

Brandeis University

# Heller

{ A MAGAZINE FOR THE  
HELLER SCHOOL FOR  
SOCIAL POLICY AND  
MANAGEMENT }



## WHO IS YOUR SOCIAL JUSTICE HERO?

HELLER COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
SHARE STORIES OF THOSE  
WHO HAVE INSPIRED  
THEIR WORK

SUMMER 2019



VIOLET NGUYEN, MA SID'20, WORKED AS A SOCIAL IMPACT ASSOCIATE AT FRIENDS OF HUE FOUNDATION IN VIETNAM FOR HER PRACTICUM, SUPPORTING A CHILDREN'S SHELTER TO GIVE CHILDREN WHO ARE ABUSED OR ABANDONED A PLACE TO LIVE. WHILE IN HER PARENTS' HOMETLAND, SHE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL TO SA PA, IN THE MOUNTAINS NEAR CHINA.

## Heller Magazine

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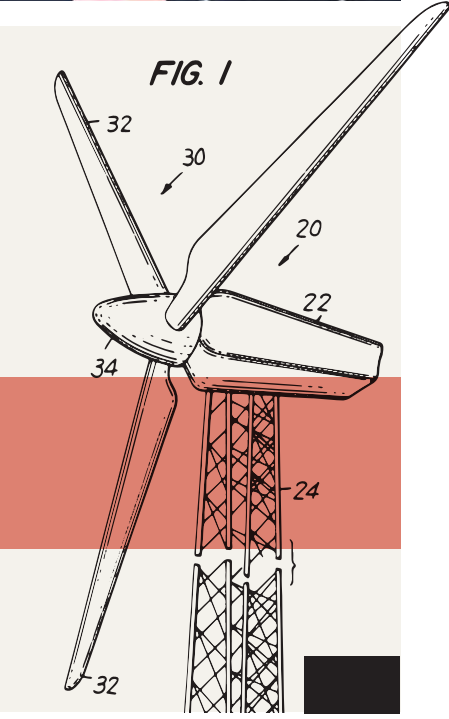
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# Heller

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## FROM THE DEAN }



### TO THE HELLER COMMUNITY,

Throughout the 2019-20 academic year, we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Heller School. In recent months, I have been reading about the amazing history of our school, particularly its founding years. From the beginning, when Abram Sachar (Brandeis' first president) and Florence Heller began their discussions on building a graduate school that would grapple with complex U.S. social policy issues, certain enduring themes and tensions emerged that have continued throughout our school's history.

First, the Heller School has always embraced both research and education as central to its mission: Sachar, Heller and the first dean, Charles Schottland, understood that teaching about social policy required breaking ground in both understanding the nature of social problems and analyzing the impacts of new efforts to address them.

Second, the founding faculty and researchers sought to engage directly with the policymakers, practitioners and recipients of social policies as well as with academics. They recognized the need to be academically rigorous in their research while ensuring that it be translated into policy-relevant outcomes.

Third, the school supported itself through a combination of tuition revenue, grants and contracts, and donations. In many ways, Heller was and remains original — a social science school with the financial model of a public health or medical school.

Fourth, though originally focused on the United States, from the school's early days Heller faculty and researchers recognized the importance of understanding social policy questions in an international context and attracting researchers (and later students) from around the globe.

Finally, social policy inevitably concerns addressing inequities in society across race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status and geography — among many other factors. This links Heller's foundations to the broader Brandeis mission of social justice.

Over the last 60 years, Heller has shifted its initial focus from areas like aging, social security and workforce training, to a broad array of highly relevant policy areas. Heller broke new ground as one of the first places to study intellectual and

developmental disabilities, became a health policy research powerhouse, and in more recent years, added specialties in such areas as international development, wealth and asset inequality, coexistence and conflict resolution, work and labor policy, and child, youth and family policy.

We've matched this breadth of research with an expanded footprint in our academic programs. In addition to the original PhD program (which, of course, remains central today), Heller now boasts six master's programs and 20 dual- and joint-degree options. With these changes, we've welcomed a student body that has grown tremendously in both size and diversity.

Despite all this change, the above themes — and the tensions they sometimes present — persist. The stories in this edition of Heller Magazine reflect those themes among our current community. As we move into our 60th anniversary year, we will highlight our ongoing pursuit of questions that draw on these same ideas — principles that have kept Heller at the forefront of social policy (including being ranked number seven among graduate schools for social policy by U.S. News & World Report in 2019). We hope you will join us in the upcoming celebration, and more importantly, in the next chapter of Heller's amazing history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Weil". The signature is fluid and cursive.

David Weil, Dean and Professor

# TOM PEREZ AND DEAN WEIL DISCUSS PROGRESSIVE POLICY IN THE TRUMP ERA

BY **BETHANY ROMANO, MBA'17**

On April 1, the Heller School welcomed Democratic National Committee Chair and former U.S. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez for a public conversation with Dean David Weil. The event, part of the Conversations with the Dean speaker series, featured a wide-ranging dialogue on Perez' life and career, his thoughts on progressive politics and his strategy for advancing Democratic candidates in 2020.

Perez spoke of his upbringing in Buffalo, New York, as the child of Dominican immigrants, and of his early career as a civil rights attorney in the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services. He's worked at every level of government and under Republican and Democratic administrations. "The connective tissue," he says of his career path, "is making a difference in the lives of people who don't have a voice."

Weil and Perez worked together during the Obama administration, when Perez served as secretary of labor, overseeing Weil as administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. Perez spoke fondly of the work he and Weil did to expand overtime pay and other basic protections for workers. The best part of being a Cabinet member was "helping people at scale," Perez said. He lauded career public servants as "the spine" of the government, urging Heller students to consider public service jobs, and jokingly referring to political appointees as "summer help."

In 2017, Perez was elected chair of the Democratic National Committee. His main goal: to facilitate voter turnout and build up the party's grassroots organizing capabilities. "A good organizer is a force multiplier," he said.

"We have to engage voters where they consume their news, which for the younger generation is here," he added, holding up his cell phone. Under his leadership, the DNC has vastly

expanded its direct phone and text outreach to sporadic voters and young voters.

Perez called the wide field of 2020 Democratic candidates an "opportunity" and described several paths to reach 270 electoral votes. "We just have to replicate what we did in 2018," he said, describing a strategy built around health care messaging and focused heavily on Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan — states Democrats lost in 2016.

"When we put hope on the ballot, we do well. When we allow others to put fear on the ballot, we don't do so well," he said, adding, "Never make a decision when paralyzed by fear, because it will cloud your judgment."

In his final remarks, Perez named some of his social justice heroes, saying, "What I love about the Heller School, aside from the fact that it gave me two hours to spend with [David Weil], is that I think it very much embodies the tradition of [Dr. Martin Luther] King, and [Cesar] Chavez, and [Rosa] Parks, and the suffragette movement."



TOM PEREZ SPEAKING TO THE AUDIENCE DURING HIS CONVERSATION WITH DEAN WEIL.

## INAUGURAL CLASS OF STARR FELLOWS LAUNCHED AT LURIE INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITY POLICY

BY CHRISTINE THIELMAN

There were some new faces around Heller's Lurie Institute for Disability Policy this semester, as eight undergraduates — Julia Brown '19, Monica Chen '19, Shoshi Finkel '20, Shira Levie '20, Alanna Levy '19, Rachel Steinberg '20, Norma Stobbe '20 and Max Tang '19 — became the inaugural class of the Nathan and Toby Starr Undergraduate Fellowship in Disability Policy, a program designed to foster research expertise and expand understanding of disability policy among undergraduate students at Brandeis.

Starr Fellows train under established Lurie Institute researchers, developing knowledge and experience in disability research and policy. During this semester-long mentorship, the 2019 fellows pursued research interests such as health policy, disability support systems, disability law and civic engagement by people with disabilities.

The Starr Fellowship provides a unique and valuable opportunity for undergraduates to be a part of the research and discovery taking place at Heller, and to benefit from the mentorship of graduate students, postdoctoral researchers and faculty. Speaking in February to *The Justice*, Starr Fellow Finkel described Lurie as “one of those hidden gems at Brandeis, in terms of its dedicated scholars and world-renowned research.”

“We have been delighted to welcome these talented undergraduates to the Lurie Institute,” said Monika Mitra, institute director and Nancy Lurie Marks Associate Professor of Disability Policy. “It's critical to educate young researchers about the many societal changes spurred by the disability rights movement, and the vital role that cross-disciplinary research has played in informing disability policy.”



SEVERAL STARR FELLOWS AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON DISABILITY RIGHTS IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, SHAKE HANDS WITH PROMINENT DISABILITY ACTIVIST JUDY HEUMANN, FEBRUARY 2019.

In February, several of the Starr Fellows joined Lurie researchers at a major symposium on disability rights sponsored by the Institute for Human Rights at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. They even met with prominent disability activist Judy Heumann, famous for her successful civil disobedience in support of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. “Meeting someone as influential and passionate as Judy Heumann was very exciting,” said Levy. “Her words encouraged me to spread tolerance and acceptance for others.” Heumann spoke on the Brandeis campus in March, drawing such a large audience that the event was moved to a larger venue.

The Lurie Institute employs both innovative and established research practices to advance a more equitable society for people with disabilities and their families. Lurie's research and publications bridge the lived experiences of disabled people with the efforts of policymakers, service providers and community leaders at the local, state, national and international levels.

# HELLER LOOKS AHEAD TO ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

BY **KATE KAPLAN**

The Heller School for Social Policy and Management will mark its 60th anniversary over the course of a year with a series of 60 events and publications that will culminate in a weekend-long anniversary celebration at the end of the 2019-20 academic year. Dean David Weil says, “We will use the year surrounding this event to pay homage to our rich history and set the stage for the next 60 years.”

The Heller School was founded in 1959 to answer a pioneering question: How can we use policy to work toward the well-being of all members of society? In the six decades since, its academic degree programs have become more numerous and diverse, as have its research institutes and centers. But Heller faculty, students, researchers, staff and alumni remain united by a vision of “knowledge advancing social justice.”

During the anniversary year, alumni and student gatherings will occur worldwide, deepening connections and creating new linkages within our community’s networks in order to increase the impact of our collective social-justice practice. “Our anniversary year programming will strengthen our knowledge base, and even more importantly, will strengthen ties with the over 4,000 alumni and current students, and past and current faculty and staff,” says Constance F. Kane, PhD’85, chair of the Heller Board of Advisors.

Weil is glad that Heller is celebrating an anniversary in the beginning of his tenure as dean. According to Weil, “The anniversary creates a framework for examining where we are going. Issues of social justice and inequities have been central to our mission since our inception, and we will continue to explore the ways that they are manifested in everyday life at this point in history, including health care disparities, disability policy and our workplaces.”

The culminating anniversary event, likely to be scheduled over a weekend in the spring of 2020, is expected to attract 400 alumni, and will feature a keynote speaker on the topic of social justice; presentations by faculty, alumni and students; and opportunities to gather in informal affinity groups such as degree program and profession. It is certain to be an occasion for one and all to see familiar faces and to meet new friends.



HELLER STUDENTS IN CLASS, CIRCA 1967.



