THE MAKING OF AN ICON
ALUMNA REDEFINES THE EAST BAY SKYLINE

FIGHTING THE OVERMEDICATING OF FOSTER YOUTH

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Like that gleaming bridge tower rising from the bay, we too are a symbol of the East Bay, also a sign that changes are afoot and big things are on the horizon for our university. Monument letters — an impressive feat of artistic engineering in their own right, but also a remnant of the past. As this academic year comes to a close, we are unveiling our long-planned East Bay Iconic Monuments Project, with the idea that over 200 years from now, people will still be able to imagine the Bay Area landscape without it. With the last anchors of the old bridge disappearing, a remnant of the past has given way to a sweeping symbol of the East Bay’s rising economic and cultural success and aspirations for the future.

The San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge has been an icon since it opened in 1936, but it is always in the shadow of its glittering neighbor, the Golden Gate. All that changed in 2013 with the new span, and the installation of more than 48,000 high-intensity LED lamps that shed new light and attention on this critical transportation artery. The lighting and electrical installation were the work of Cal State East Bay alumni and entrepreneur Ruth Bley and her band of Bleyco “mavericks,” who took a job many others shied away from.

We all have other favorite East Bay icons. For me, there is the Campanile at my alma mater, UC Berkeley. The Tribune Tower in downtown Oakland stands for some as a symbol of the city’s pride. Mount Diablo is another icon, visible to our neighbors all around the bay on a clear day. There is Jack London Square — and of course, there is Jack London himself, one of many towering characters who have achieved East Bay iconic status. Our university is part of the East Bay iconography, not just because of our physical presence — our beautiful main campus on a hill — but because of our presence in the lives of so many people who call the East Bay home. Throughout our 60-year history, we have stood as a beacon of opportunity to the communities we serve. A statistic in which I take particular pride is that about 80 percent of Cal State East Bay graduates go on to live and work in the region. Through their contributions, we have an enormous impact on the life of the East Bay.

For many of our alumni, Warren Hall was an icon, and they were sad to see it go. But as time moves on, our environment changes, and new icons arise to take the place of the old. As this academic year draws to a close, we are unveiling our long-planned East Bay Iconic Monuments Project — an impressive feat of artistic engineering in their own right, but also a sign that changes are afoot and big things are on the horizon for our university. Like that gleaming bridge tower rising from the bay, we too are a symbol of the East Bay’s rising aspirations and the promise of a bright future.

Go Pioneers!

W hen I look out at the eastern span of the Bay Bridge, with its gleaming white tower and cascading suspension cables, I cannot imagine the Bay Area landscape without it. With the last anchors of the old bridge disappearing, a remnant of the past has given way to a sweeping symbol of the East Bay’s rising economic and cultural success and aspirations for the future.

Dr. Leroy M. Morishita
President

College of Business and Economics Dean Retires

After 26 years with the university, Jagdish Agrawal — dean of Cal State East Bay’s College of Business and Economics — retired in January. Under Agrawal’s direction, CBE reached new heights in terms of recognition from ranking websites such as U.S. News and World Report. Agrawal, who was named dean in 2013, also played a key role in hiring more than 10 new faculty for the college during his tenure, securing accreditation through the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business and increasing the number of scholarships available to students.

President Leroy M. Morishita said Agrawal has served the university and college in an “exemplary fashion.”

“I am grateful to him for his leadership, and the legacy of excellence [he leaves behind] that has impacted the lives of our students, graduates, faculty and staff,” Morishita said. “On behalf of the university, I would like to thank Dean Agrawal for all he has accomplished and wish him the very best in the years to come.”

Agrawal, who will return through the faculty early retirement program, said he will finally remember Cal State East Bay.

“I will dearly miss working with the department chairs, program directors, faculty and staff ... who are poised to take the business school to new heights in terms of providing quality education and support services to improve career opportunities for our graduates,” Agrawal said.

— Natalie Feulner

Anniversary Celebration

It started as an initiative to prepare future speech-language pathologists for clinical work, but no one could have predicted the community that would result from Cal State East Bay’s Aphasia Treatment Program.

“I found my home, right here,” said Jay Schuster. “This group, these teachers, these wonderful [students], it’s a loving place.”

Through bimonthly visits to ATP (housed within the Department of Communicative Sciences and Disorders), where students spend eight-week rotations practicing to be clinicians across a variety of group therapy settings, Schuster is regaining his confidence to communicate. Aphasia, a disorder that results from brain trauma, impacts a person’s language and comprehension, though not their intelligence.

