Alumni Association



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Spring/Summer2021

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ON THE COVER

This edition's cover is an original design by WSU alumna and notable Detroit artist Desiree Kelly. To read more about Kelly, see page 8.



campus routines and traditions. While precautions will be in place, we are planning for the majority of our fall semester classes to be offered in person. We also look forward to offering the opportunities for social interaction and engagement that are so vital to the college experience.

As we make the necessary adjustments for fall, we are also planning for the university's future. It is hard for me to believe, but the culmination of our Distinctively Wayne State 2016-21 strategic plan is upon us. I am proud that we reached or exceeded most of our goals, including:

- ▶ Exceeding our six-year graduation rate goal of 50% by 2021. We achieved a 52% graduation rate in 2020, a year earlier than our deadline.
- ▶ Enrolling the three largest freshmen classes in Wayne State's history (2018, 2019, 2020).
- ▶ Surpassing our \$750 million "Pivotal Moments" capital campaign goal one year early. At its conclusion, we had raised \$776.5 million.
- ▶ Completion and beginning implementation of a new campus master plan.
- ▶ Creation of an Office of Multicultural Student Engagement, which has been serving our students for the last five years.

Despite our accomplishments, we are not satisfied. I believe we will emerge from the pandemic a better university. Guided by our commitment to student success and excellence, we are eager to take the lessons learned, build upon our gains, and tackle new challenges. Discussions are underway for the 2022-27 strategic plan that will guide the university's initiatives over the next five years and help clarify the university's mission, vision and values.

I welcome your input and hope to see you soon.

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

M. Roy Wilson
President
Wayne State University

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Paint

PASSION

PORTRAITISTS

By Jacqueline Lee

As a native Detroiter, Desiree Kelly '11 has been involved in several aspects of the arts around Detroit since her childhood. When she began to sell her art at festivals and engage with others over her pieces, she realized the magic of expressing people's lives and their experiences through her creations.

"I really took two different paths with my art – graphic design and then painting on the side," she said. "When I was doing festival circuits, I started to talk to people and they showed interest in what I was creating by hand, and that's when I realized 'I got something here – I can sell my art.'"

Often known as "Detroit's Premiere Portrait Painter," Kelly is a full-time artist and the owner of Desiree Kelly Art. She is acclaimed for her immersive portraits of public icons and her unique ability to reflect on the narrative of her subjects. Kelly incorporates artifacts and phrases within each work and uses a unique mixture of street art and traditional oil technique.



“Painting is something I’ve always done and kept doing.”

“Growing up I was always involved in the arts. I went to the Winan’s Academy [of Performing Arts] which was an intro to everything, and then I studied graphic design at Wayne State,” she said. “Painting is something I’ve always done and kept doing.”

Since becoming a full-time independent artist in 2014, Kelly’s work can be experienced across Detroit in permanent museum collections, temporary exhibitions, products, and on buildings and billboards. Her artistic use of energy, colors, and mixed media stands out among others and most recently caught the attention of one of the world’s leading food and beverage companies – Pepsi.

“There are many corporations that I’ve worked with, and they just email me directly – they reach out,” said Kelly. “Pepsi’s advertising agency brought this campaign idea to me early last year. They asked for my thoughts about the theme and said to do whatever I come up with in my style.”





“People hire me for private commissions portraits paintings corporate work I’ve really built a business surrounding all of it.”

Kelly’s artwork is currently displayed on several Pepsi billboards and wallsapes across the city, and on limited edition packaging and labels. She was specifically selected by the company for her positive leadership and remarkable impact on the Detroit arts. The campaign “Full of Detroit Soul” explores representations of what “Detroit Soul” means to each featured artist.

Pepsi describes its goal as wanting to create something that “authentically and unapologetically captures the spirit of Detroit [through] local artists, makers and organizations to create a campaign that is powerful, engaging and, most of all, a vibrant celebration of Detroit, [their] history in the city and what being a proud Detroiter is all about.”

Similar to Pepsi, Kelly describes Detroit as having “something that a lot of people try to capture, but that only some people can do.”



“I love the authenticity of Detroit.”

“I felt this was an important role for me to tell the narrative, especially being a native Detroit artist,” said Kelly. “I wanted to come across as truly authentic and [as someone] that people of the community would connect to and identify with, pulling from what I have personally experienced living in the city.”

In the mural, Kelly includes a self-portrait wearing headphones, which she describes as listening to the sound of the city. She explains that the other elements dance around her figure to create movement which allows the viewer to read through the composition. She includes old school cars, skates for skate culture, the Spirit of Detroit landmark, and individual neighborhood names throughout the piece.

Growing up in Detroit and having been immersed in the culture has shaped her work on this piece in addition to several of her other murals.


“I love the authenticity of Detroit,” said Kelly. “The attention that the city is getting now is interesting to see – everyone wants to be a part of it. Having grown naturally with it – seeing it all – is very unique to visually interpret as a creative.”

The young artist has also been commissioned by a number of other significant corporations including the Detroit Pistons, Footlocker, Converse, Pandora, Beaumont, and Red Bull. Kelly is the recipient of several awards and recognitions including being named as a

Crain's Detroit Business “Twenty in their 20's” honoree and a *Complex* magazine “Rising Street Artist to Watch in Detroit.”

“Being a full-time independent artist can get really busy because I do everything on my own,” she said. “People hire me for private commissions, portraits, paintings, corporate work – I've really built a business surrounding all of it.”

Kelly continues to find impactful ways to create uplifting messages through her artistic expression especially during these unprecedented times. She enjoys community-oriented projects and this theme shines throughout her work.

The artist recently began painting the Piston's oversized 3D block letters at Little Caesar's Arena with various themes, the latest being Women's History Month and Black History Month. Some other recent favorites include historical hospital portraits for the new Henry Ford Cancer Institute Healing Arts program, which brings Detroit culture to patients visiting from around the world, and interior artwork and a large “Rooting for Everybody Black” mural of Emmy Award-winning actress Issa Rae on the brick of Kuzzo's Chicken & Waffles restaurants. 



HIS CALLING

By Darrell Dawsey



The way zoologist
Michael Reed '84 remembers it, it was
the birds who called to him first.

As a kid growing up in Detroit, he would join his classmates for regular outings with his school teacher at Courville Elementary School, the group strolling through the neighborhood and scanning the treetops as they listened intently to a chorus of chirps.

“I loved that, when we would go outside and listen for the sounds of the different birds,” Reed recalled recently. “We would try to figure out which bird made which sound. I can remember that being one of the first places I really began to take an interest in animals.”

Over the next several decades, Reed’s curiosity about animals blossomed into a passion that led him from Detroit’s Benedictine High School to Wayne State University — where he earned a bachelor’s in biology in 1984 — and fueled a groundbreaking career that has lifted Reed into the rarefied ranks of leadership in Detroit’s sprawling zoo system and in zoological circles state and nationwide.

Currently serving as curator of citizen science education for the Detroit Zoological Society, Reed has spent some 30 years caring for the stunning variety of fish, insects and other animals that populate the Detroit Zoo, Belle Isle Nature Center (formerly Belle Isle Zoo) and Belle Isle Aquarium. He has also spent that time exporting his love for and deep knowledge of the animal kingdom to schoolchildren throughout Michigan — and especially in his hometown.

“I’ve been to just about every public school in Detroit,” said Reed, “and I still love talking to these kids about animals as much as ever. It’s the smile they give when they say, ‘Wow, you work at the zoo.’ It puts you in a different place and makes all those nights studying until 2 am worth it.”

As a high-profile African American zoologist, Reed said he feels a particular obligation to help educate Black children in the city about the wonders of the animal world. To this end, he has pushed back hard against not only stereotypes but against staid, traditional approaches to science education.

“Throughout my career, I’ve heard, ‘We can’t get Black scientists,’” he said. “But the way it’s taught, the emphasis is usually put on the book side of science. I have a lot of success reaching kids — and this is one big reason I love my career — because most kids love animals. Most kids love being outside.”