# WHO IS YOUR SOCIAL JUSTICE HERO?

INTRODUCTION BY **DEAN DAVID WEIL**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **TOM FROESE**





*As the Heller community seeks to address social policy questions that will shape the next decades, it's essential to ground ourselves and look back at those who have fought for social justice in the past. We all find resonance and inspiration from different people. We hope all members of the Heller community will share their heroes as we approach our 60th anniversary next year.*

**IT'S IMPORTANT TO SEE HOW OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE HEROES** navigated the challenge of achieving social justice goals, given the realities of the world they lived in and the resources they had to do so. We always think the social problems of today are the worst we've ever faced. I think there's a certain humility that comes from looking back in time and realizing that every generation has grappled with difficult and complicated social problems, and then sought to overcome them. It says to us: Keep moving and striving, as difficult as times may seem. As Martin Luther King Jr., a social justice hero of mine, said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

I hope reading about our social justice heroes will inspire a dialogue about the Heller School's research and academic missions: What are different conceptions of social justice that drive us? How do we seek to deeply understand the social policy problems facing us? What avenues — from organizing to educating to legislating, to leading public, private and nonprofit institutions — do we need to address them? How do we use rigorous and hardheaded analysis of complex societal problems to advance social justice principles?

## ROSE SHAPIRO AND FRANCES PERKINS

DEAN DAVID WEIL

I'm sharing two of my social justice heroes today. The first is my grandmother, Rose Shapiro, who had a classic Jewish immigrant story. She arrived as a 15-year-old in New York City in 1905 with nothing. Her father had died, and her mother saw no

future for her daughter in Russia. My grandmother worked in the garment industry in the era of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, and became a vocal supporter of unions, social progressive movements and civil rights. Until the day she died in her 90s, her personal experiences led her to have empathy for the vulnerable in society and the quest for greater justice for them in society. Her optimism and dedication to social justice continue to inspire me.

The second is Frances Perkins, the first woman to serve as a member of a U.S. president's Cabinet. Early in her career,

Perkins was appointed to a panel to investigate the causes of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. She later became an influential adviser to Franklin Roosevelt, and when he became president, he appointed her secretary of labor. She was bold and creative in thinking about the systems necessary to deal with the effects of the Great Depression. She played a critical role in the creation of the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Administration and the Fair Labor Standards Act (which established the agency



I led during the Obama administration, the Wage and Hour Division). At the time, these ideas were revolutionary: a minimum wage, child labor laws, a pension system for the elderly, formally recognizing unions in the workplace. Though fueled by a social justice vision, Perkins was also politically deft in her ability to push Roosevelt to turn bold ideas into legislative and administrative reality. Combining a vision of justice with the knowledge and skills to make things happen is something I deeply admire.

## SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENT ACTIVISTS

ZIYANDA STUURMAN, MA SID'20

My social justice heroes are the South African students who mobilized and led the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements between 2015 and 2017. Those movements fundamentally changed the landscape of higher education in South Africa; they began the real and deep work of transformation and decolonization of campuses and curricula across the country's 22 universities; and their efforts resulted in a fundamental policy change toward funding higher education for young people from poor and working-class communities. Without the many thousands of students who organized, protested and made change, so many other students would still face almost insurmountable odds in accessing a quality, decolonized university education. I am inspired every day by the fact that a small, determined group of students united and created an ocean of change.

### A. PHILIP RANDOLPH AND BAYARD RUSTIN

JULES BERNSTEIN '57  
HELLER BOARD OF ADVISORS MEMBER

My heroes are A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, civil rights leaders who organized the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and had a major influence on progressive American history. They were principled, brilliant and

fearless. I was lucky enough to have an insider's view of their work. I worked with Rustin, and in 1963, I was there with him at the March on Washington at 5:30 in the morning, when you couldn't see a single bus or person. Rustin spent time in prison for his civil rights work and was beaten mercilessly on many occasions — but he always came back and persevered. I had the opportunity to meet Randolph through my work representing major labor unions. Randolph, the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, went toe-to-toe with three presidents — Roosevelt, Truman and Kennedy — which led to the desegregation of the defense industry and the military. I remember

Randolph standing up at an AFL-CIO convention and saying they had to integrate the local unions. They were such incredible collaborators, and so effective as leaders. We need to keep growing more like them!

### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

JOANNE NICHOLSON  
PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE

Bruce Springsteen is my social justice hero — not just because of what he does, but because of who he is. Springsteen uses his gifts and talents to capture the events and issues that define the past

50 years, such as the struggles of the working class and the impact of increasing economic divisions, relationships, family, growing up and hometowns, identity issues, heartbreak, labor disputes, Vietnam, HIV, 9/11, the challenge of making sense of the world, freedom and responsibility, and what it means to be an American. Springsteen is a successful, skilled musician and writer who talks publicly about his depression. He writes about seeking professional treatment and the benefits he finds in talk therapy and medication. Springsteen writes about life with his father,



diagnosed at one point with paranoid schizophrenia, and the streak of bipolar disorder that runs in his family. The stigma associated with mental illness is pervasive, but Springsteen provides examples of persistence and writes of hope.

## MUHAMMAD ANWER AND SABINA ABBASI

BAKHTAWER ABBASI, MA COEX'20

My parents, Muhammad Anwer and Sabina Abbasi, are my social justice heroes. Pakistan, where I grew up, is a highly patriarchal society, and there is a huge divide between the male and female genders. I'm one of three daughters, but my father didn't treat us any differently. He gave us absolute freedom to study, to work. In his own way, it was his form of social justice for us. It all stemmed from my mother, who reinforced the idea that we should be no less than anyone else, and therefore could and should grow up to be whatever we'd like to be. That has helped me to also look at equality in a broader sense: between different religions, genders beyond male and female, and the LGBTQ community.



## DAISAKU IKEDA

ANRI TANABE, MA SID/MS GHPM'17

Throughout my life, I have been encouraged by the life and writings of Buddhist philosopher, peacebuilder and educator Daisaku Ikeda. He is a person who has dedicated his life to the happiness of others, wholeheartedly encouraging each person he encounters based on a conviction of their innate worth as

human beings. His activities toward peace stem from a belief in the power of heart-to-heart dialogue among people. He says, "Dialogue is a bastion protecting human dignity against the assaults of violence, an essential force for the creation and expansion of peace." I truly believe that.

## GLORIA STEINEM

STEPHANIE TOBLER, MA COEX'20

My social justice hero is Gloria Steinem. When I started working in my 20s, the workplace wasn't perfect, but it was pretty good.

She and other women of her time made those breakthroughs for me and other women who are in the workplace today. That's empowered me in my work on women's rights issues — from my previous work with survivors of sexual assault to my new focus on the role of women in countering violent extremism.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

RAJESH SAMPATH  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

From the time I was young, Martin Luther King Jr. was my social justice hero. Who cannot possibly be moved by his passionate and stirring speeches about love, unity and overcoming hate and divisions in our society? Now, as a member of our school, which abides by the motto of "knowledge advancing social justice," I see King's principles being lived out every day. Compassion, empathy and community bring people of different backgrounds together to find ways to overcome the world's gravest social injustices. He was a great soul who had a vision for a different world, and I am inspired every day in playing my small part to see that new world become a reality!

## ROUPEN AND ANNIE KIREDJIAN

### MARC KIREDJIAN '05

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS  
AND INNOVATION

I'm a firm believer in the direct influence we as individuals have on the people around us, and how our actions speak volumes. It may sound clichéd, but my parents, Roupen and Annie Kiredjian, have served as examples of social justice activism in my life. Their parents were orphaned during the Armenian genocide; they had to navigate a conflict-ridden society as refugees without a home and create from scratch the notion of "family."

After emigrating from Lebanon in the 1960s, my parents had to start from scratch again in the United States. Life was not easy for them during this time, but they worked hard, built careers and raised a family. Within this environment, we learned that while life may not be fair, we as individuals have the responsibility to advocate for fairness and justice for the people in our lives.

## BRITTANY PACKNETT

### BRIA PRICE, MPP'19

My social justice hero is Brittany Packnett. She is an activist and educator who believes in the intersection of culture and justice. From the Obama White House to a community meeting in Ferguson, Missouri, she speaks the truth of her community, the nation and her ancestors. Packnett gives me hope that my voice, a natural blend between educated, authentic, Southern and open, can also bring truth to power and make a difference. She's a political expert, educator, organizer and leader who pushes society not only toward justice, but also toward ultimate liberation.



## CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON

### SUSAN EATON

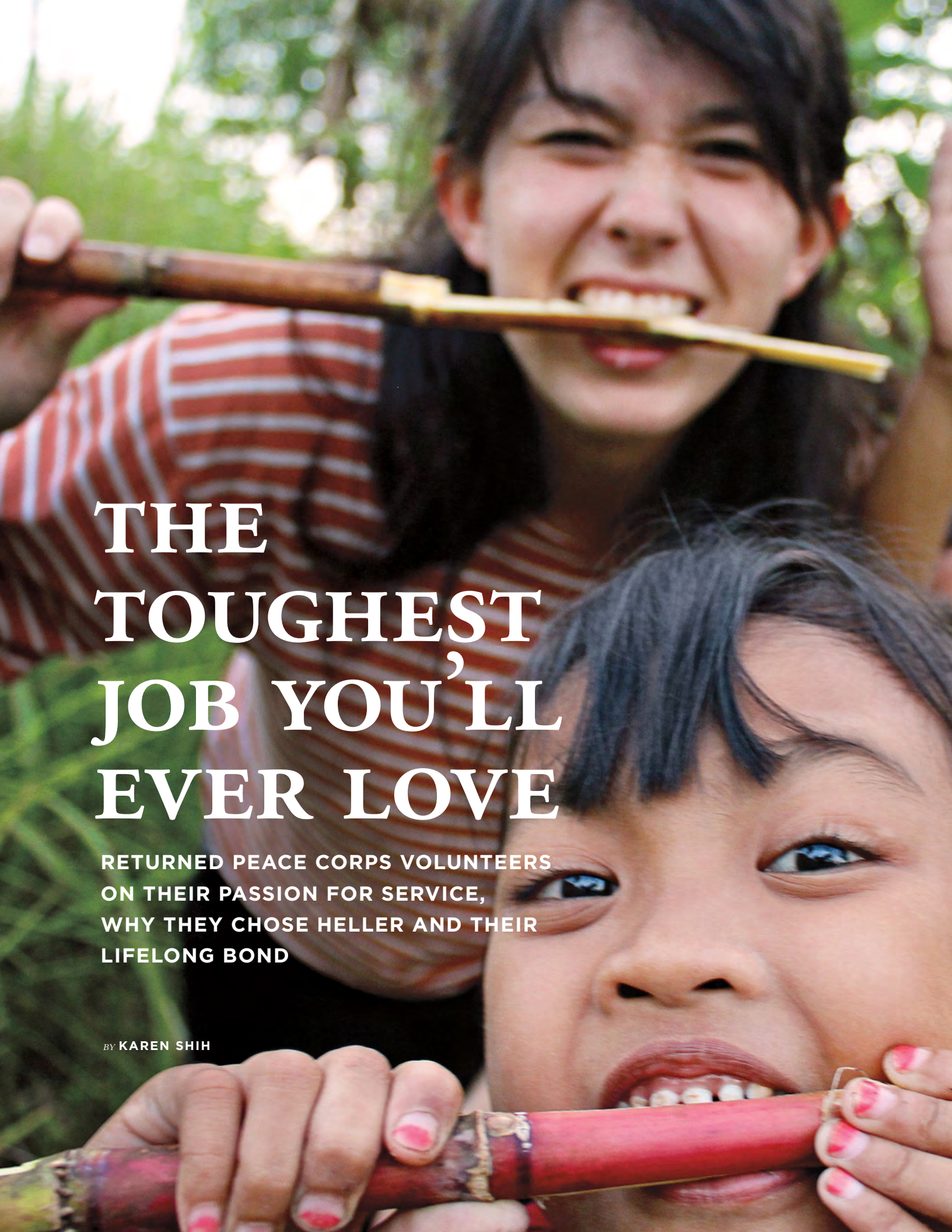
DIRECTOR OF THE SILLERMAN CENTER FOR THE  
ADVANCEMENT OF PHILANTHROPY

Civil rights lawyer and vice dean of Howard Law School Charles Hamilton Houston engineered the decades-long legal strategy that led to the unanimous 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. This repudiated the doctrine of "separate but equal" for black children and white children and helped ignite the civil rights movement. Houston inspires me because he worked so methodically and

creatively, collaboratively and quietly, calling in numerous scholars and legal minds to bring racial discrimination cases that set precedents to make *Brown* possible. Educated at Harvard Law School, Houston was a devoted mentor to his African American students and colleagues at Howard (including Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall). Together, they reshaped legal doctrine and training that continues to this day. He reminds me that social justice work requires a lot of different types of people.