The National Aphasia Association believes more than 2 million people in the U.S. live with aphasia, and for 20 years, Cal State East Bay has been one of two dedicated treatment centers in the region. It’s a milestone the students, faculty, staff, friends and alumni of ATP gathered May 6 to celebrate — the accomplishments of the clients, and the program’s nearly 300 graduates, who work as speech-language pathologists in the community and beyond.

“It was a milestone event that honored all of our stakeholders, the clients and their families, students and alumni,” said Ellen Bernstein-Ellis, director of ATP. “It was the perfect opportunity to reflect on ATP’s multiple contributions, including innovative program development to promote the life participation model and aphasia advocacy, excellence in clinical training and service provision, research contributions in aphasia care and community partnership development.”

— Krista Dossetti

Natalie Feulner

University News

S P R I N G  2 0 1 7 CAL S TATE E A S T B A Y M A G A Z I N E
Assistant Professor Amy Furniss has taken her interest in the study of very high energy astroparticle physics to new heights.

Rather than simply interpreting cosmic phenomena through her association with VERITAS (the Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System based in Arizona), she’s made an investment with her faculty startup funding from Cal State East Bay to purchase one of two mirrors for a telescope now currently being constructed beside the old one.

“When an event occurs that requires further investigation, we use VERITAS software in that direction.”

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“We’re interested in frontier science,” Rosequist says. “It’s amazing just to be out there and look through that telescope lens and to try and answer those fundamental questions of how the universe formed.”

Furniss’ and Rosequist’s work requires further investigation to let other student-parents know they are supported and give them a space to let other student-parents know they are supported and eventually, a way to help each other with day care.

“My goal is to find students who are in the same situation and create an organization that supports not just single parents, but all parents,” Stance said.

“We have Kovnita’s daughter, 9-year-old Audra, with us,” Stance said. “For more information, visit singlemomsonly.com.”

Stance, who has a 9-year-old daughter named Audra, said her goal was to create an organization that could serve as a forum for students to share their experiences, a place to look for other student-parents who are supported and eventually, a way to help each other with day care.

“My goal is to find students who are in the same situation and create an organization that supports not just single parents, but all parents,” Stance said.

“I now see myself working in research and doing this type of work into the future.”

For more information, visit singlemomsalwaysstandtogether.com.

### Cal State East Bay Is the Proud Owner of a New Global Science Tool

Students Trent Rosequist (left) and Ethan Rinck get an up-close look at VERITAS.

Cal State East Bay student Audrey Stance recently realized she was missing a sense of community at the university. Not just any community — a group of like-minded individuals with whom she shared one special bond: single parenthood. But after looking for an existing club or support group and not finding one, the 34-year-old mother of one decided to form a club on her own: Single Moms Always Rise Together, or SMART for short.

“I think the club plays a big role in my success as a student,” said single mother Donna McClain, 31, one of the first members to join. “It’s already allowed me to meet other students in the same situation that I’m in, we can guide each other, and it’s a group of people that I share a lot of similarities with.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, out of 12 million single-parent families in 2015, more than 80 percent were headed by single mothers. And according to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, student-parents often operate under crushing time demands, including full-time work and an estimated additional 30 hours per week outside school on caregiving activities. Despite the added challenges, however, students with children statistically have higher GPAs than nonparents.

### Single Mother Starts Club to Support Other Student-Parents

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### Forever Pioneer Weekend 2017

#### 60th Anniversary Celebration

#### October 20–22, 2017

Join President Leroy M. Morishita and the Alumni Association in celebrating the 60th Anniversary of Cal State East Bay — and all our graduates through the years. We have an exciting weekend planned, to include:

**Golden Grad Celebration**

A celebration of a Pioneer alumni who have marked 50 years or more since graduation from the university (1967 and earlier). Distinguished Alumni Awards & 60th Anniversary Gala

Join us in this memorable evening with a look back at 60 years of accomplishments at the university. We will also bestow Cal State East Bay’s highest honor — the Distinguished Alumni Award — to an exceptional graduate from each of the four colleges in recognition of his/her achievements and support of the university.

**Reunion and Affinity Celebrations**

Meet with friends old and new through a variety of campus reunions and affinity events, including the second annual Alumni of Color reunion.

For more information and to stay updated on event details, connect with the Cal State East Bay Alumni Association on social media or visit csueastbay.edu/alumni.

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**学生 and founder of SMART, Audra Stance, with her 9-year-old daughter, Audra, at SMART’s first meeting on campus.**
Upon her departure last year, she received the Hamilton Award, the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for exceptional leadership.