“However, they don’t think of it as a being science a lot of times. But when I come in, say I’m a zoologist, an environmental scientist and a geneticist, and I talk a little bit about what I do, many young people become very interested. They’re like, ‘Wow, I didn’t think you could work at the zoo being a scientist.’”

A LOVE FOR THE LAB

Conversely, for much of his own childhood, Reed said, he didn't think much about being anything other than a scientist.

"I was just one of those kids, man," he said. "I would do little experiments to show off to my friends. My dad even built me a laboratory in the basement. He had no idea what I was doing, but he trusted me. I would do my thing. I would go out and impress the kids by making rockets with vinegar and baking soda. I was always a quiet, shy kid so I used science to make friends."

After high school, Reed set off to the west side of the state for college, thinking that getting away from Detroit would be a good experience. But a year into college, Reed came back to Detroit, hoping to integrate himself into a stronger support system. "So many minority students in the science field had dropped out," he said.

He enrolled in Wayne State, where his desire for more support was gratified. "Wayne State was tough," he said. "But the major thing I was able to do was connect with a bunch of like-minded people. We formed a study group and made sure everybody made it through."

Reed said he was considering a career in medicine, but first, he needed work. Not long after receiving his bachelor of arts in biology, Reed found himself at a City of Detroit job fair seeking a municipal position as a general science technical aid.

Reed wound up being called for a position with the city, but before he could start, the post was eliminated due to budget cuts. Fortunately, a recruiter had noted that Reed had also expressed a desire to work with the zoo and informed him that the city had an opening for a zookeeper at the Detroit Zoo.

"They hired me on the spot," he said.

Months later, Reed was moved to the Belle Isle Zoo, which excited him. "Belle Isle was where I wanted to go in the first place," he said. "That meant I'd get to work with different animals. At the time, at the Detroit Zoo, people tended to stay in one place. If you got assigned to, say, the penguins, people would spend 20 years there."



CALLED TO SERVE

After about a year of exemplary work at the Belle Isle Zoo, Reed received a call from a woman who oversaw the Belle Isle Zoo affairs for the office of then-mayor Coleman A. Young. The current director of the zoo was leaving, and Young was looking to shake up leadership at the zoo.

After summoning Reed to the Manoogian Mansion, Young vetted the young zookeeper and, following their chat, tapped Reed to become the youngest person to head up a zoo division. In the years since, Reed's profile has grown. He has helmed zoological work at both zoos and the aquarium and, for a two-day period, oversaw all three institutions simultaneously — a feat that hasn't been done since.

Although his position doesn't demand that he wear a uniform, Reed can almost always be found clad in his work togs, even when touring the grounds and glad-handing with zoo visitors. And of course, he continues his outreach work.

His speaking gigs in public schools and colleges — at which the insect expert often talks about the value of bugs — have grown so popular over the past several years that he's earned the nickname "Spiderman." Additionally, he participates in programs such as Metro Detroit Youth Day, an annual all-day celebration of local children that is held on Belle Isle. Reed also provides science lessons to kids at Ecotek, a science research organization comprised of science students ages 10 to 17 and headquartered at WSU's TechTown.

"Mike is a wonderful man, and he genuinely cares about children," said Barbara Jean Johnson, Ph.D., a co-chairperson on the Metro Detroit Youth Day executive board. "In the 30 years I've known him, he has always had a smooth demeanor. He's quiet in nature. He doesn't have to be in the spotlight. But when he's working, he demands attention because of the power of his work. From the time he started at the zoo, he had done a phenomenal job."



His work isn't limited to Detroit either. For years, Reed worked with Michigan Technological University and the U.S. Forest Service's Urban Connections program to bring scores of underrepresented high schoolers to the Upper Peninsula to explore STEM career opportunities, learn survival skills and fan their love of science.

"It's interesting because a lot of them are afraid of going into the woods before the program — but afterward, they are not," said Reed. "They are curious. And while it seems like we're just up there in the woods, throughout that time, I'm actually teaching lessons related to environmental science and stewardship: How do you ID bugs in water and know whether the water is clean? I'm also trying to teach lessons on life in general. A lot of kids turn around and want to go into that field after we finish."

"There's nothing better than when a kid comes up to me and is interested in the work that I do."




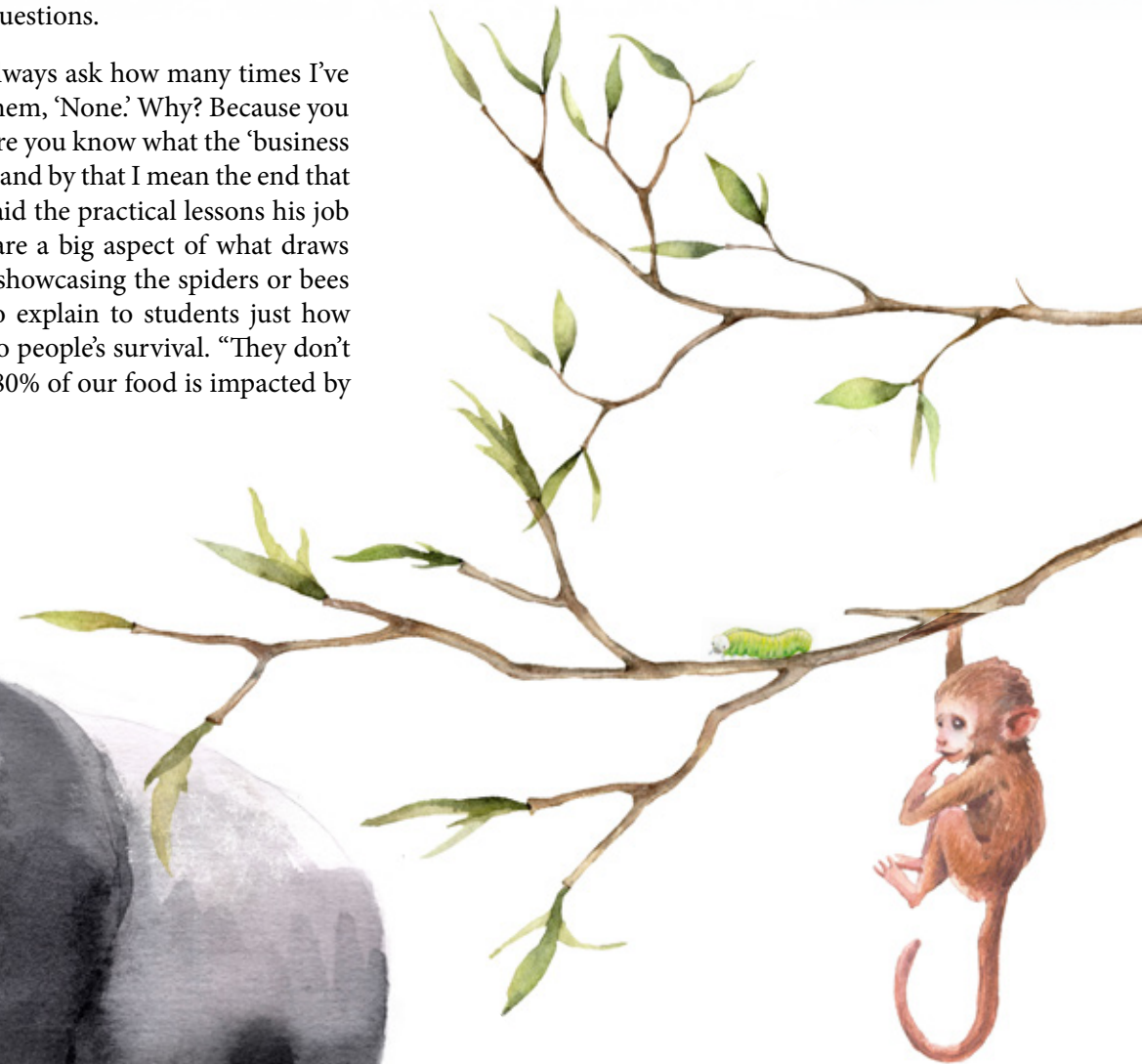
Named the first Black president of the Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education in 2012 and now a board member of the alliance, Reed also works to recruit science teachers and to provide them professional development

Reed is rarely happier, though, than when he's simply doing his job, whether that's feeding moose, caring for chimps, or showing off insects. He recalled how Executive Director Ron Kagan, after granting Reed permission to design a unique exhibit dedicated to spiders, asked him to spend more time talking with kids and to create an education program for them about arachnids. Such work also gives him a chance to address some serious questions.