We understandably tend to remember the folks who lead the marches, who speak with eloquence to the largest crowds, and these days, who've mastered the Twittersphere. But Houston's quiet conscientiousness, creative collaboration and hard work, all driven by values, remind me to keep moving forward, even when the nation seems to be rolling backward.


THESE HEROES EXEMPLIFY HELLER'S MISSION AND VALUES —  
AND INSPIRE US TO TACKLE THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES OF  
TODAY. SHARE YOUR SOCIAL JUSTICE HERO WITH US BY USING  
#HELLER60FOR60 ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a red and white striped shirt, is smiling and holding a wooden instrument horizontally across her mouth. In the foreground, a young girl with dark hair and bangs is looking towards the camera, holding a red instrument horizontally across her mouth. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting.

# THE TOUGHEST JOB YOU'LL EVER LOVE

RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS  
ON THEIR PASSION FOR SERVICE,  
WHY THEY CHOSE HELLER AND THEIR  
LIFELONG BOND

BY KAREN SHIH



**WALK THE HALLS AT HELLER** and chances are you'll bump into a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV). She might be a student who flew back a week before the start of the school year, excited to combine lessons from her experiences abroad with what she's learning in class. Or perhaps an alumnus hosting a Lunch and Learn session to share details about his career as a social entrepreneur. Or even a faculty or staff member who served decades ago, but who still draws on those life lessons each day.

The community grows each year. In fall 2018, 22 RPCVs enrolled at Heller — more than 10 percent of the entering class — and it's a point of pride and connection as they network with fellow students and alumni.

"It's just one of those experiences you take with you for the rest of your life," says Ricki Herrera, MBA/MA SID'20. Meet a few of the RPCVs who have brought their passion for service — especially to empower the disadvantaged around the world — to Heller:

#### **A FOUNDATIONAL EXPERIENCE** MARIA MADISON

"Peace Corps is an intercultural experience that becomes foundational for everything: how I think about research at the ground level, human interaction, cultural humility — and it gives me a better perspective as an African American on the strengths and weaknesses of living in America," says Associate Dean for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Maria Madison.

Serving in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) more than three decades ago "gave me a sense of career and purpose," she says. During her service right after college, Madison was "the model of the barefoot community health worker." She lived in a hut with dirt floors ("I was considered wealthy because I had a tin roof"), and oversaw a team that did everything from weighing babies to managing a small pharmacy to providing oral rehydration therapy and vaccinations. She then transferred to a position to do epidemiology and community diagnosis, where her team worked to prevent the spread of schistosomiasis, a disease caused by parasites in standing water.

"You don't think you can do it until you have to," she says. "You're given far more responsibility than you should be. Whoever thought I could survive on my own so far away from home?"

After returning from her service, her career would take her to Africa again and again as she studied international health, and even today, she consults for the University of Global Health Equity in Rwanda.

In her role at Heller, she brings what she learned through the Peace Corps into her work every day. As students seek to work across cultures and around the world, she reminds them to embody cultural humility, not paternalism, and to work jointly with local people. "Seek first to understand and then be understood; be a facilitator as opposed to a lecturer," she says. Embrace "the art of listening, and the art of prioritizing others' needs before determining and designing interventions."

#### **"BEING PROUD OF THE SMALLER VICTORIES"** RICKI HERRERA

"As clichéd as it sounds, I've always been interested in service," says Ricki Herrera, MBA/MA SID'20. "My mom said, 'You should always do what you can to help other people.' I have a vivid memory of second grade, when she drove us through skid row in downtown L.A. and told us that even if we had it bad, they have it worse. She'd always give away clothes and money."

Herrera started volunteering in middle school, joining two different service clubs. When he heard about the Peace Corps during an AP world history class at age 16, "I immediately knew it was the thing I wanted to do."

He applied after earning his undergraduate degree and was sent to Lesotho, a tiny country in southern Africa, as a community health volunteer.

"It was exciting to see and learn about other people and cultures. All the things they told me were going to be difficult weren't a problem for me, like the lack of running water or electricity," he says. "The biggest shock for me was how lonely it could be. I was an hour's drive from the nearest volunteer."

He worked with a local clinic and schools on a program to target HIV-positive youth, since Lesotho has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, and he offered nutrition workshops and monitored malnourishment rates in the village.

Like other RPCVs, he quickly learned that success wasn't going to be what he originally imagined. "Before you go, you think, 'I'm going to save the world!' So when you go to the site and

you haven't worked in a week because of funding lapses, you feel like a failure. But getting over that hurdle and being proud of the smaller victories, whether it's teaching a class or assisting a youth club, is a major part of the experience."

He decided during his last month in Lesotho to apply to graduate school for nonprofit management, taking advantage of the Coverdell Fellowship program that offers financial aid for RPCVs returning to school. A college professor recommended that he look at Heller, and when he saw the option to do the dual Social Impact MBA and MA in Sustainable International Development, he was sold.

He came to Heller in fall 2018 with a large class of fellow RPCVs. He's even rooming with a fellow RPCV, Elizabeth Nguyen, MBA/MA SID'20, who served in Swaziland.

"It's hard to explain the bond that all the volunteers have," he says. "There's a big readjustment when you come back, and it's nice to find everyone."

#### **"ONE OF THE BEST DECISIONS I'VE EVER MADE"** KYLE RICHARD

It was the Great Recession that spurred Kyle Richard to spend 27 months at the border of Guatemala and Mexico, working on ecotourism. He'd studied natural resources management in college but had trouble finding a job with the flagging U.S. economy, when an adviser suggested he consider the Peace Corps.

"Peace Corps is one of the best decisions I've ever made," says Richard, program coordinator for the Eli J. and Phyllis N. Segal Citizen Leadership Program. "I got the trial by fire that helped me into my adulthood. No matter what kind of work you want to do, it elucidates the soft skills you'll need and opens your mind to the different influences that make things possible."

He put his skills — and passion for wildlife conservation — to use in the remote municipality of Sibinal, Guatemala, where he worked with the environmental department to develop parkland for ecotourism. He created trails; developed signage, tours and programming in local villages around trout fishing and endangered-bird watching; and started a recycling program.

"Peace Corps teaches you patience and humility when you want to enact social change, to put yourself aside," he says. "First, build trust. Go to dinners. Play volleyball. Learn about the history — this was a region hit hard by civil war and had outsiders mining for resources. By the end of the two years, though I did make trails and pamphlets and give lectures, the accomplishment I was most excited about was that the people trusted me enough to work with them."

When he returned to the United States in 2011, he continued to work on community development with a focus on the environment, and eventually found his way to the Eli J. and Phyllis N. Segal Citizen Leadership Program at Heller in November 2018.

The Segal program "values social justice and social change and wants to grow future leaders in that regard," he says, and it provides an opportunity for him to draw on his own experiences to support the Segal Fellows.

"The kind of services Segal offers, I had to get à la carte through my time working: finding a mentor, resources, a network of people," he says. "I look back at my re-entry from the Peace Corps and put myself in the Segal Fellows' shoes: What kind of support and mentorship would I need?"

#### **AN OPPORTUNITY THAT OPENS DOORS** ELLE CHANG

For Elle Chang, MA SID'15, the Peace Corps was a launching pad for her federal career.

"I was always interested in diplomacy and helping people, and this seemed like a great opportunity to live and work in a different country to experience a new community and culture," says Chang, who was an education volunteer in East Java, Indonesia.

Since middle school, she'd worked with refugee families from Iraq, Afghanistan and Burundi to improve their English as they resettled in the United States. After graduating from college, she became part of just the second group of Peace Corps volunteers to return to Indonesia after the program went on hiatus in the 1960s.

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#### FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

- MARIA MADISON (RIGHT) IN A HEALTH CLINIC IN THE FORMER ZAIRE.
- KYLE RICHARD (LEFT) ASSISTS WITH LUNCH IN SIBINAL, GUATEMALA.
- ELLE CHANG (2ND FROM RIGHT) AT A WEDDING IN EAST JAVA, INDONESIA.
- MARIA MADISON (LEFT) WITH A YOUNG FAMILY IN THE FORMER ZAIRE.
- RICKI HERRERA (2ND FROM LEFT) WALKS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO A "PITSO," OR A VILLAGE MEETING, IN LESOTHO.





Chang was excited to help re-establish the Peace Corps presence in Indonesia, identifying and interviewing potential schools where volunteers could teach and families that could host them, creating an infrastructure for future cohorts. As a foreigner moving into a tightknit farming community, she found that integrating and establishing meaningful relationships required patience. She soon learned the best way to get to know people was simply by sitting outside of her host family's house, where children would come find her to play and adults in the community would stop by to chat.



As she looked at graduate programs toward the end of her service, Heller's SID program stood out because of its practicum option. "A lot of the organizations were places I'd been interested in working for," says Chang, including the United Nations Development Programme, where she joined the Equator Initiative for her practicum.



For Chang, the Peace Corps opened many doors. The Coverdell Fellowship made graduate school at Heller affordable; her shared experiences developed into friendships with fellow RPCVs both at Heller and beyond (she even met her fiancé through the Peace Corps); and it gave her noncompetitive eligibility for federal government hiring, which helped her get a job at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



Now she serves as an international program specialist in the Office of International and Tribal Affairs at the EPA where she has the opportunity to engage with international partners and stakeholders during multilateral environmental fora, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly and G7 meetings. Her current focus is on addressing food loss and waste issues through innovative policy solutions at the global scale.

"It's an exciting time to work on environmental issues," she says.

#### PAUL D. COVERDELL FELLOWSHIP AT HELLER

All RPCVs admitted to the Heller School receive a guaranteed scholarship of at least 50 percent of their tuition, and starting fall 2019, Heller is offering five new 100 percent tuition scholarships for RPCVs. The application fee is also waived for all RPCVs.

Visit [heller.brandeis.edu/peace-corps-coverdell-fellows](http://heller.brandeis.edu/peace-corps-coverdell-fellows) to learn more.





# FROM SOCIAL POLICY TO SESAME STREET

**SESAME WORKSHOP'S CHIEF KNOWLEDGE OFFICER  
MICHAEL LEVINE, PhD'85, ON HIS CAREER IN EARLY  
EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

*BY* **BETHANY ROMANO, MBA'17**



**OVER THE DECADES**, Michael Levine, PhD’85, has rubbed elbows with civil rights activists, politicians, philanthropists, Hollywood celebrities and the most prominent child development researchers of his generation, all in a quest to improve child policy at every possible turn. From his office at Sesame Workshop in Lincoln Square in Manhattan, where he serves as chief knowledge officer, he looks back on a career that spans countries, sectors and disciplines.

“I’ve had a very interesting career,” he acknowledges with a smile. “I’ve been so, so lucky to have great mentors, amazing colleagues and transformational opportunities.”

### **A FOUNDATION IN SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Levine grew up in New York City in a family deeply rooted in the social justice issues of the day. He says, “My dad worked with civil rights organizers, including leaders in Martin Luther King’s inner circle like Andrew Young, so we always had lots of interesting people coming into the house. Our kitchen-table conversations were very much about the pressing issues of the moment — we constantly had to stop eating dinner because Walter Cronkite was on in the background.”