A first-generation Mexican-American, Rios is one of nine children raised by a single mother in Hayward, Calif. After attending Moreau Catholic High School, she went on to graduate with honors from Harvard University. She began her career in real estate finance before turning to the public sector, where she spent more than a decade overseeing economic development projects throughout the East Bay in communities such as Oakland, Fremont, San Leandro and Union City. Rios has also served the public as a trustee of the Alameda County Employee Retirement Association, and as a board member of the California Association of Local Economic Development and the Spanish-Speaking Unity Council in Oakland. Before her government appointment, Rios was managing director of investments at MacFarlane Partners, an investment firm focused on urban property markets.

In July 2009, Rios was appointed 43rd treasurer of the United States, a role that entailed overseeing the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the United States Mint and Fort Knox. She was also a key liaison to the Federal Reserve. Rios’ responsibilities as treasurer included leading 4,000 employees and eight facilities, and maintaining responsibility for the entirety of U.S. currency and coin production. She saved more than $1 billion in taxpayer dollars in her first five years. Since resigning in 2016, Rios has accepted a position as a visiting scholar at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. She began her career in the private and public sector has already established a legacy of significant achievement to public service,” President LeRoy M. Morishita said. “Ms. Rios exemplifies the values of commitment to service and meaningful livelihood Cal State East Bay inspires in each of our students.”

Among her many achievements, Rios leaves behind an enduring legacy from her time as a public servant and 43rd treasurer of the United States. Due to her initiative and continued efforts, a woman will appear on U.S. currency for the first time in more than 100 years, when abolitionist Harriet Tubman is unveiled on the $20 bill in 2020. “Rosie Rios’ extraordinary and ongoing impact on the East Bay region, university, State of California and country at large. Rios will receive the honorary doctoral degree during Cal State East Bay’s commencement ceremony June 11 at 10 a.m. on the university’s Hayward campus.

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STUDENTS

NAME: Elizabeth “Liz” Cocker
AGE: 21
MAJOR: Liberal Studies
HOMETOWN: Rancho Cordova
WANTS TO BE: Flight attendant

GREAT BEGINNINGS: “I was born deaf, and when I was 16 months old, doctors told my parents I’d never read or talk above a third-grade level and I would be at a disadvantage when playing sports,” Cocker says. “Luckily, they didn’t listen.”

EARLY COMPETITOR: “I joined my first competitive swim team at 7 and by the time I was 12, I was having some good successes. I started taking it more seriously and joining year-round teams to continue improving.”

STROKE: Butterfly. “Not a lot of swimmers do fly — there’s a rhythm you have to learn and it takes a lot of strength, but I always liked it. All of a sudden I started getting all these blue ribbons, and I realized that I was pretty good at this.” Cocker is 5-foot-9, which doesn’t hurt either.

THE CHALLENGE: Thanks to developments in technology, Cocker uses cochlear implants that are safe in the water. But growing up, “[Starters] weren’t always the best at remembering to signal in addition to using the buzzer] and sometimes we’d have to start the entire race over because I didn’t hear it,” she says.

THE WIN: At a meet in February, Pelton asked Cocker if she wanted to swim butterfly in a 50-yard freestyle race. With the season ending, it was her last chance to try to beat the American record. Right before the buzzer went off, Pelton looked at Cocker and said to her to “go get it” — and 26.68 seconds later she had, breaking the U.S. Deaf Swimming League 50 fly record of 26.99 by milliseconds. “Breaking the record has not been easy for me,” Cocker says. “It’s been a lot of focusing on stroke, getting stronger and working harder, and all those little details added up into [that] moment.”

THE BIGGER WIN: A few weeks after she broke the record, Cocker received an email from the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf, explaining that she had qualified to compete in the 2017 Deaflympics games in Turkey this summer. “It will be super fun to compete with other deaf athletes and I know by putting in the work it will go well,” she says.

PIONEER PRIDE: This season Cocker checked off personal goals of competing on behalf of Cal State East Bay at away meets (which include only the top 18 finishers of the 23-person team) and securing both lifetime and season-best times in all of her events. Head swim coach Shane Pelton says the women rally around Cocker — and the feeling is mutual: “I’ve been incredibly blessed to have always felt supported here [by] the team, from the coaches and from the school,” she says.

COACH’S MOMENT: “The word to describe Liz is driven,” Pelton says. “When she wants it, she gets it … [and] if it’s in sight, she’s going to achieve it.”