Said Reed, "The kids always ask how many times I've been bitten, and I tell them, 'None.' Why? Because you should always make sure you know what the 'business end' of the animal is — and by that I mean the end that can hurt you." Reed said the practical lessons his job allows him to impart are a big aspect of what draws crowds to him. When showcasing the spiders or bees on a tree, Reed gets to explain to students just how important insects are to people's survival. "They don't know that as much as 80% of our food is impacted by insects," he said.

Whether tending to animals, sharing little-known facts with children, training teachers or exposing Detroit students to careers in science, Reed said he always strives to bring fun to his endeavors.

"I have an opportunity to do what I love, which is work around animals from all over the world, and combine that with the opportunity to impact all these young people and those young at heart," he said. "There's nothing better than when a kid comes up to me and is interested in the work that I do. Right then, right there, I'm always reminded of what my calling is." 





Let's show 'em
how it's done.

CREATING SOUND WAVES



By Da'Stanza Murphy '10 '13

After graduating from the Department of Music in 2017, Music Technology alumnus Tyler Hoffman had high hopes of pursuing a career as a sound designer for film and video games. With an eager spirit, Hoffman applied and was accepted to the University of Southern California's MFA program in Film and Television Production in Winter 2020.

“You could tell right from the start Tyler was bound for success,”

“I thought USC would be a great catalyst for having a reason to be closer to the film/ game industry while learning from the best and using outstanding equipment and facilities,” said Hoffman. “I went out to USC in April 2019 for their graduate acceptance day to meet faculty and (possible) future peers. I fell in love and definitely wanted to go at this point.”

Like many students taking their first steps toward entering the industry, Hoffman wanted to find an internship opportunity between semesters. However, for most internships at game/movie studios, student status is typically required to be considered. An opportunity at Sony in San Diego for a sound design intern led him to apply in late August.

“You could tell right from the start Tyler was bound for success,” said Assistant Professor of Composition and Theory Jonathan Anderson. “From when he integrated his dance-activated Dance Dance Revolution game controller for designing sound worlds in my Interactive Electronic Music class, to later mentoring him on his successfully funded Undergraduate Research Grant for developing an interactive music harmonization software program called SmartHarmony, I saw firsthand his passion for sound and technology.”

Hoffman received a call in early October saying the candidates were pared down to a few people. To advance in the selection process he had to take a sound design test. “I was floored with excitement and was sent a 26-second clip of their Spider-Man game to perform a sound design test that was due on Halloween,” explained Hoffman. “I took my time designing, recording and editing sounds to fit and be perfect; all while documenting my approach to recording and designing certain sounds.”

Three hours later Hoffman received a call from Sony Recruiting asking if he was interested in a more permanent position.

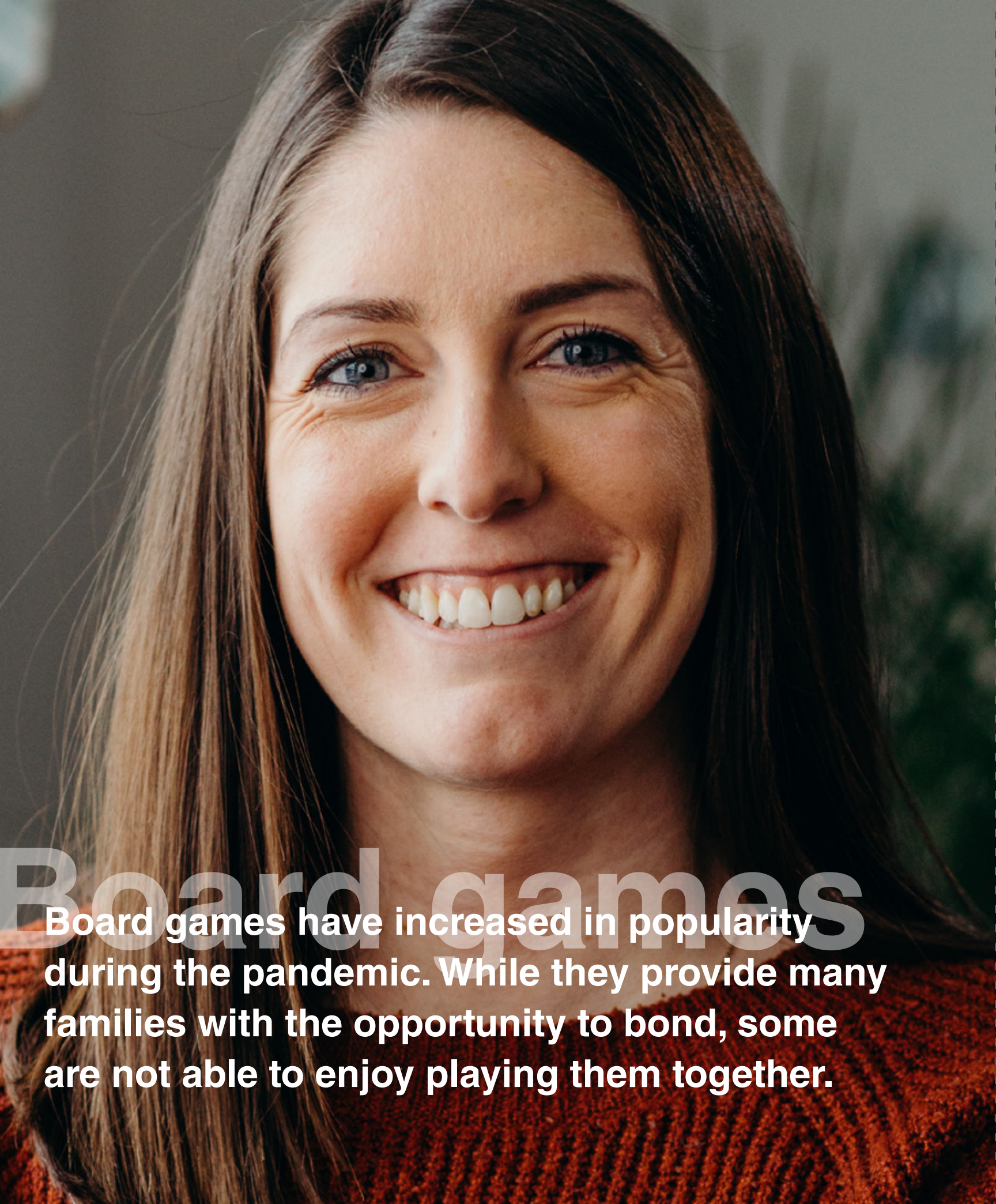
“The following day I received a lot of information on the position and we continued forward with the process. Sony flew me out to Insomniac Games in Burbank for an in-person interview. We all hit it off and I had a great time. Not too long after I was offered the position!” explained Hoffman.

In January 2020, he was asked to come on board as an associate sound designer as part of Sony Interactive Entertainment’s PDSG (Product Development Service Group) Sound team on-site at Sony’s newly acquired Insomniac Games location. By July 2020, Hoffman was brought onto the Insomniac Games sound department as a full-time fixed-term associate sound designer with the hopes of continuing at Insomniac for a long time to come.