Levine was inspired by his father’s work, joining the speech and debate club at his public high school in New York and becoming a youth organizer for a presidential campaign at age 14. When it came time for college, “That’s when my mother’s influence really kicked in,” says Levine, whose mother is a nationally known mental health clinician and expert on child development and family dynamics. At Cornell, he got involved in child development research under the tutelage of Urie Bronfenbrenner, founder of the ecological systems theory of child development.

Bronfenbrenner put Levine to work as an undergraduate research assistant on a cross-national study where he focused on the needs of vulnerable U.S. families with young children. “It was very heady and exciting to be an undergraduate involved in all that,” he says. “Everything the team did was applied — so I got very interested in translating field research into public policy.”

Levine’s foray into research prompted new interests in economic development, job training and public policy — all of which led him to the Heller PhD program.

“I made a choice to go to the Heller School because the school had heart and soul,” he says. “At Heller, social justice was in the DNA. The folks who walked the halls of Heller in the mid-1980s were mentors, activists and scholars who had been present at the very beginning of social justice policymaking. My upbringing was steeped in the civil rights movement and the War on Poverty, and Heller was a logical extension of that.”

At Heller, Levine worked on grant-funded projects led by faculty members Andy Hahn, PhD’78, Barry Friedman, Lorraine Klerman and Richard Weatherley, among others. Despite the research responsibilities and course workload, Levine carved out time to stay politically active, interning in the U.S. Senate for Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, and even attending the occasional Brandeis grad-student party — just one, in fact. At that party he met Joni Blinderman, MA’83, a master’s degree student in the Hornstein Jewish Communal Service program. “The only graduate-student party I ever went to, I met my wife at,” he says with a grin. They were married at the Berlin Chapel on the Brandeis campus in the fall of 1983.

Levine’s doctoral studies overlapped with President Reagan’s first term, and the dramatic federal cutbacks that characterized his administration helped to define Levine’s research. In his dissertation, Levine examined the institutional supports and barriers to social policy innovation in an era of restricted resources. He says, “I learned a lot about the role of the media, the role of philanthropy, the role of faith leaders — all of the key sector players. Visiting 14 cities and speaking with all of those pivotal institutions was really influential in my thinking about the ecological system around a kid.”

### **FROM NEW YORK TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

After graduating, the newlyweds relocated to New York City, where Levine had been recruited to work for Mayor Ed Koch on “a smorgasbord of youth issues,” including homelessness, school dropouts and prevention services. He was regularly called on to represent the mayor’s office in community debates, especially disputes around school safety, access and quality. When kids were getting sick at three schools with coal-burning furnaces, “it was ‘send Michael out, he grew up in Queens,’” he says. He also learned the ins and outs of New York City real estate deals, playing an important role in finding new homes for specialized schools such as the High School of Performing Arts (the “Fame” school) and Stuyvesant High School.

*“The folks who walked the halls of Heller in the mid-1980s were mentors, activists and scholars who had been present at the very beginning of social justice policymaking.”*

That position marked Levine’s entry into a series of jobs focused on improving New York’s embattled public school system. At the New York Urban Coalition, he focused on improving school leadership and teacher quality by training teachers, superintendents and principals. Then he became special assistant to Richard Green, the first black New York City Schools chancellor. The work for Chancellor Green was intense, the stakes were high and the politics were “a viper’s pit,” says Levine. “I learned a ton, but I was working 75 to 80 hours a week and had a new family.

“Then one day, in May of 1989, at 3 o’clock in the morning, my phone rang. My boss — the chancellor — had died suddenly of a heart attack.”

Though Levine was offered another position in the chancellor’s office, he decided it was time for a change. He says, “I didn’t want to be a member of a big bureaucracy forever. I felt like I’d done deep work at the city level, and perhaps I should try to do something on a national level.”

In 1990, the Carnegie Corporation of New York hired Levine to run its early childhood portfolio. “It was the biggest break of my life,” he says. “At that point, there was no emphasis on the first few years of life in U.S. national policy, so we became the think tank behind new ideas like Early Head Start and SCHIP [State Children’s Health Insurance Program] and home-visiting programs. It was a very active and deeply thoughtful philanthropy.”

At Carnegie, Levine contributed to a landmark report titled “Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children,” which sparked a national conversation about those critical early years. The report, which delved into new research on the child’s developing brain, appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* and quickly reached President Clinton’s desk.

Levine’s phone started to ring — and one of the calls was from filmmaker Rob Reiner. “He had read the report and was of the opinion that early child development was the most important

issue in the nation,” says Levine. “He was getting more politically active at this point, so he asked me to come to Hollywood and organize a briefing for him and a few friends.”

On Christmas of 1995, Levine and a few colleagues flew to Los Angeles to deliver a policy briefing in Rob Reiner’s home theater. Among the attendees were Steven Spielberg, Kate Capshaw, Warren Beatty and Annette Bening. “It was crazy,” he says. “We knew it was a big opportunity — if Hollywood gets involved in an issue, it could really help drive the message home.”

Levine was familiar with the entertainment field and its power to persuade. His brother, Dr. Robert Levine, was married to Mary Tyler Moore, and he had learned about finding allies across the aisle from his “more conservative” sibling. “Mary and Robert built bridges on the importance of biomedical research, relying on a bipartisan approach to find a cure for juvenile diabetes — a disease that afflicted Mary. They found a way to work with leaders as different as Newt Gingrich and Tom Harkin,” he says.

That meeting in Reiner’s home theater marked the beginning of the “I Am Your Child” campaign, a national public-education initiative on early childhood development. Reiner recruited Levine to run the campaign, and Reiner leveraged the star power of celebrities like Tom Hanks, Colin Powell, Whoopi Goldberg and Jada Pinkett Smith to catapult early childhood brain development into the mainstream.

“We did all sorts of great work together,” Levine says, “including organizing dozens of awareness campaigns, a prime-time special directed by Reiner and narrated by Hanks on the importance of the early years, special editions of *Newsweek* magazine on the importance of ages 0-3 with babies on the cover and two White House conferences on childhood development.

“And then 9/11 happened.”

## AN EYE TOWARD THE FUTURE

The shock and tragedy of 9/11, combined with road weariness from his travel-heavy work with Hollywood, inspired Levine to turn his sights to a new issue: the wave of xenophobia that arose after 9/11. He took a position as vice president for the Asia Society, which focuses on promoting the importance of global education across languages, regions and cultures.

Part of his work included running exchange programs for U.S. leaders in education and policy. Through one such trip to India, Levine spent time with Gary Knell, the CEO of Sesame Workshop. Knell had a vision to start something completely new at Sesame — an independent research arm of the organization that would focus on education in an era of rapidly changing technology. It would be named after the co-founder of Sesame Workshop and co-creator of “Sesame Street,” Joan Ganz Cooney, and Knell wanted Levine to lead it.

In 2007, Levine became the founding executive director of the Joan Ganz Cooney Center, along with two staff members and a mandate to think broadly about kids’ use of technology. “When we started, the very first iPhone had just come out. Interactive touch screens weren’t something anyone had much thought about for kids — programming was still very video- and TV-centric. Our purpose at the Cooney Center was to think about what was coming next, to be a scout for Sesame, and to advance the needs of children in the digital age,” he says.

In the 10 years he ran the Cooney Center, Levine helped it become one of the best-known thought leaders around educational technology for children. In particular, the center sought to strike a middle ground in “the debate between technology as menace versus technology as a magic elixir,” as he puts it.

Last year, Levine turned over the reins of the Cooney Center and assumed a new position as Sesame’s chief knowledge officer. “As I reach this stage of my career,” he says, “one of my big interests is to build the field. In my role, I’m doing a good deal of mentoring and support of younger leaders who are in the communications and technologies space. I’ve seen so much change in the course of my career. As government stalls in creativity and innovation, who actually influences policy and practice? I have a new appreciation for the role that socially responsive corporations, startups and nonprofits with hybrid business models can bring to accelerate change for good.”



MUPPET ABBY CADABBY (ALONG WITH PUPPETEER LESLIE CARRARA-RUDOLPH) HELPS TO “TEACH” MICHAEL LEVINE HOW TO TAKE A SELFIE IN 2016.

As he reflects on a career that began in research, shifted to policy, program development and grant making, and included rubbing elbows with entertainment icons (including Big Bird), Levine says, “My purpose now is to support the growth of the next generation of leaders by helping them use evidence-based research and strategic communications tools to drive progress.”

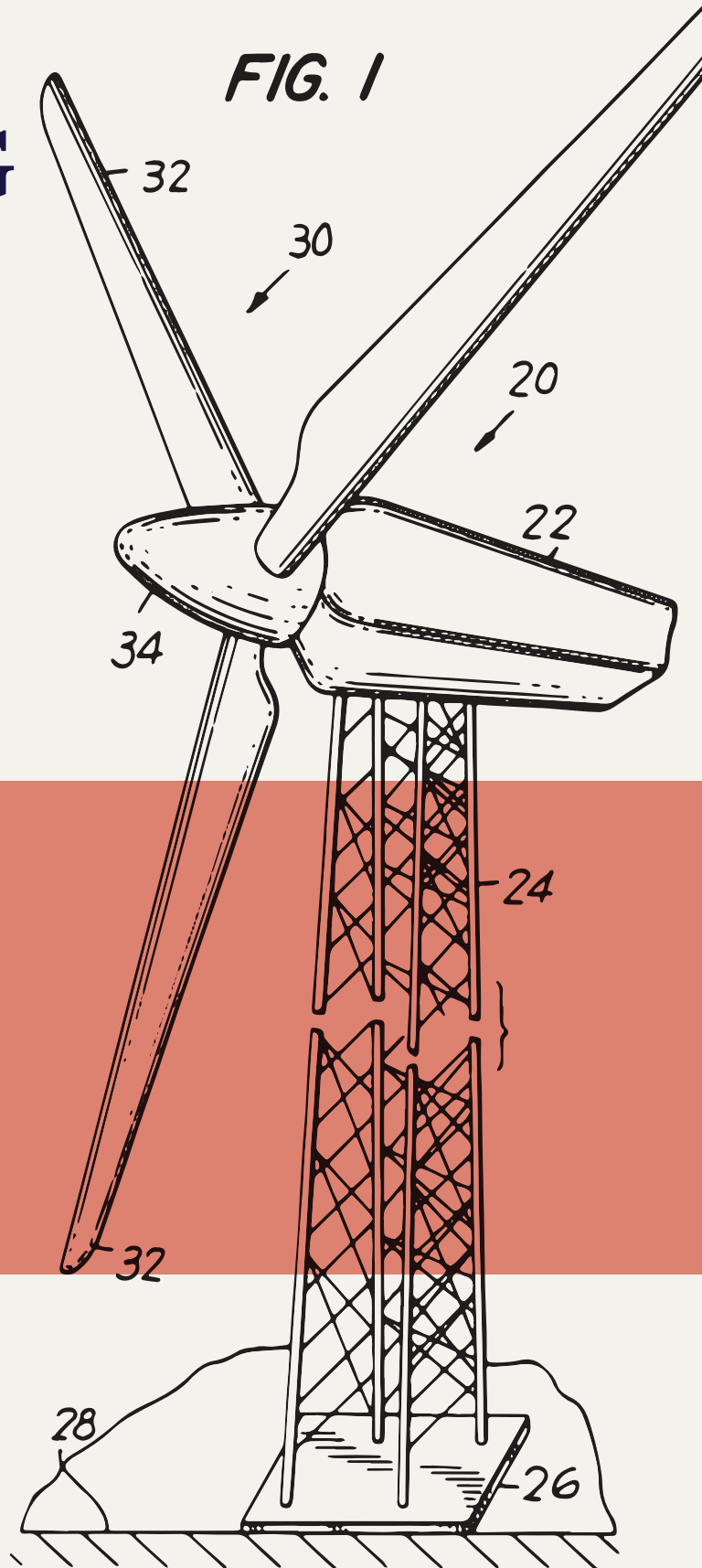
Despite everything he’s experienced in the last decades, Levine feels that he can draw “a direct line” from his studies at Heller to his work at Sesame today. “Being at Heller during the Reagan years reinvigorated my commitment to analyze social problems and policy fixes with a justice and equity lens. My career proceeded with that core awareness as a kind of ‘planned serendipity.’”