“His hard work at Wayne State paid off, leading to his internship and job at Yessian Music, and eventually his position at Sony, and we couldn’t be prouder,” said Anderson.

Hoffman shared that he is incredibly grateful for each step of his journey and for everyone that helped him get to where he is today.

“I said a final goodbye to USC, as in the end, the outcome was better. If I hadn’t applied for graduate school, I wouldn’t have been able to apply for the internship which turned into my dream job, said Hoffman. “My mentor at USC encouraged me to take this opportunity as she wants this for her students after they graduate.”



Board games

Board games have increased in popularity during the pandemic. While they provide many families with the opportunity to bond, some are not able to enjoy playing them together.

HOW TO OVERCOME FEARS TO SUCCEED

By Tracy Walker

Colleen Sullivan, a board-certified behavior analyst, discovered this while working with a client with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

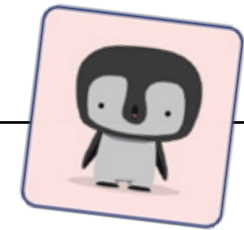
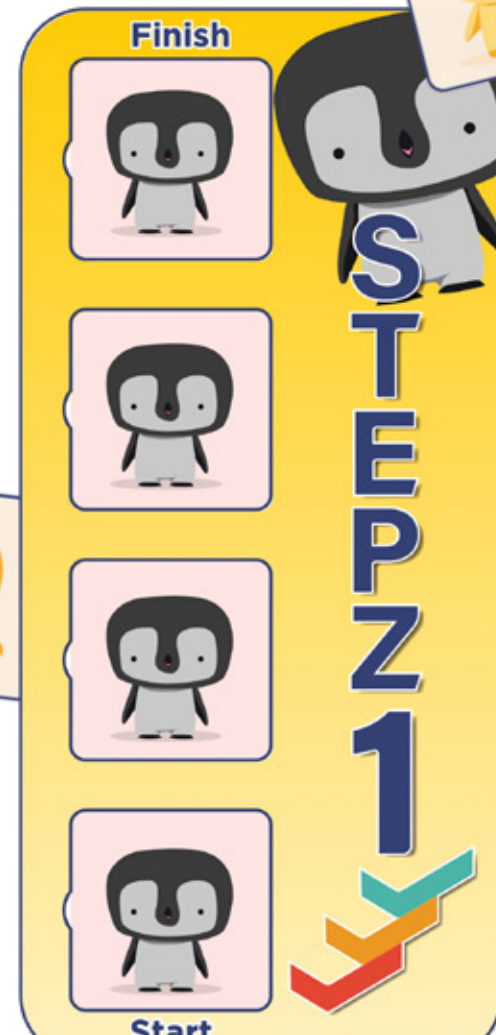
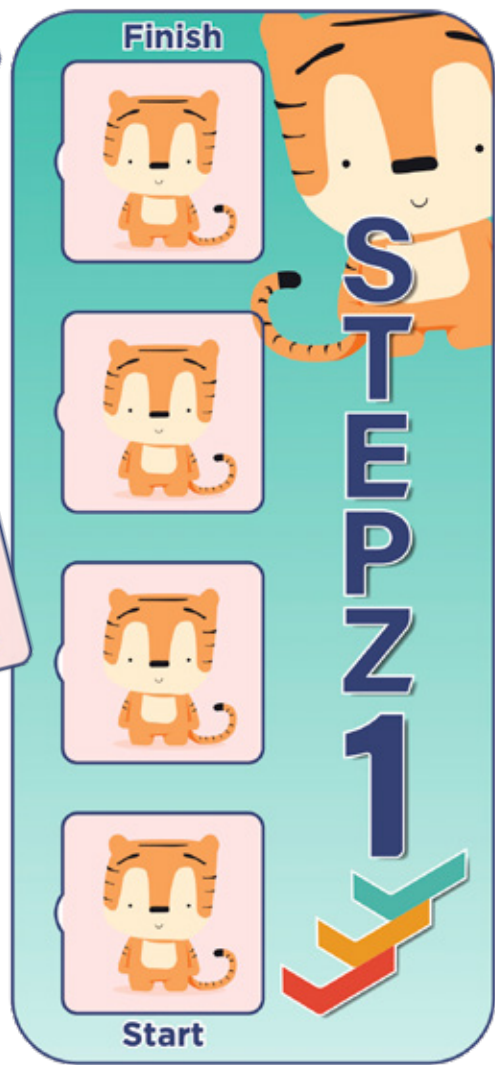
“The client’s mother really wanted her to learn how to play this popular board game,” she said. “I worked one-on-one with her and tried several strategies to teach her how to play it, but she could not navigate the game. The board was overstimulating and confusing, the small pieces were difficult for her to grasp, the directions were too complex, and it took a long time to complete.”

Sullivan began researching board games for individuals with autism in hopes that she could find one, buy it and teach her client how to play it. Her search netted zero results.

“I couldn’t find any games for people with autism,” she said. “I started thinking it would be awesome if there was one. I wanted to make playing board games easier, less stressful and fun for people with ASD.”

Sullivan got to work. She designed a board game on paper and tried teaching her client how to play it. When the client accomplished the goal, Sullivan realized she was on to something, and STEPZ Board Games — the first three-set board game designed for individuals with autism — was born.





“It has been exciting to take a challenge I faced with one client and use it to produce a game that meets the needs of a larger population.”

“As a behavior analyst, I develop plans and programs to help teach my clients the functional skills they need,” said Sullivan, who aspires to open her own applied behavior analysis practice. “It has been exciting to take a challenge I faced with one client and use it to produce a game that meets the needs of a larger population.”

Sullivan, who earned a master's in educational psychology in 2018, took courses in applied behavior analysis so she could take the BCBA exam. She encourages students majoring in different subjects to think about earning a certificate or degree. “If you are interested in pursuing speech pathology, occupational therapy or physical therapy, consider ABA. It allows you to work on language, daily living skills, motor skills and behavior. It’s comprehensive, individualized therapy that makes a big impact on people’s lives.”

Sullivan notes that STEPZ, which features eight animal characters, is different from traditional board games. It has a distinct beginning and ending point, provides players with the predictability and fast pace often needed to maintain their attention, and includes big tokens to make holding and gripping pieces easier for players. Further, it offers benefits not only for individuals with ASD but also those with physical or other developmental disabilities.




” My goal is to make games that are inclusive. ”

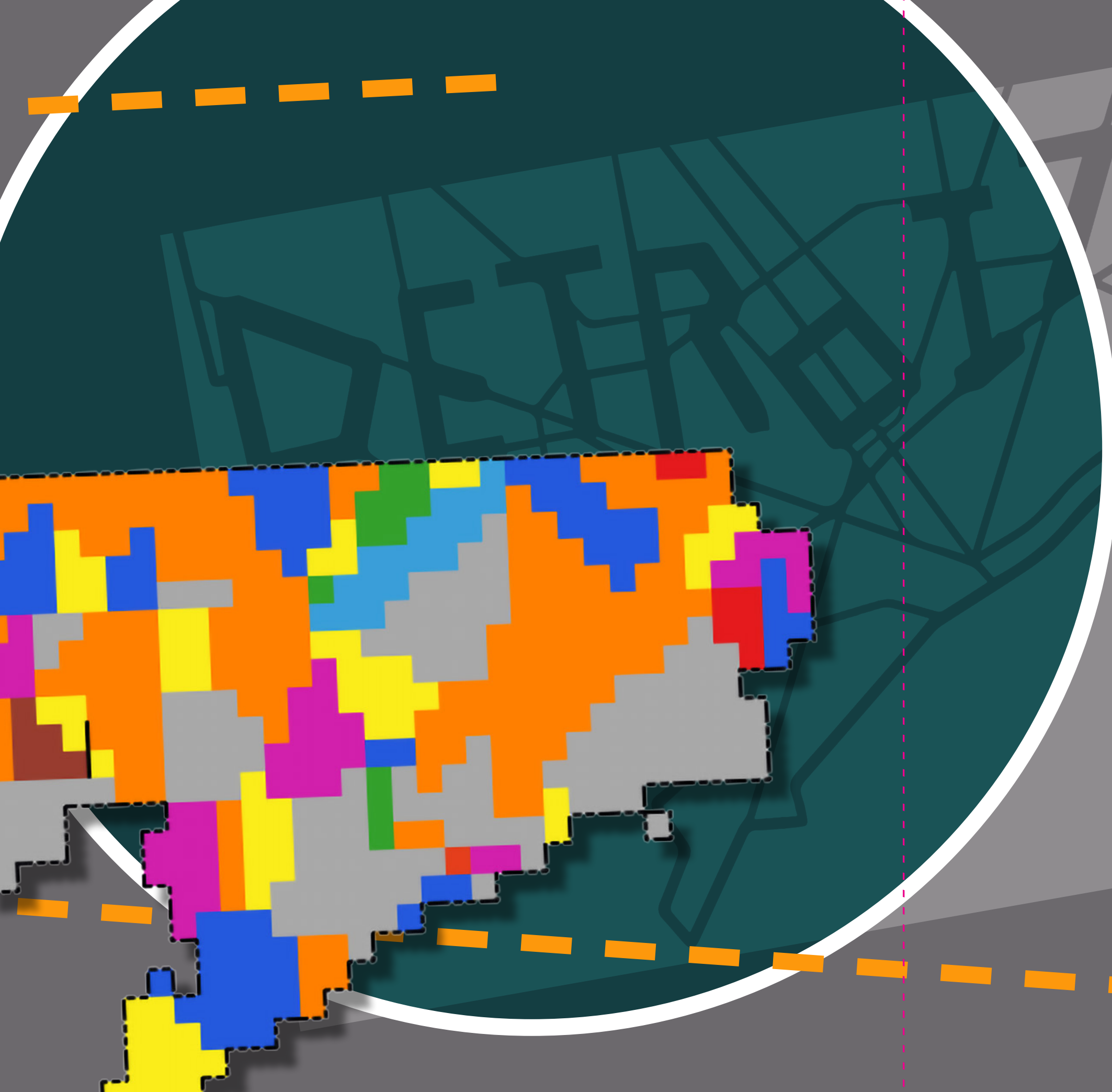


According to Sullivan, play can be the foundation for many learning opportunities. STEPZ helps players develop their fine motor, communication and social skills as well as practice identifying animals, matching, following directions, taking turns, making eye contact and tolerating losing.

Although she designed the game with 3- to 7-year-old children in mind, Sullivan says it can be enjoyed by individuals of all ages.

“I have 15-year-old clients who would benefit from playing STEPZ,” she said. “This game is broken down such that anyone could play it right out of the box. My goal is to make games that are inclusive.” 





Topography

**MAPPING
THE MOTOR CITY**

By Steve Zoski

When people ask Alex B. Hill '16 to give them a brief introduction to Detroit, he tells them that doing so is nearly impossible. Instead, Hill asks them to trace their hand on a piece of paper and label the fingers as the major Detroit roads - Michigan, Grand River, Woodward, Gratiot, and Jefferson - branching out from downtown like the spokes of a wheel. Participants draw the landmarks and locations most meaningful to themselves within the traced hand's boundaries. Every hand map looks different. Some people's palms only include midtown, downtown, or the neighborhood where they grew up.

The endless perspectives help illustrate Hill's point - it is impossible to accurately depict the city in just one sitting. Every one of the city's more than 700,000 residents has a story to tell, and Hill wants to share them through the magic of maps.

This realization inspired Hill to create "Detroit in 50 Maps", a cartography book that invites readers to look at Detroit in a number of unique ways. Though he and others will continue to make new maps for as long as Detroit's story goes on, Hill hopes this collection of his favorites will serve as a brief but captivating introduction to Detroit life.

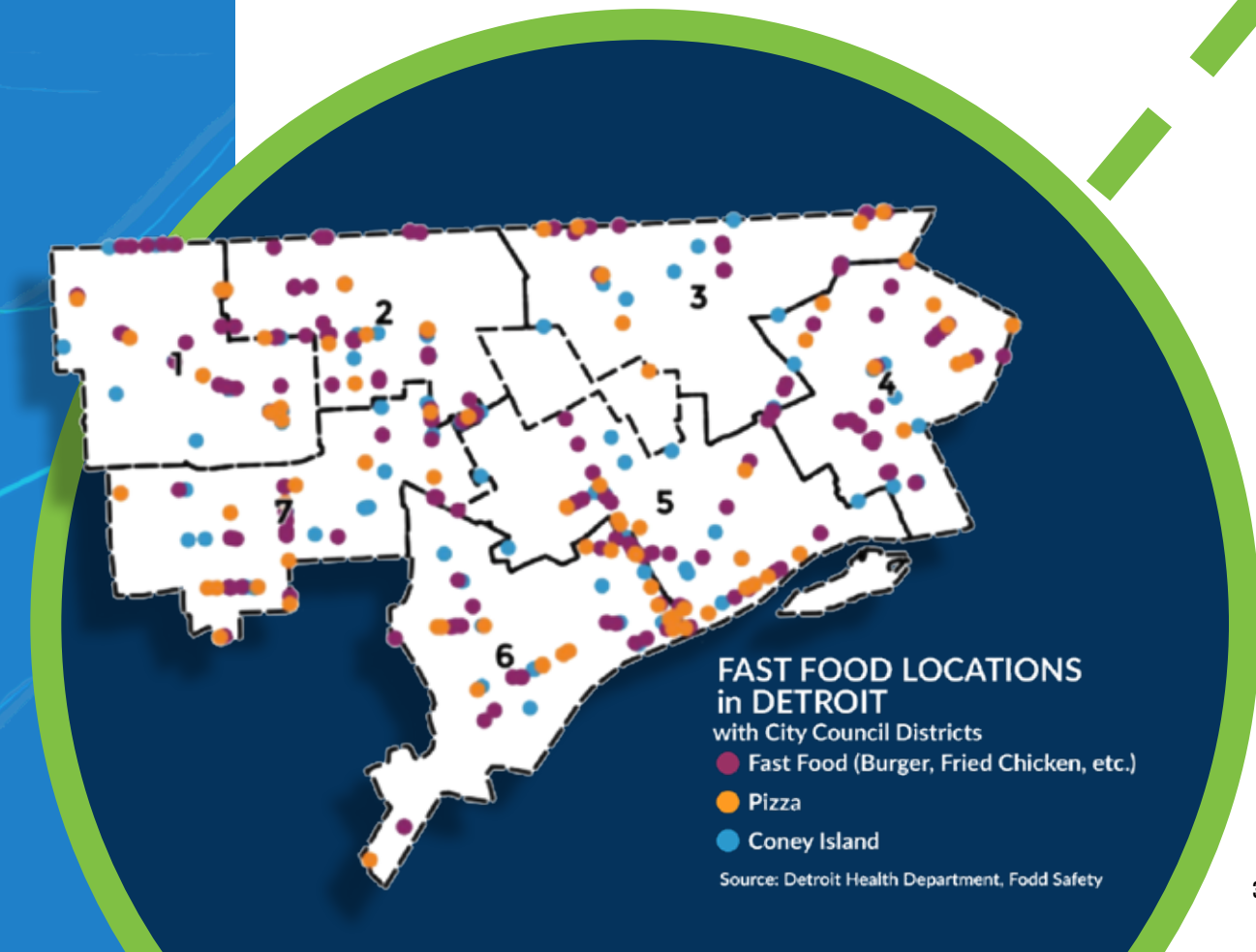
Hill's maps convey the city's boundaries, neighborhood borderlines, landmarks and roads but are especially memorable for their ability to portray what life in Detroit entails for the people who call it home. Maps included in the book show where Detroiters buy their groceries, most frequently see wild pheasants, and even where they live in relation to the many different brands of pizza restaurants and fast-food chains. Some maps were also created to help inform citizens about resources during COVID-19.