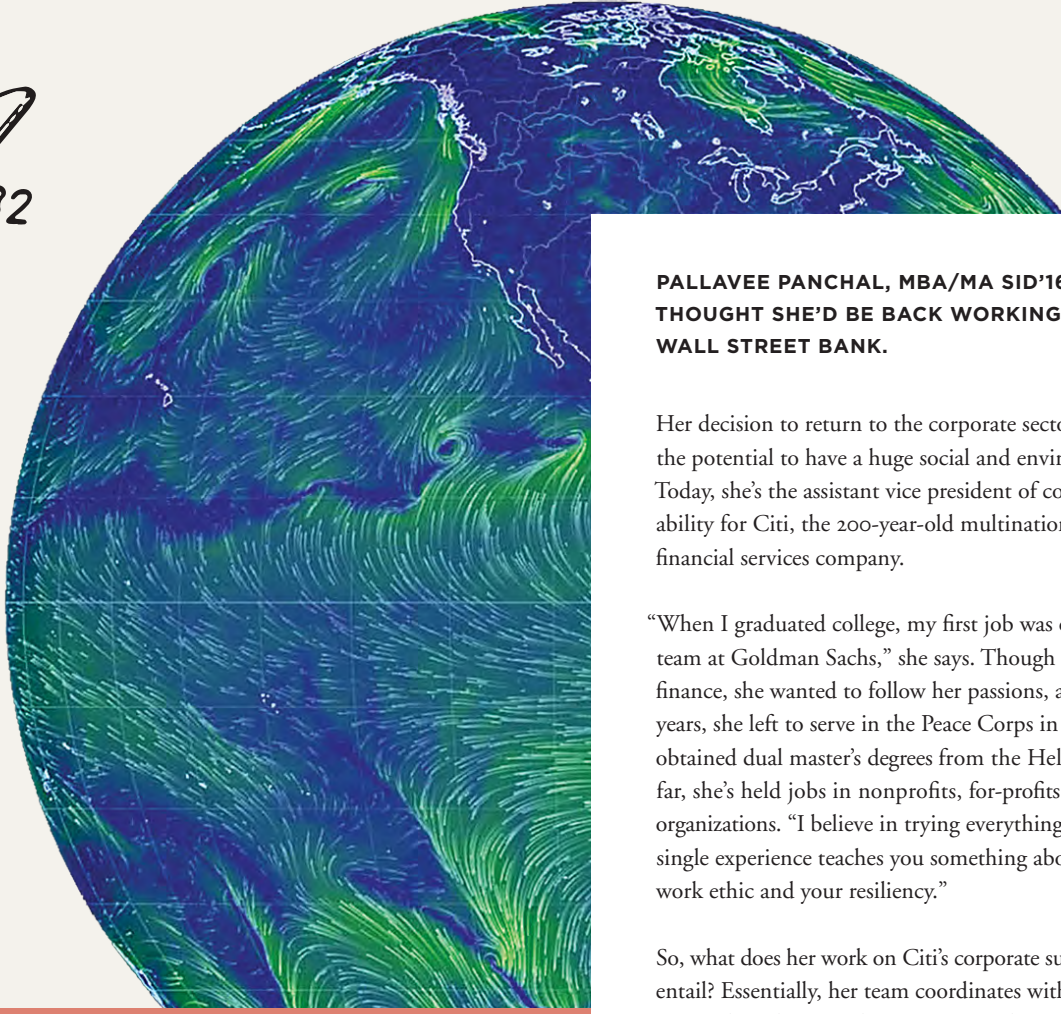
Levine’s family planted the seeds for what he refers to as “my own march to Selma,” and Heller inculcated the values of lifelong learning, alliance building and a passion for helping the most vulnerable kids. And these values, he says, “are needed now more than ever.”



# BRINGING BIG BUSINESS TO THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

PALLAVEE PANCHAL,  
MBA/MA SID'16, IS  
ADVANCING CORPORATE  
SUSTAINABILITY AT CITI





**PALLAVEE PANCHAL, MBA/MA SID'16, NEVER THOUGHT SHE'D BE BACK WORKING IN A WALL STREET BANK.**

Her decision to return to the corporate sector was driven by the potential to have a huge social and environmental impact. Today, she's the assistant vice president of corporate sustainability for Citi, the 200-year-old multinational banking and financial services company.

"When I graduated college, my first job was on the operations team at Goldman Sachs," she says. Though challenged in finance, she wanted to follow her passions, and after three years, she left to serve in the Peace Corps in Indonesia, then obtained dual master's degrees from the Heller School. So far, she's held jobs in nonprofits, for-profits and philanthropic organizations. "I believe in trying everything once. Every single experience teaches you something about yourself, your work ethic and your resiliency."

So, what does her work on Citi's corporate sustainability team entail? Essentially, her team coordinates with various parts of Citi and its clients and partners to understand the opportunities and risks around environmental and social sustainability. This work is guided by Citi's Sustainable Progress Strategy, which organizes goals and activities into three pillars: environmental and social risk management, environmental finance, and operations and supply chain.

For risk management, Panchal's team works alongside other groups within Citi to examine environmental, social and human rights in Citi's business practices, setting high standards for the bank itself and leveraging client relationships to impose those standards on others. "We're constantly working to make sure our policies — whether they're social, human rights-based or environmental — don't just align with national and international standards; we go beyond that," she says.

The second area focuses on Citi's flagship initiative: the \$100 Billion Environmental Finance Goal. This initiative aims to finance and facilitate \$100 billion in activities that reduce the impacts of climate change and create environmental solutions that benefit people and communities. Panchal's work focuses a lot on this goal, from tracking transactions and reporting progress to working hand in glove with the bankers on accounting for these environmental activities.

BY **BETHANY ROMANO, MBA'17**

The last area of sustainability activities — operations and supply chain — seeks to reduce Citi’s environmental footprint and reflect best practices across its supply chain. Citi has committed to sourcing renewable energy for all of its energy needs by 2020. In at least one instance, Panchal’s team worked with bankers and the communications team to link Citi’s environmental finance activities with their operations goals: first they provided financing for a wind-farm project in Texas, and then they purchased the power generated by that wind farm to achieve Citi’s goal of contracting 100 percent renewable energy in the region by 2020.

For Panchal, a job like this requires a few key ingredients to be truly successful, and mission is paramount among them. “Citi’s mission is to enable growth and economic progress,” she says. “Every single part of the bank, from the finance side to the banking side, operations, all of it: Everyone’s always looking at how to push that mission. I’ve never met people who are so passionate, except when I was at Heller.”

With a strong mission and passionate people on her side, Panchal revels in the capacity — and responsibility — for making a significant impact. Within Citi, the Corporate Sustainability team sits under Citizenship, and largely Global Public Affairs. As part of her function, she counts the number of people she can influence at Citi in the hundreds of thousands. “There are over 200,000 employees, and even more customers globally. My voice is so much louder in this position than at any other place I’ve worked. I continually ask myself, how can we challenge ourselves now?”

Panchal loves her work at Citi and emphasizes that she feels very lucky to have found the “unicorn” job. “Getting this job is 90 percent luck and 10 percent incredibly hard work, but these types of jobs are very few and far between. Before this, I searched for a very long time for the job that fit best. I could have stayed in nonprofits forever, but my skills and background were perfectly suited for this challenge.”

Ravi Lakshmikanthan, MA SID’99, Heller’s assistant dean of academic and student services, remembers that moment, too. “She always worked so hard and had such positive energy. I knew she’d reach her goals, no matter the path. Last spring, I received an email from Pallavee with the subject line ‘Big News!’ telling me about her new role at Citi, and I wasn’t surprised at all, just happy for her to start her dream job.”

Panchal, who was a Teigh Blume Brown Fellow at Heller, credits her unique dual master’s degrees — an MBA and an MA in Sustainable International Development (SID) — with her ability to navigate the business and environmental worlds simultaneously. When she was applying to grad school, she considered both MBA programs and sustainable development programs. Heller was the only school that would allow her to combine both of these key interests at the same time.

“And I really did combine them — every MBA project, from financial management to my capstone to my team consulting project — all of my projects were environmentally focused. I can’t imagine being in a traditional MBA program and saying, ‘OK, team. Let’s do our project on an environmental social enterprise!’”

The intersection of business and environment has given Panchal a career path in corporate sustainability, a field that’s grown exponentially as more corporations have taken it upon themselves to reduce their environmental impact and tackle climate change. When she thinks about the future of her field, Panchal says, “The thing that matters most right now in financial services, really any business, is climate risk. Climate change is coming to all companies. It’s an imminent threat. Everything companies do will be impacted, and to be ready we have to be proactive, not reactive.

“Learning what those risks are and how a company can manage these threats is integral to success and profit in the long term. Anyone that can learn, build and administer these climate models will be able to make a career out of it for the next 25 to 30 years,” she adds.

Being able to generate accurate financial projections based on climate change is not only a growing career skill; it’s a way to convince companies to fully commit to sustainability efforts. Corporations have everything to gain by actively combating climate change, so Panchal’s team works with the environmental and social risk management team, bankers and others to model these impacts, publishing their work in a recent report titled “Finance for a Climate-Resilient Future.”

But right now? “Every single day I’m learning something new,” she says. “And this work isn’t easy. But you just keep pushing, because at the end of the day, each of us is trying to make a real difference.”



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# SHEPHERD, SCHOLAR AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

**ROBA BULGA JILO, MBA/MA SID'19, FIGHTS FOR  
THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AROUND THE  
WORLD — INCLUDING HIS OWN TRIBE IN ETHIOPIA**

BY **KAREN SHIH**

For Roba Bulga Jilo, MBA/MA SID'19, camels represent freedom. Freedom to roam the grazing lands under the shadow of Mount Fentale, away from watchful parental eyes. Freedom to survive in the face of climate change and drought. Freedom from irresponsible international development.

That's why camels have become both a symbol and a linchpin of his plan to create a sustainable economic future for his own Karrayyu-Oromo tribe in Ethiopia — the first step in his greater goal to empower indigenous people around the world.

"I want to challenge development policy," says Bulga, whose tribe has lost 60 percent of its grazing land over the last 60 years. "I've seen so-called development that's a disaster. My community is getting poorer and poorer and poorer, and so marginalized. Development should recognize the rights of the people to the land, the air, the river."

Today, Bulga has moved beyond his roots as a shepherd, working with fellow pastoralists to create a cooperative to pool

and sell their camel milk, a staple in the region. He's now a social entrepreneur inspiring his fellow classmates; an activist who's been invited to speak around the world; and a scholar who's nearly completed three master's degrees, including a Social Impact MBA and an MA in Sustainable International Development (SID) from Heller. But through his travels and studies, he always comes back to his community.

## **A CHILDHOOD WITH CAMELS**

"My childhood was mostly growing up with animals," says Bulga. In the Awash Valley of central Ethiopia, he lived in a village of about 100, part of the greater Karrayyu-Oromo tribe of about 100,000 members.