One map compares sites in Detroit that manufactured artillery during World War II as part of the "The Arsenal of Democracy" with recent local efforts to produce personal protective equipment including masks, face-shields, and hand sanitizer - a campaign some have dubbed "The Arsenal of Health."

Hill received his master's in medical anthropology from Wayne State in 2016. He acknowledges that he approaches cartography as an anthropologist, but he is also a health geographer and information designer.

His maps include eye-catching colors, creative shading, superimposed geographic and geopolitical borders, carefully-researched records, and informative keys, analysis and captions. Hill said arranging all of those elements together enables maps to illustrate Detroit's complex layers, stories, and issues in a way that spreadsheets, news articles or social media might not.



FAST FOOD LOCATIONS in DETROIT
with City Council Districts
● Fast Food (Burger, Fried Chicken, etc.)
● Pizza
● Coney Island

Source: Detroit Health Department, Food Safety

"For better or for worse, maps are magic, and people believe them. When you present data in a visually compelling way, it really grabs people's attention," Hill said. "It's not that people can't figure these things out on their own, but sometimes having that visual data display helps to change the way you think about things."

Hill said his maps are about the human experience of Detroiters. Hill often conducts extensive ethnographical interviews and employs his data-informed maps to show how cartography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be powerful tools for citizens to ignite change. Ideally, Hill said, he wants to empower Detroiters to make their own maps that bring about a difference in their home communities.

In 2020, Hill returned to WSU as the GIS Director at the university's Center for Translational Science and Clinical Research Innovation and as an adjunct professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. In 2012, Hill launched DETROITography.com, which features many of his maps included in "Detroit in 50 Maps," historical maps, and maps made by other Detroit-based cartographers. He also serves as project director of the Detroit Food Map Initiative, which has been mapping nutritional access of Detroit grocery stores, corner stores, and farmers markets since 2011.

For Hill, the mapmaking process begins when he or someone else raises a compelling question, like "where are people seeing the most pheasants?"

"I go from there looking for any data that could help answer that question. And sometimes, honestly, a mapping project could take me six months to figure it out. It could take me a day. Sometimes it takes three years to find the data," Hill said. "In that whole process, I interview a lot of people about the particular data that I'm looking for."

When considering data from secondary sources, Hill said that "often, there's a lot of nuance to the data. No data is just pure and simply data; it's all constructed and created. You have to ask, what was the process for collecting that data? What might have been the politics around that data?"

"Detroit in 50 Maps" features four main sections: maps comparing Detroit to other cities and regions; transportation and networks maps; demographic maps; and maps about neighborhoods. Hill said one of his favorite maps included in the book is Detroit in 100 Maps, which shows Detroit's boundaries as defined by the first 100 maps that came up in a Google search of Detroit maps. Another of his favorites is a map comparing Detroit to three other cities (Boston, San Francisco, and Manhattan, New York City).

Detroit in 50 Maps

Alex B. Hill



Hill said his process certainly includes researching records and databases and diving deep into spreadsheets. Still, he emphasizes that it's vital that once "you have that data and that background, to go beyond that and you talk to people and hear what's important to them in their neighborhood."

Many of his maps reveal discrepancies between maps and labels informed by data collected directly from people who live there and older maps, where planners and administrators defined neighborhood boundaries without substantial input from citizens.

"The city has done master planning for decades. You can go back to the 1940s and see how the city divided up neighborhoods in different areas," Hill said, "and compare that with where we are today. We have established masterplan neighborhoods, but then the city is proposing even smaller areas be considered neighborhoods."

Hill's anthropological approach leads him straight to leaders of community and neighborhood groups. He asks them a range of questions to gauge how residents define their neighborhoods.

"What's the history of your group? How long have you been here? What do you think about this data, and how have you defined your own community?" Hill asks. "Because that's really the missing piece in a lot of this —Detroit is a city of 700,000 stories, but that takes a long time to capture."

Hill said he hopes maps can help Detroiters and neighborhood affinity groups find access to resources, including knowledge about programs they may be eligible for and opportunities to leverage grants or funding to city programs.

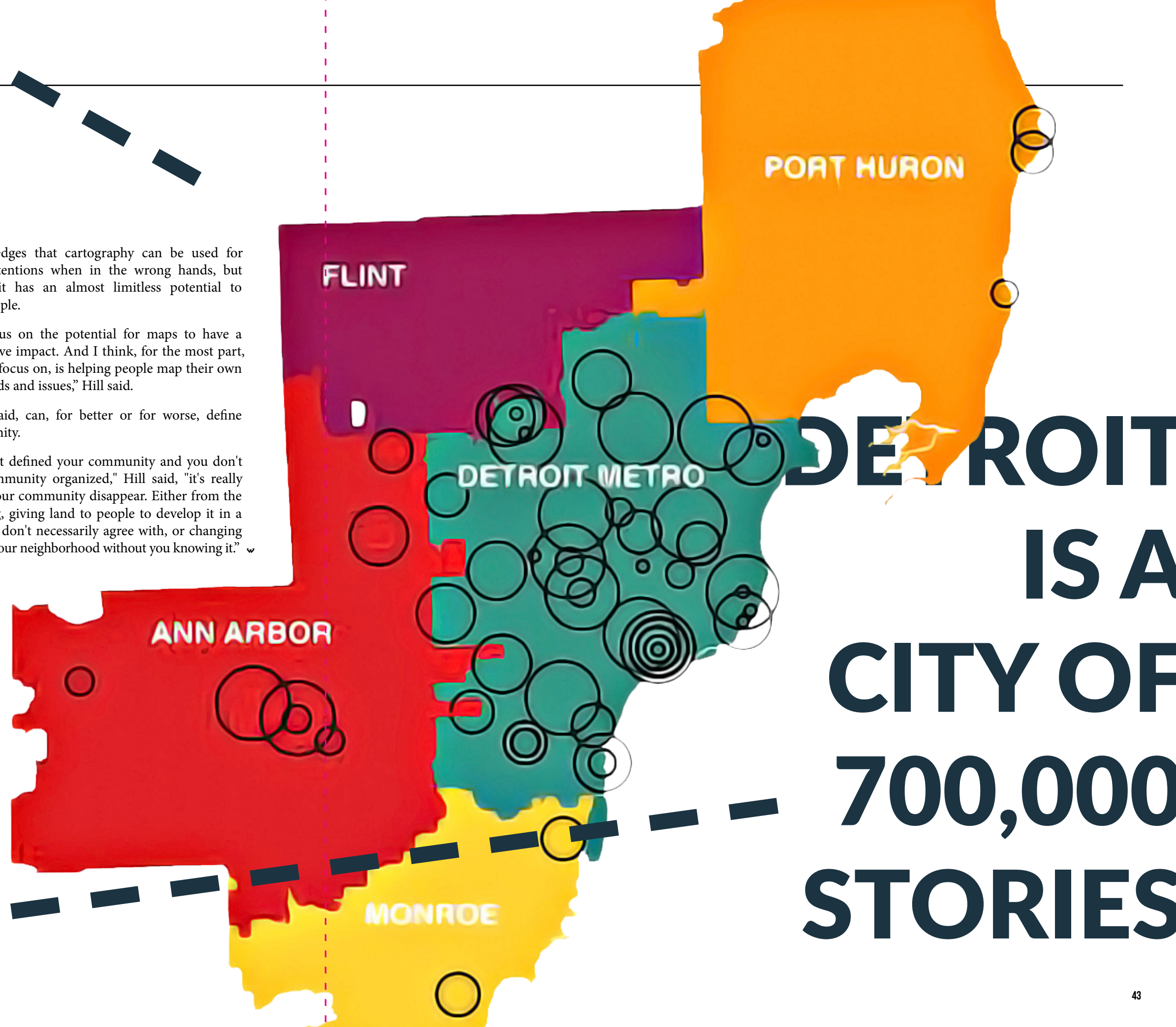
Hill said. "I've had the privilege of being able to work with a lot of Detroit community youth and Detroit residents to create maps that were meaningful for them and were important for a community issue that they were fighting for."

He acknowledges that cartography can be used for malicious intentions when in the wrong hands, but added that it has an almost limitless potential to empower people.

"I like to focus on the potential for maps to have a strong, positive impact. And I think, for the most part, what I try to focus on, is helping people map their own neighborhoods and issues," Hill said.

Maps, Hill said, can, for better or for worse, define your community.

"If you haven't defined your community and you don't have the community organized," Hill said, "it's really easy to see your community disappear. Either from the city changing, giving land to people to develop it in a way that you don't necessarily agree with, or changing the name of your neighborhood without you knowing it."



**DETROIT
IS A
CITY OF
700,000
STORIES**



EVOLVING

By Annessa Morley

P E R C E P T I O N S

The African
Democracy
Project

It has all the makings of a movie. A university president travels from America's Midwest to Africa, where he meets with the president of Mozambique for a discussion on democratic principles and practices. The African leader invites him to bring students with him next time to witness democracy in Africa first-hand. The university president does just that – and continues to return with new students each year for the next eight years.



The year was 2008 and the university president was Dr. Irvin D. Reid. After meeting with the second president of Mozambique, Joachim Chissano, Reid returned to Detroit and established the African Democracy Project (ADP). The following year saw the first of eight trips with Reid escorting multidisciplinary teams of faculty and students to meet government officials, ministers and educators in several African nations.

In his current role as WSU president emeritus, Reid said that establishing the program provided Wayne State students a unique opportunity, different from any other study abroad program.

“For most of us, Africa is remote – but it is not irrelevant,” Reid said. “We are better persons over time because we relate to fellow citizens of the world. This is the lesson about our own democracy that I wanted our students to learn – from insight into the democracies of others.”

To prepare for the trips, students would enroll in study-abroad courses specific to a region in Africa. The courses were offered through the Honors College (which bears Reid’s name) but were open to all students. Whether they were studying nursing, education, political science or economics, this course would bring them together to research the impact of democracy in areas such as human rights, economic sustainability and environment policy. The capstone of each course was a trip to the country they were studying for immersive field research. While on the ground in Africa for two weeks, they met with and interviewed voters, dissenters, government officials and citizens. They also spent time on African university campuses with students and professors.


The project was initially funded by the Eugene Applebaum Chair in Community Engagement with the support of Applebaum Family Philanthropy. From 2009 through 2016, more than 100 graduate and undergraduate students, faculty and staff participated in study-abroad courses culminating in trips to Mozambique, Tanzania, Namibia, Liberia, Botswana and Ghana.

They may have visited different parts of the continent, but, Reid says the common transformative experience was the opportunity to reflect on their own democracy here at home.

“What evolved in our students’ perceptions was a new way to look at things, namely, judging what is truly democratic and what a democracy is. They understood for the first time that we do not have all the answers or solutions. They stood on the continent of Africa and knew that their connection was deep, varied and pervasive. In many ways they saw themselves as coming home and seeing that home for the first time.”

Aleanna Siacon '19 was part of the team that traveled to Ghana in 2016. A journalism major and political science honors student, Siacon heard about the opportunity from peers and enrolled in the ADP course.

“Within the span of a semester, we went from the classroom in Detroit to the busy streets of Accra. In Ghana, we got to meet and pose questions to students, entrepreneurs, journalists, judges, and two former presidents. The ADP was such a special experience because it was all of the things that make students love learning - it was immersive, engaging, rewarding, and unique.”



“We are better persons over time because we relate to fellow citizens of the world.”

"Everyone was so engaged and passionate about changes they wanted to see."

As a journalism major and member of the Journalism Institute of Media Diversity, Siacon met with students from the Ghana Institute of Journalism and the Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology. She recalls, "It was an incredibly fascinating time because it was 2016, and both the United States and Ghana were having presidential elections. I remember speaking with students about what they thought of the U.S. elections and what they were seeing in Ghana. Everyone was so engaged and passionate about changes they wanted to see and ideas they had about how to get more young people involved in politics. It was really heartening to have such open conversations about democratic processes around the world. The connections we made also extended beyond the ADP, and I have been able to keep in touch with some of the students I met via social media."

For Aleanna, the program was also an impetus to complete a total of three majors from WSU.

"What I loved about the class was that we were able to look at so many different facets of Ghanaian society, culture, business, and

political institutions from a historical lens. I realized how multi-dimensional a historical survey can be and I wound up adding history as a third major," Siacon said. "I know graduating with three degrees is unusual, and people often ask me both 'how?' and 'why?'. Really, it stems from my experience with the ADP. I came away really motivated to learn more, and I signed up for more African history classes right after. I ended up enjoying the classes so much that I wanted to complete the [history] degree."

Lawrence Robinson '14, '18, made a total of five trips to Africa with ADP, first as an undergraduate student and then as a graduate assistant and field director. It was his initial trip to Ghana in 2012 that inspired him to earn a master's in social work degree with a community, policy and leadership concentration. Today he is an academic advisor at WSU School of Social Work.





“The fact that I am a first-generation African American college student and I was afforded the opportunity and resources to visit the continent of Africa, not just once but multiple times is incredible,” he said. “I was given the opportunity to be immersed in another culture and learn about their personal and professional experiences of others. Now, I have the connections on the continent to establish a permanent connection and help others to do the same.”

It also inspired Robinson to give back. He recently created his own nonprofit venture that aims to provide young people the opportunity to learn and experience the beauty of the world and other cultures.

Siacon and Robinson’s experiences are among the many that are captured in Reid’s documentary “African Democracy-Hopes and Challenges”. The documentary was ten years in the making, but for Reid, it was a goal from the start. He had the foresight to have videographer Darryl Shreve accompany the group on every single trip, resulting in hundreds of hours of footage with some of Africa’s most prominent leaders and scholars. Among those included in the documentary are Jerry Rawlings and John Mahamma, former presidents of Ghana; Nobel Prize-recipient Ellen Sirleaf, formerly the president of Liberia following its civil war; Mozambique civil war leader Afonso Dhlakama; Nora Schimming-Chase, former ambassador to Germany from Namibia; and Liberian activist Leymah Gbowee, a Nobel laureate for leadership for her work to seek a peaceful end to the civil war.

The 90-minute documentary explores responses to several critical questions: What were citizens' hopes and dreams? Where did they think African democracy ranked among the different countries? To what extent do national leaders share governance with local authorities? What do they see as African nations' greatest challenges? Did they think that corruption is a serious challenge? Finally, are they optimistic for the future of democracy on the continent?

The documentary is gaining recognition at global film festivals. It recently won Best Documentary Feature at the New York International Film Awards and is an official selection for the 2021 Around International Film Festival (ARFF) Barcelona/International Awards.

Dean John Corvino, who heads the Honors College, recently interviewed Reid for a recent virtual WSU "Knowledge on Tap" event and remarked on the lessons the documentary holds not only for those interested in African democracy but for many watching U.S. politics as well.

"This documentary is both moving and timely," said Dean Corvino. "At a time when our own democracy feels fragile, it invites us to think more deeply about democracy's prospects and challenges through the experience of African nations." ↴



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JOURNEYS *with Jerry*



By Steve Zoski



Amidst a pandemic that halted travel across the globe, one former Wayne State professor is helping hundreds of people escape to the South and North Poles, Alaska, Antarctica, Bora Bora, Chile, Hawaii, the Canary and Galapagos Islands and other exotic locales.