His people are pastoralists. They raise cows, sheep, goats and camels, selling or trading them for other food and necessities. They move from season to season for the best grazing lands and water sources for their animals — even as they've lost more than half of their grazing land over the last 60 years to agriculture and wildlife conservation.

For Bulga, camels were always his favorite. “They are so cute and humble, and they remember you really well,” he says. His life intertwined with theirs, as he cared for and played with calves and even became, when he was 6, a surrogate calf for a camel who had lost her own.

“After that day, she considered me like her baby,” he says. “Without me, you cannot milk this camel. For a year and a half, she would sniff my hair and then give milk.”

He learned from a young age which season and pastures were best for each animal. Everybody in the village contributed to their care; some built fences, others herded and milked.

As Bulga became a teenager, one of his favorite activities was bringing the camels to graze on higher land during the dry season. The trip would take him and other young men out of the village for months at a time. They lived “cowboy style,” sleeping under the stars surrounded by camels, which created a protective circle. The men would take turns keeping watch each night for predators like leopards, hyenas and lions, which would come to pick off vulnerable calves.

Who would want to give up that kind of freedom to sit in a classroom all day? But it was a formal education that gave Bulga the opportunity to understand and tackle the complex challenges facing his community — and to start creating solutions.

### QUESTIONING EVERYTHING

“I still remember the first day I started school,” says Bulga. “We weren’t even in a building. We were outside under a big acacia tree, sitting on stones. A university student volunteered to teach us. I thought, ‘What is this guy doing on this little blackboard?’”

He was 9 years old when an NGO opened a school nearby, and he joined the first generation of people from his tribe to attend. Though nearly two dozen of his peers started with him, most dropped out. For the first few years, he considered doing so, too. Walking sometimes 12 kilometers each way to attend class (depending on where his village was at the moment) just wasn’t appealing. That is, until he had his first geography lesson.

“We started to learn about other cultures and other ways of life, how things have been explored,” he says. “We started with Ethiopia, then Africa, then the world, and it was fascinating. How did these people know all these things? Are there really people like me with animals all around the world?”

He reached a turning point in high school. As he turned 20, his parents wanted him to take the traditional route: continue to live as a shepherd, find a wife, have kids. He respected his parents, but “there was no way to turn back. I started to question everything.”

He set his sights on studying law, economics or political science at Addis Ababa University, but was assigned to study language and communications based on his college entrance-exam scores.





TITLED "THE CHIEFTAIN," THIS IMAGE OF ROBA BULGA JILO WAS TAKEN BY RENOWNED PHOTOGRAPHER STEVE MCCURRY FOR THE 2015 LAVAZZA CALENDAR, PRODUCED WITH SLOW FOOD. THE CALENDAR FEATURED STORIES OF 12 AFRICANS WHO ARE SYMBOLS OF HOPE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND SPOKESPEOPLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND A BETTER FUTURE.

Feeling unfulfilled by his university studies, he found purpose volunteering with Slow Food International, a global organization dedicated to protecting local food cultures and promoting biodiversity. He hosted tastings for indigenous products, such as coffee and honey, and served as a translator for Slow Food representatives who met small-scale producers in the field.

Every other year, Slow Food hosts a global conference in Italy, bringing together artisans, producers and consumers, among others. In 2008, Bulga was invited to attend. It was his first trip abroad, and though he didn't know it at the time, would become his first steppingstone to Heller.

#### A CHANCE MEETING

Elinor Gollay, MSW'71, PhD'77, was visiting the Vatican with her husband, Rex, when she spotted a young African man listening in on their tour. Intrigued, she asked him to join her for lunch.

"It doesn't take a genius to notice there's something special about Roba," she says. "He radiates a kind of calm curiosity, a self-confidence without being arrogant. The fact that he was there indicated his openness, even at a young age, to other cultures, other people and other experiences."

Gollay wanted to learn about his studies and work and see how she could help. They stayed in touch through Facebook and email. She sent articles she found relevant to his work and offered suggestions on Bulga's grant proposals. When he had the opportunity to earn a master's degree in gastronomic science in northern Italy in 2011, sponsored by Slow Food, Gollay reconnected with him in person, and their friendship grew stronger.

After Bulga graduated, Slow Food hired him to oversee its Ethiopia operations. He took what he learned from Italian grape growers and cheese makers to help Ethiopian beekeepers and coffee growers enhance the quality of their products and broaden the market for their goods. He also oversaw a program that taught schoolchildren to plant gardens and understand the origins of their food.

"Working with the communities, I found the change was visible," Bulga says. "I could do the stuff on the ground very well. But it's more difficult to go to the policy level. I thought,

let me go back to school. Once you have the experience of the field and the policy point of view, you can amplify your work."

Gollay suggested that he look at the Heller School, which had expanded on its social policy roots to add a sustainable international development program.

"It felt clear to me that he would benefit from the level of teaching at Brandeis, where he could improve his writing and analytical skills and get more knowledge, more contacts and a broader perspective on helping his people," she says.

#### INDIGENOUS INCLUSION

Bulga enrolled at Heller in 2016, focused initially on development. "I wanted to analyze what happens when communities become the subject of development, instead of being included in development," he says. He had seen development projects contribute to the marginalization of his own tribe. One such project diverted critical water resources to sugar cane plantations, and another created a new wildlife sanctuary that cut off access to the grazing land needed during the dry season.

"Indigenous people cannot afford to be exploited by multinational corporations or small private companies on their ancestral lands," he says. "Collaboration and negotiation are key — engaging the local indigenous groups will be important for narrowing the 'gaps of exploitation' by companies."

He had experienced the success of this collaborative approach in his community-driven work with Slow Food; with the coffee growers in southeast Ethiopia, for example, he had helped develop a cooperative to better connect them with roasters and buyers.

"You need to tell the story," he says. "These coffee growers are protecting the Harenna Forest, the second largest in Ethiopia. They are producing an amazing product, but they are marginalized. If you support them, you support the forest."

With Heller's esteemed faculty and internationally experienced peer cohort, he was already making crucial connections between lessons on policy in the classroom and his own experiences living and working in his home country. Soon, those connections would come all the way back to his childhood in the highlands, lying under the stars encircled by camels.

## NOMAD DAIRY

“Does camel milk taste good?”

That’s not a question Iwona Matczuk, MBA/MA SID’19, thought she’d be answering when she enrolled at Heller. But she soon found herself drawn in by Bulga’s passion when they both entered the Heller Startup Challenge in fall 2017, an annual weekend-long startup incubator and pitch competition.

During his second year, Bulga had become intrigued by social entrepreneurship as another potential avenue to make his community self-sustaining, and decided to enroll in the Social Impact MBA. At the Startup Challenge, he assembled a team with Matczuk; Kyle Plummer, MBA’18; and Liz Keefe, MBA/MA SID’18, called Nomad Dairy. Their goal: to raise funds to support the camel-milk cooperative he started in Ethiopia.

“Climate change is making people lose hope with cattle or goats or sheep. If there’s a drought, you’ll lose everything,” Bulga says. But camels, whose milk has even more protein and less fat than cow’s milk, are better adapted to survive in harsher conditions.

He created the camel-milk cooperative, modeled on Slow Food’s coffee grower cooperative, in 2012. Though pastoralists had always consumed camel milk, it wasn’t popular in the cities — and he was determined to find a way to bring it to market. He offered tastings at embassies and hotels, proposing both high-end ways it could be used in place of cow’s milk, such as in espresso drinks, as well as ways to spread it worldwide, such as in rations for disaster relief.

During the whirlwind weekend of the Startup Challenge, the Nomad Dairy team chatted with Bulga’s friends in Addis Ababa to better understand the challenges and environment in Ethiopia.

“The distance is far, but there are so many people in Roba’s network who are so invested in his success that the distance gets smaller,” Matczuk says.

Nomad Dairy won the Startup Challenge, kicking off a series of wins at other pitch competitions that year. They ultimately raised enough money to purchase a refrigerator, modifying

a truck donated by Slow Food, to bring the milk from the grazing lands to Addis Ababa. Now, their next goal is to create a small processing plant to pasteurize the milk. This will allow for broader distribution, particularly to grocery stores and cafes, which provide better profits than local markets.

So what does camel milk taste like? “We used to defer to Roba when people asked that question,” Matczuk says. “But every time he comes back from a trip, he calls us over and makes a lovely dinner and we have camel milk from wherever he can find it.” Bulga has brought back bottled camel milk from Amish farmers in Missouri, as well as powdered camel milk from the Middle East and California.

“It’s creamy and thicker like whole milk, but has these nuttier, earthier undertones,” Matczuk says. “We can now confidently say, ‘It’s good!’”

## COMING FULL CIRCLE

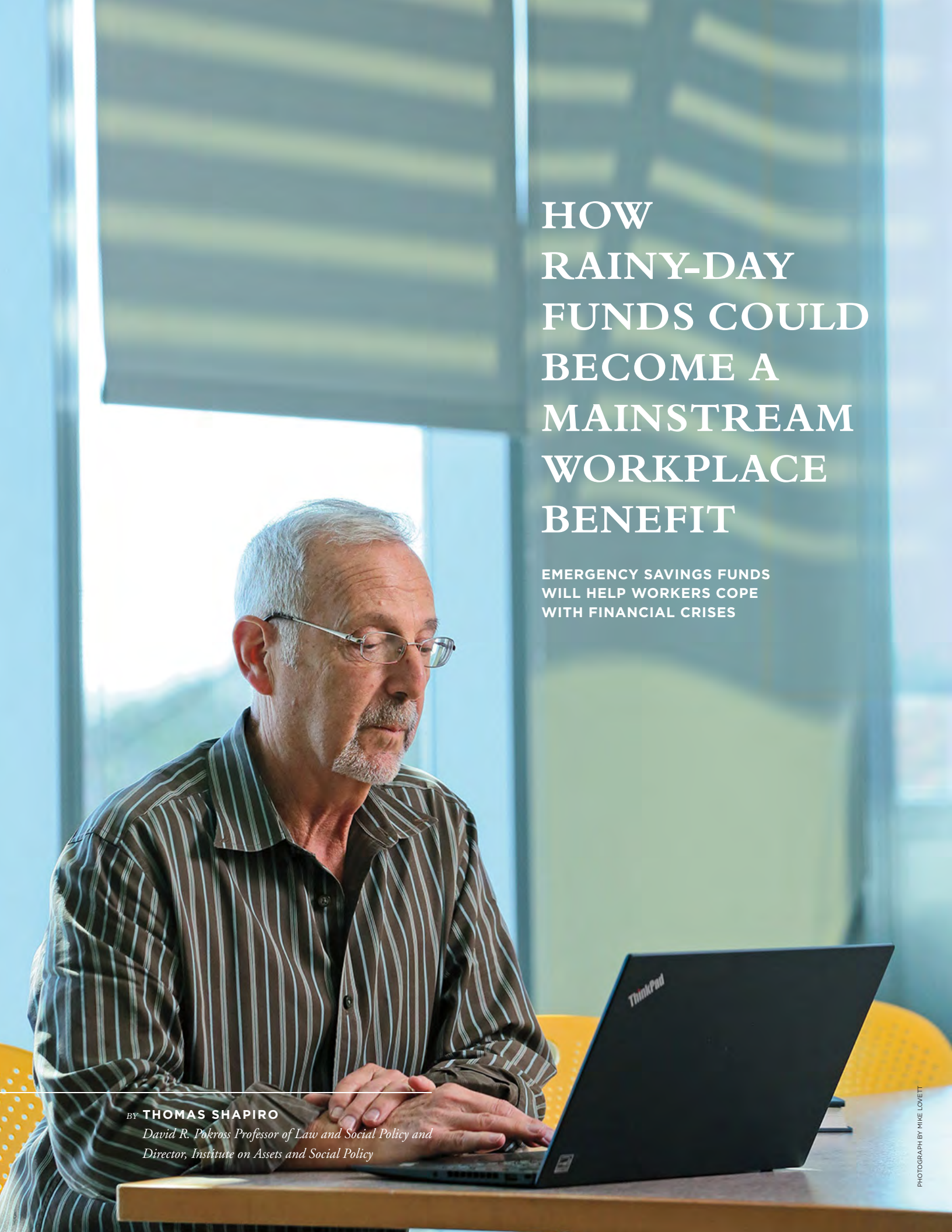
Bulga has taken full advantage of his time at Heller. He’s maximized his studies with his dual master’s degrees; pursued social entrepreneurship through university and Boston-area resources; and traveled across the United States and around the world to network and advocate for indigenous people.

“If we give people like Roba the right tools, they can figure out a lot of their own solutions to the challenges that their countries and their people face,” Gollay says.

After he graduates in May 2019, Bulga plans to return to Ethiopia, where a new progressive government gives him hope that he can effect real change. He’ll tackle the challenges facing his community using his new skills in policy and business, as well as an expanded global perspective from his experiences at Heller and beyond. But it’s clear to those who meet him that the traits Bulga admires in his camels — genuine humility, unwavering resilience and a sense of protecting one’s own — are qualities he exemplifies himself.

“I want to fight for pastoralists globally,” Bulga says. “If you work closely with the community and have the right strategy, you can bring about the right change.”





# HOW RAINY-DAY FUNDS COULD BECOME A MAINSTREAM WORKPLACE BENEFIT

EMERGENCY SAVINGS FUNDS  
WILL HELP WORKERS COPE  
WITH FINANCIAL CRISES

BY **THOMAS SHAPIRO**

*David R. Pokross Professor of Law and Social Policy and  
Director, Institute on Assets and Social Policy*



**MY ACADEMIC AND ADVOCACY PASSIONS SWIRL AROUND WEALTH INEQUALITY AND HOW A LACK OF WEALTH DRAGS FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES DOWN, A MAIN INGREDIENT OF WHAT I CALL “TOXIC INEQUALITY.”**

Rather than dwell on the ravages of deficit, the Institute on Assets and Social Policy and I partner with nonprofits, organizations and advocates to build solutions for better economic security for families and communities. That’s one reason emergency savings rises to the top tier of my policy wish list — an idea that’s taking root in philanthropies and think tanks, and even at the San Francisco airport.

For my book “Toxic Inequality,” my research team and I interviewed over 100 families in 1998-99 and again in 2010-11 about their finances, aspirations and prospects. Perhaps the results were not earth-shattering, but we were struck over and over again by how easily these hardworking families with sky-high ambitions for their children were thrown off-track by routine yet unplanned events like illness, a cutback in hours, loss of a job, the need to care for newborns or relatives, a broken-down car or a government shutdown.

It’s hard for working families in America today. Once our study subjects were thrown off-track, it often took them years to climb back to the same place, and those who did were lucky. Some even luckier ones had parents or other relatives who were able to help them weather a financial crisis; fewer still were able to move ahead on the wings of timely and considerable financial support. For too many, a single misfortune was too much to overcome: Plans came undone, and the family was never able to advance.

For me, these stories brought home the increasing financial precariousness of American families. And they are not alone. Indeed, the stories we heard are in many ways emblematic of how economics, race and wealth have congealed to historic levels of inequality, paralyzing Americans’ chances of getting ahead in these tough times.

Four in 10 Americans cannot cover a \$400 unplanned expense, and nearly two-thirds struggle to cover a \$1,000 crisis. People

go to the hospital. Cars break down. We know this from our studies. Low-income workers and families that rely on assistance programs tell us some months last longer than their paychecks. Yet it still is hard to fathom how this reality is becoming the story of mainstream America. Millions of American workers are a paycheck away from food pantries. The December 2018-January 2019 government shutdown affecting 800,000 federal workers and 10,000 contractors brought that reality into the headlines, putting faces to the cold statistic that 40 percent of U.S. workers are unable to weather routine financial shocks.

People tend to plan for one mishap, if they can, but one adverse event often triggers a cascade of other stressful and



THE DEC. 2018-JAN. 2019  
U.S. GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN  
SHOWED THAT

**40%**

OF WORKERS CANNOT COVER  
A \$400 UNPLANNED EXPENSE

# 30%

OF U.S. WORKERS  
(36 MILLION) ARE AT 125%  
OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY  
LEVEL, EARNING \$24K

# 2/3

OF AMERICANS STRUGGLE  
TO COVER A \$1,000 CRISIS



traumatic events. I am ever-mindful of our conversations with Michelle and Kendrick Johnson (not their real names). When Kendrick lost his high-paying job, it unleashed economic, psychological, family and marital stresses from which he and Michelle could not recover. We don't yet know how their daughter Desi dealt with these emotional and financial stresses and her parents' ensuing separation. Now that Desi is in young adulthood, we also do not know how these stresses carried over to her family and career.

Workers who are paid a low wage are the most at risk. Let's consider a family of three earning one paycheck equivalent to 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold, or about \$24,000. Thirty percent of all workers, or 36 million people, fall into this category. Women, younger workers, Hispanic workers and those with some college are overrepresented among low-wage workers. Wages have stagnated the past 30 years and the largest job growth in the next decade is mostly in low-wage work with poor benefits. The future of work is trending in the wrong direction — toward more people working at jobs that pay low wages.

Policy offers no answers to meeting these unplanned expenses, other than accumulating lots of wealth or being born into a wealthy family. Since conducting those interviews, I (and many, many others!) have been trying to build an institutional rainy-day mechanism that would allow families to cover event-related financial hardships without unhinging all their hard work, plans and aspirations for their children.

One of the lessons we learned from the interviews involved the capacity of family wealth not only to navigate unplanned emergencies but to provide second, third, fourth, sometimes endless chances to "succeed." We kept asking ourselves: Can we help innovate some institutionalized mechanism to serve similar functions as family wealth or inheritance to keep families from being thrown off-track so easily?

Emergency savings is one of the most promising and simple solutions to manage unexpected financial shocks. Money distresses us, especially low-wage workers close to the financial brink, where the need to meet bills too often results in taking predatory loans that typically make the situation worse. The emergency savings idea is quite simple: Employers provide a fund that workers can tap into in case of emergencies, say \$1,000.



## *The emergency savings idea is quite simple: Employers provide a fund that workers can tap into in case of emergencies, say \$1,000.*

The idea is not preposterously optimistic. I am aware of several demonstration projects in the design phase or approaching a pilot phase. Organizations engaged in this work include the Workers Lab, the Rockefeller Foundation, BlackRock, the Center for Financial Services Innovation, Commonwealth, the Common Cents Lab at Duke University, and the City of San Francisco's Office of Financial Empowerment and San Francisco International Airport.

*Wait, the San Francisco airport??*

Half of San Francisco airport's 40,000 workers are paid less than \$50,000. An emergency savings fund will help these workers cope with emergencies, stabilize their jobs, reduce reliance on predatory loans and ease the cycle of debt. The airport has committed resources and is listening to workers' financial needs and concerns in order to design a rainy-day fund that would help boost their financial security. Over the past several months, I have come away from talks with several of the key players, and I am encouraged that pilot programs soon will be on the ground, perhaps with several designs to help us understand how to maximize impacts for workers and employment.

One option, a multi-stage design, particularly intrigues me because it melds economic security with workers' power. In this model, contributions come from employers, so the fund is treated as a benefit. Workers can increase the fund with their own contributions, enabling them to exceed the \$1,000 benefit ceiling and build in a borrowing facility to the workers' fund. Such a workers' fund would be controlled by workers and their representatives, and rules for distribution and decisions determined by a council of workers and employers.

This plan provides more security for workers and is good for employers, too. One in three workers say that financial stress is distracting at work. From a business point of view, that adds up

to a lot of lost productivity each month. Distress over money and lower job satisfaction, in turn, leads to higher turnover and considerably higher hiring and training replacement costs.

It's my privilege to work with and learn from advocates and groups across the country resisting the downward spiral of widening inequality and the violence of racial injustice. The need for emergency savings marks another profound failure manufactured by those who write the rules of the economy to benefit themselves at the expense of workers' wages, benefits and income volatility. Absent these disturbing trends (and the knowledge that most new jobs in the next decade are expected to be just as bad), there would be little need for emergency savings programs.

Vehicles like emergency savings schemes fill in the downstream consequences and are an important redistribution palliative. My hope is for serious organizing, advocacy and policy action to generate a far more equitable distribution of the tremendous wealth we produce in the first place, thus drastically reducing crises for families.

The rules of the economy and politics are broken. Fortunately, the uncertainty and break-all-molds character of the current policy environment has also emboldened transformative ideas to enter the public square. Today's is certainly a strange and dynamic policy environment, one that allows audacious ideas like emergency savings funds to take root. I am confident the Heller School will be an actor in these bold policy innovations. Stay tuned to see if they bear fruit.

## BRIAN KENNEDY IS PODCASTING ON POLICY AND POP CULTURE



TOP:  
BRIAN KENNEDY  
BOTTOM:  
PANTHER ALIER

“There are definitely voices missing from policy conversations,” says Brian Kennedy, MPP’16. “But we know that most communities, regardless of their professions, their incomes — they’re talking about policy issues that directly impact them. After the 2016 election, we wanted to take the tools and information that we had as trained policy analysts and bring that to people who are having these conversations in their daily lives.”

Thus was born “At the Intersection,” a podcast featuring Kennedy and co-host Marion Johnson. They released 20 episodes in their first year and intend to continue releasing new episodes every two weeks. Together, Kennedy and Johnson dig deep into their topics (each episode lasts about one hour), bringing historical and cultural context to policy issues of the day.

“When people have these conversations, they’re not just talking about whether a policy is good or bad. It’s intertwined with pop culture, with our individual identities, with history,” he says. Their podcast tries to tease out those intersections rather than compartmentalizing policy in a vacuum. In an episode about gun control, for example, the hosts discussed their personal histories with the topic, how gun culture is perpetuated in movies, and the long history of gun control debates in the United States.

Despite the many hours he puts into each episode, Kennedy’s work on the podcast is independent of his day job as a policy analyst for the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center (a project of the North Carolina Justice Center), where he focuses on poverty alleviation and the social safety net in North Carolina. His job includes tracking how specific policies are impacting different populations of North Carolinians and working with partners who are lobbying for specific legislation. He also helps run an intensive four-day summer institute for college students interested in policy, a new program he says is loosely based on the MPP capstone.

“Almost everything I took out of the MPP program I’m using as a policy analyst,” he says, “especially the focus on writing

and communicating succinctly. I’ve worked with a lot of other MPPs, and I’ve learned that some schools send students out into the world as perfectly polished data analysts. Other schools, like Heller, send grads out with the tools to understand data and models, and also with the skills to understand whether a policy is going to help people or hurt people. The most important thing someone with this degree can do is speak up and make sure that the decisions we’re making will improve folks’ lives.”

For the podcast, Kennedy hopes to continue providing listeners with the historical and cultural context to understand policies that matter to them. In particular, he plans to have more guest experts on the show, and to do more live events. He says, “I just really want to continue hearing different opinions on these topics. I’ve been blown away by all the different perspectives out there on what people think of as very simple issues.”

## PANTHER ALIER IS REBUILDING LOCAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

Two decades after Panther Alier, MA SID’07, fled his home during Sudan’s devastating civil war in 1987, he finally returned to his village of Bor in South Sudan.

During his long journey back home, he resided in one refugee camp after another in Ethiopia and Kenya, separated from his aunt and his siblings, before finally resettling in the United States in 2001. It was a struggle for him to acclimate to his new country — but eventually he earned a bachelor’s degree from University of Massachusetts Boston and started to earn a comfortable living. He gained U.S. citizenship. No one could fault him for staying.