For the past year, journeyers have come inches away from penguins and tortoises, viewed the Northern Lights, and stargazed under earth's darkest skies in the Atacama Desert - without ever leaving their homes. From the comfort of their couches, virtual audiences have regularly tuned in to Journeys with Jerry, a series of adventures centered on visually stunning slideshows narrated by Professor Emeritus Jerry Dunifer, Ph.D.

In extensive and breathtaking detail, Dunifer shows—and tells—what the exotic locales he previously visited in person are really like. The details he includes are so specific – such as travel expenses, transportation means, routes taken, and lodging and restaurant recommendations, that viewers could easily plan their own trips once the pandemic subsides.

With pure excitement, Dunifer describes unforgettable moments like the Milky Way casting a shadow over him as he walked in the Atacama Desert, the joy of peering over the edge of a volcano or viewing the horizon through one of the world's most esteemed observatories.

Bora Bora

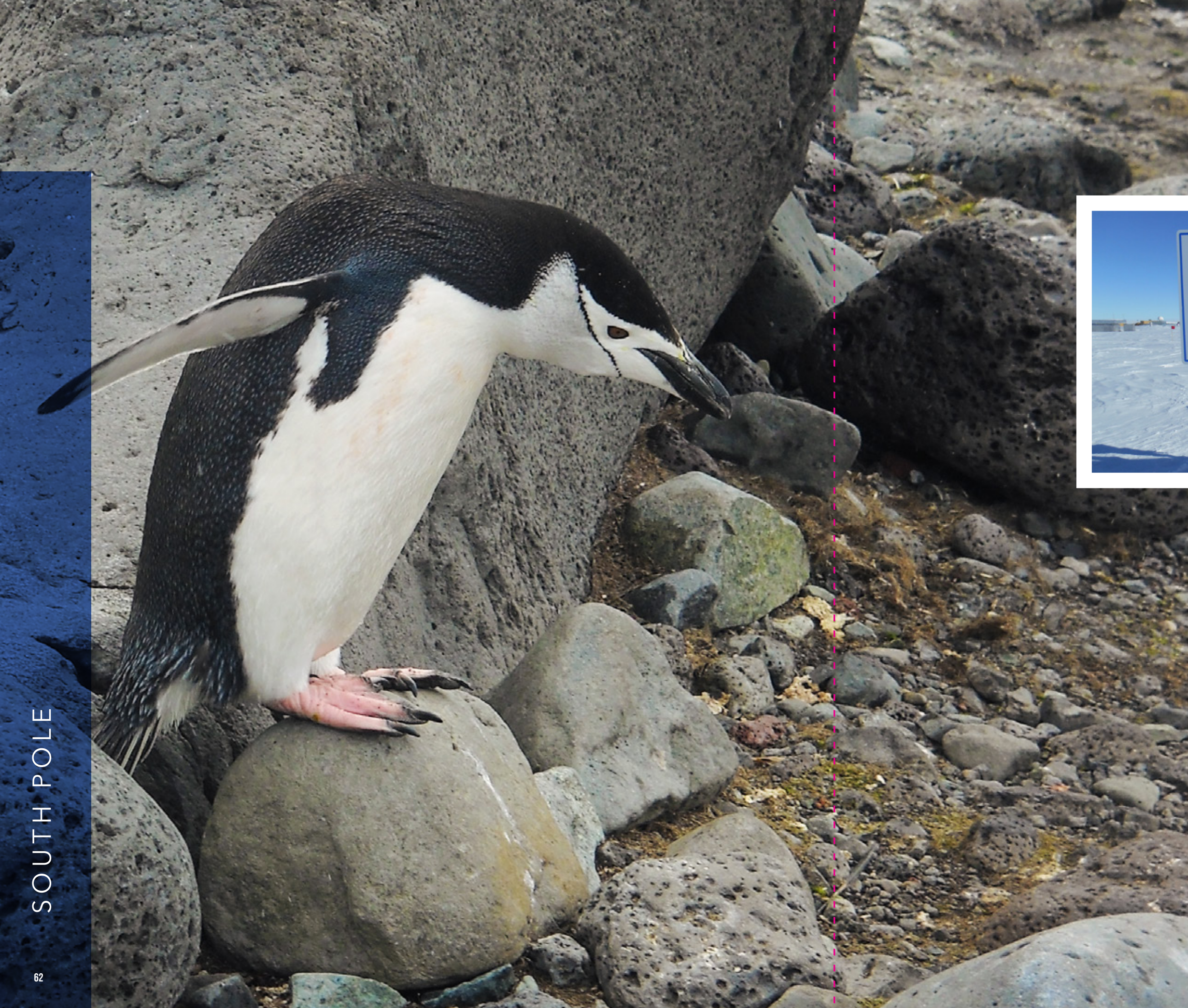


In making his virtual Journeys with Jerry presentations, Dunifer dives into his extensive collection of photos and videos to choose the best imagery to accompany the talk. Journeys with Jerry provide audiences with close-up views of all the natural wonders, cities, structures, and restaurants Dunifer has visited, and all of the flora and fauna he has encountered. Dunifer doesn't keep written journals of his travels, but his memory is so detailed, he will often recall for audiences the names of local people and tour guides he met while displaying photos of them posing in front of various sites, telescopes, observatories, and mountains.

He candidly explains to audiences that some trips are more accessible and affordable than others. A trip to Alaska, for example, is easier to pull off than one to one of the Poles or gaining access to a Russian icebreaker. The hard-to accomplish trips are cited among his favorite journeys.

Dunifer was a member of the faculty in the Department of Physics & Astronomy from 1971 to 2006. Since retirement, he often volunteers at the WSU Planetarium (which he was instrumental in bringing to campus) and gives science presentations to community groups or schools. He said the pandemic and the rise of virtual





zoom meetings presented him with a new opportunity to reach a wider audience and continue his passion for educating people.

His favorite part of retirement has been venturing to a number of the world's most exotic locations and sights. Though the scope of his journeys has expanded, his initial goal after retiring was to visit the observatories and astronomy destinations he taught about for years.

“In my thirty years of teaching astronomy, there would always be a part of the course where we would talk about some of the major observatories, where they are and had been discovered. After talking about these observatories for 30 years, I thought, well, I’d like to go see some of these in person,” Dunifer said. “And it’s not too difficult, you can usually do a little research to find out who’s been working there, and who’s on the staff there, and call them up, send an email and say you want to visit, and they usually say yes.”

Megan McCullen, Ph.D. the Director of the WSU Planetarium, who conceived the idea for Journeys with Jerry, said that she especially appreciates how enjoyable the events are for families and how detailed they are as a guide for would-be-travelers.

Northern Lights



“I love how Jerry will say things like, ‘this is how you get there and includes all the practical information, such as this is where the flights go, this is what the food is like,’” McCullen said. “I love all those little details. I think that’s part of what makes it different than just surfing the internet trying to learn about a place. The other thing is we’re connecting with alumni that we can’t normally connect to because they don’t live in Detroit anymore. Some of the attendees of these events are colleagues who did postdocs here who now live in Japan and former grad students who live around the world.”

Dunifer adds that he hopes to go on many more adventures once it is safe to travel again and will capture much more material for future Journeys with Jerry. He said the next two places he hopes to travel to are Easter Island and South Georgia Island, the latter of which was recommended to him by a geologist he met while flying to the Galapagos Islands.




GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK

*Of all the places in the world,
where do you most recommend I go?"*

Canary Islands



"I asked her, of all the places in the world, where do you most recommend I go? And she had an instant answer, she said, 'my favorite place in the world, South Georgia Island.' It sounds like it has very interesting geology and wildlife and is just like a Garden of Eden," Dunifer said.

There have been seven sessions of Journeys with Jerry so far. The next session will take the audience on a sailing and flying tour of the Great Lakes, at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17th. Recordings of past Journeys with Jerry are viewable at alumni.wayne.edu. 

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