But that’s not what Alier wanted. He chose to pursue a master’s degree in sustainable international development at Heller so he could find a job that would take him back to Sudan.

“My goal was always to return and help communities back home,” he says. “I went back with the euphoria of going to make drastic changes.”

But it was a shock — and an incredibly emotional experience — for him to return to his village and reunite with his siblings.

“Literally, in Bor, there was nothing there, other than people. I saw so many kids running around, not in school, including in my own family. The only way I could help was to establish something that would contribute: a school.”

It wasn't easy. Sudan was in the midst of political upheaval, with South Sudan on the verge of establishing independence in 2011. Alier had a good job with Winrock International, working on a USAID-funded project to support local governance and service delivery, but he was embarking on a new career and had little money saved.

Despite these challenges, he furthered his career at Winrock, then moved to Deloitte to consult for the South Sudanese government and the World Bank. In 2012, he was finally able to work with two friends to establish Bor College High School.

Alier and the school have survived tumultuous times in South Sudan, which “descended into chaos barely a year after independence,” he says. After a new conflict erupted there, Alier took a position with Voluntary Service Overseas in Malawi, temporarily shuttering the school during his absence. But he returned in 2015 and reopened the school, and today serves as country director for the Smile Again Africa Development Organization.

In a way, Alier has come full circle. While he was living in the refugee camps, “the only profession we saw was a teacher. So I thought when I went back to Sudan, I could become a teacher.” Now, he's providing an education to more than 500 students. In February, he visited Heller during a business trip, seeking advice from Professor Larry Simon on how to make the school self-sufficient in the face of South Sudan's ongoing crisis.

He hopes through education that this new generation will be able to avoid the ethnic and tribal conflicts that have plagued his people over the last century. More concretely, he says, “My hope is that these kids will be able to go off to college and come back to change their communities,” just like he did.

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## ALLISON IVIE IS LOBBYING CONGRESS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

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“I've done government work, private-sector work and nonprofit work, and I see value in all of it,” says Allison Ivie, MPP'13. “The beauty of the MPP is that all these options are open to you.”

Today, Ivie is the senior director of government relations and public affairs at Center Road Solutions, a boutique, woman-owned lobbying firm focused on mental health and school safety. “Our goal is to make sure the Affordable Care Act is implemented in the way it was intended, such as keeping coverage for mental health and substance use disorder treatment. It's an ongoing challenge,” she says.

When Congress is in session, Ivie frequently meets with staffers on Capitol Hill, especially those working with the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. “I'm telling them, this is who I represent, and these are our key issues. I'm asking, what are you guys tackling this session? How can we partner to improve your work?” Once she knows her clients' stance on ongoing legislative efforts, she works to write joint letters with coalition members to heads of committees and to activate grass-roots networks to call different congressional offices. However, it's not just about Congress. In times of legislative gridlock, administrations often turn to regulations to get things done. That's when she dives deep into policy research and analysis to write opinions on behalf of her clients to enter into the public record.

“One of the most important skills I learned at Heller was writing policy memos,” she says. “Learning to be really concise in your language and getting your point across quickly. In any government or lobbying job, nobody has time to read academic papers.”

Ivie's path to social policy was clear. In college, she volunteered at a local domestic violence shelter. It soon became apparent to her that many of the women were over-prescribed medications like antidepressants.



ALLISON IVIE



MELISSA BRIGANTE

“I realized this was a policy issue,” she says. “If they go from doctor to doctor to doctor, they should have a record of what they’ve been prescribed. We still see this today with the opioid crisis of over-prescribing. I didn’t have the skill set or knowledge to address it, so I needed to go to grad school.”

She chose Heller because of the joint master’s program in public policy and women’s, gender and sexuality studies. Raised by a single mother who faced both abuse and financial struggles, Ivie wanted to find a way to help others like her.

“My mother passed away in 2015, and her life was so short because she had to work so hard to provide for us,” she says. “It was incredibly stressful for her, but she still dedicated herself to public health. That’s what gets me out of bed every morning. She worked so hard to launch me and my brother — the least I can do is get up every day and do some good in the world.”

## MELISSA BRIGANTE IS PROVIDING PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID TO GRENFELL TOWER FIRE VICTIMS

When London’s Grenfell Tower apartment building went up in flames in June 2017, Melissa Kizildemir Brigante, MA SID’07, was on maternity leave. But living in London, just miles from the tragedy that claimed 72 lives and injured dozens more, she couldn’t just sit and watch it happen.

“I knew from my background that a lot of people would need psychological first aid,” says Brigante. “I went there the first day to see if I could volunteer. It was complete chaos — absolutely nothing was organized.”

Brigante leapt into action, reaching out on Facebook for psychosocial volunteers. She trained them in batches and sent them to the site. They provided psychological first aid at the street level, realizing emotionally overwhelmed and distraught

survivors, witnesses and community members could not check themselves into the formally set up disaster mental health support clinics in the crucial early days.

It felt only natural for Brigante, who started working in disaster relief in her home country of Turkey when she was just a teenager, to step up in a time of need. Throughout her career, she’s helped implement psychosocial programs for refugee camps on the Iraqi border, children in earthquake-prone Turkey, immigrant families in New Orleans and others to help them recover from disasters.

After she earned her master’s in sustainable international development at Heller, Brigante obtained a master’s in management from Harvard. She also worked on a homelessness prevention program with the Boston mayor’s office before moving to London in 2010.

That’s how she found herself poised to use her skills and experience to start up the charity, the Grenfell Hope Project. She’s now expanded from providing mental health services to hosting resilience-building trainings in partnership with Mental Health First Aid England.

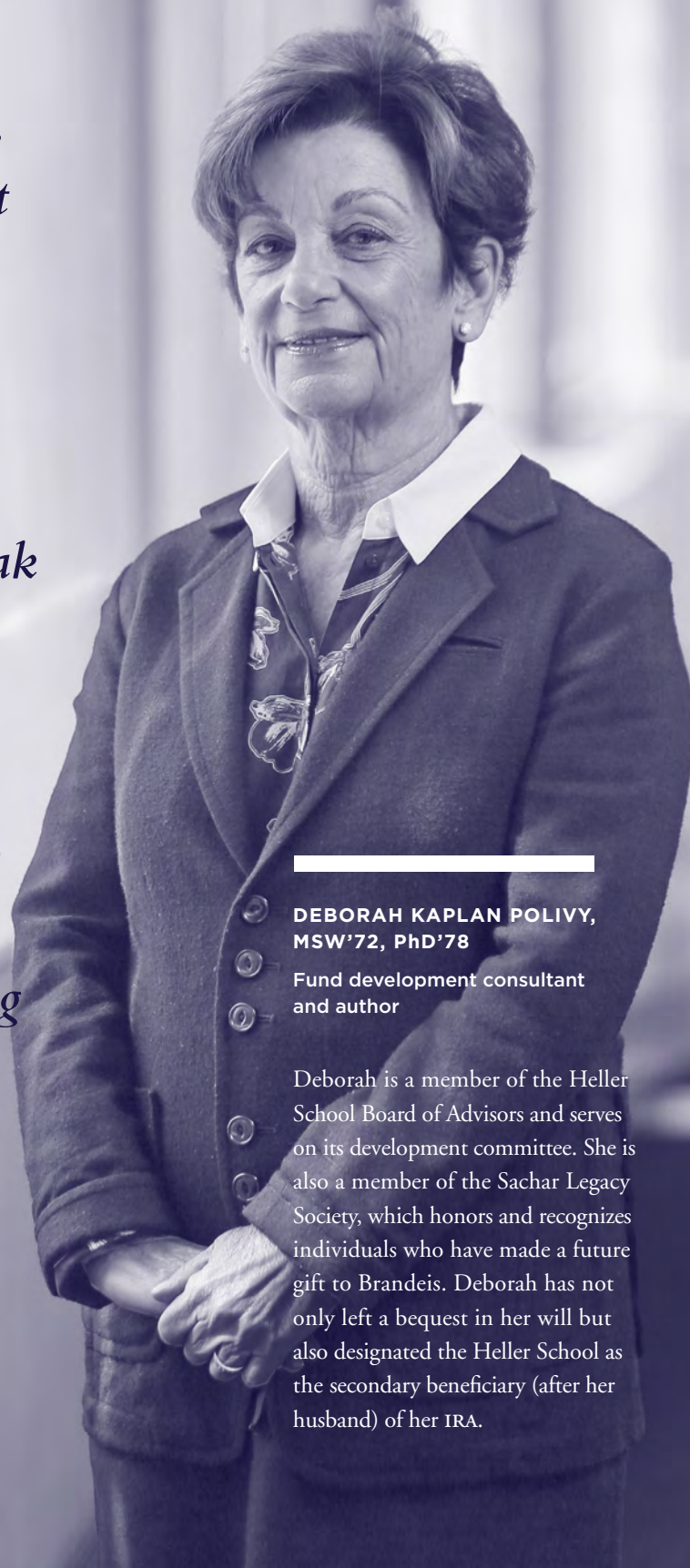
“We’re filling the gaps of mental health support and continue to serve the otherwise unserved,” Brigante says.

For example, she found counselors fluent in different languages to serve the large immigrant community. She also organized the first Grenfell mental health coordination seminar, attended by 75 representatives from organizations like the British Red Cross and the National Health Service, to advocate Do No Harm principles and World Health Organization guidelines on working without inflicting more trauma on the beneficiaries.

“If you see someone bleeding, you don’t go and ask how they got cut. You just try to help them stop bleeding,” she says. “It should not be different for mental health. You must offer first aid.”

She hopes others — particularly first responders — can learn from her experiences. Though it’s been nearly two years since the disaster, people continue to suffer mental and physical consequences of the fire, of still being displaced and of feeling neglected as a community. “We’re going to offer help as long as there is the need.”

*“I give to Heller because I am totally indebted to the school. Heller not only taught me to think and analyze, but gave me courage as well as confidence and empowered me to speak up about my ideas. I received my education at no cost and I am now in the position to repay that debt, both on an annual, ongoing basis and through my estate plan.”*



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**DEBORAH KAPLAN POLIVY,  
MSW'72, PhD'78**

Fund development consultant  
and author

Deborah is a member of the Heller School Board of Advisors and serves on its development committee. She is also a member of the Sachar Legacy Society, which honors and recognizes individuals who have made a future gift to Brandeis. Deborah has not only left a bequest in her will but also designated the Heller School as the secondary beneficiary (after her husband) of her IRA.

BACK COVER(AGE)

*The culture at FDA continues to be much too cozy with the industry it's supposed to be regulating.*

**ANDREW KOLODNY** ON CBS' "60 MINUTES" ON HOW A LABEL CHANGE BY THE FDA EXPANDED THE USE OF OPIOIDS

*Actively look and listen, be curious, seek and demonstrate genuine understanding of the other side.*

**ALAIN LEMPEREUR** IN THE BOSTON GLOBE ON HOW TO NAVIGATE CONTENTIOUS POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS

*More than one in five Hispanic children lived in poverty, and that rate was nearly three times the rate of non-Hispanic white children.*

**DOLORES ACEVEDO-GARCIA** ON A REPORT SHE CO-AUTHORED FOR THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING AND MEDICINE ON HOW TO CUT CHILD POVERTY IN THE U.S. IN HALF OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS

*The way [Trump] negotiates directly challenges what is almost a half century of tools and principles and methods that have emerged in the field.*

**JOEL CUTCHER-GERSHENFELD** IN HUFFPOST ON PRESIDENT TRUMP'S NEGOTIATING STYLE