BY NATALIE FEULNER. PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

DEAFLYMPIAN AND STUDENT LIZ COCKER’S RECORD-BREAKING MOMENT

CAL STATE EAST BAY MAGAZINE SPRING 2017
Jamie Mackie is not a doctor. He never went to medical school, and his salary is paltry compared to a surgeon’s. Nevertheless, he spends a 60-hour workweek in scrubs, logging in and out of hospital operating rooms, outfitted something like an air traffic controller: He wears a headset and microphone while building an atlas of neon veins on the computer screen before him — only a thin lead window separating him from a cardiac surgeon tapping into a femoral artery on the other side.

No, Jamie Mackie (M.S. ‘13, Kinesiology) is not a doctor. He is the voice helping to guide doctors; the hands at the keyboard behind an increasingly common medical technology that creates 3-D, real-time, electro-anatomical maps of the cardiac system so surgeons can burn scars into precise locations in the human heart. Through a series of catheters and a 3-D mapping system made by the company he works for (Biosense Webster, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson), Mackie helps a type of doctor called a cardiac electrophysiologist build images of the heart for use during surgery. The images pinpoint any electrical impulses causing irregularities (arrhythmias) so they can be treated through cardiac ablation.

“I love the true health care aspect of this,” Mackie says. “There’s this whole group of people who could have a better life without being on drugs — who could possibly have a cure instead of a treatment.”

After graduating from Cal State East Bay’s master’s program in kinesiology, Mackie applied to the Arrhythmia Technology Institute, a cardiac device training center. There, he began learning how to create anatomical models of the heart using a variety of imaging tools such as fluoroscope, ultrasound, MRI, TTE (transesophageal echocardiogram) and CT (computed tomography). Mackie reports he was among the first group of students in his class at ATI to be placed with a biomedical company, and to then complete more than a year of guided surgeries before beginning to map on his own.

“Because I had the background in physiology and anatomy (from my kinesiology studies) and had taken this interest in medical devices, it opened up this job opportunity,” he says.

Professor Cathy Inouye, a mentor to Mackie during his time at the university, says the majority of Cal State East Bay kinesiology graduates go on to become physical or occupational therapists — and that the route he chose is incredibly competitive.

“Very few of our graduates move into cardiac rehab — it’s a difficult profession to enter and there’s a lot of additional education and certification that has to happen before you can get a position like that. I know he’ll be great at this because he’s very driven, he’s a powerful independent thinker and he’s very calm.”

At least outwardly. “There’s a person under that blue tarp,” Mackie says. “And I need to be really, really good at this because every decision the doctor makes affects that patient. Little things make a big difference.”

**Meeting the Voice Helping to Guide Your Heart Surgeon**
inside a small cell in San Francisco’s County Jail, a pregnant woman awaits her first meeting with Darcy Stanley — doula and co-founder of a program called Birth Justice Project, which provides labor support for incarcerated women.

When Stanley (B.S. ’14, Nursing) enters the anterior chamber of the cell, she’s already mindful of her new client, who she says does not yet have reason to trust or like her. “It takes a lot more time and gentleness around building trust because of the dynamic of a free person coming in to talk to a locked-up person,” Stanley says. “[A pregnant woman] meeting a doula for the first time and deciding to let them into one of their most intimate life experiences and trusting them is incredibly courageous.”

There’s no shortage of need. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 5-6 percent of female inmates are pregnant at the time of admission to jail or prison, approximating to more than 6,000 pregnant women in 2015 — and black women are incarcerated at twice the rate of whites.

It’s a demographic Stanley and her co-founders are passionate about supporting. After starting Birth Justice Project in 2011, the doulas collaborated with UCSF in 2013 to apply for (and win) a $194,000 grant from the Alameda County Public Health Department — all while Stanley was still a Cal State East Bay student.

In recognition, she received the university’s Alma M. Gessman Memorial Scholarship in 2014.

For alumnus Patrick Devine and his wife Kathy, proprietors of the Gessman scholarship, Stanley’s work makes her a hero in their eyes. “Darcy has shown incredible empathy and given invaluable service to some of the most vulnerable in prison and society,” Patrick Devine says. “My wife and I are great admirers, and extremely proud to have been involved in supporting her.”

With the money from the scholarship, Stanley was able to finish her degree at Cal State East Bay while focusing on Birth Justice Project. And in turn, with the grant from ACPHD, Birth Justice Project not only replicated the San Francisco program at Santa Rita Jail in Dublin, but also partnered with an organization called Black Women Birth- ing Justice to create an outside training program for women to become doulas in their communities.

“People trust and prefer being treated by someone who looks more like them,” Stanley says. “It’s about creating a system that supports culturally appropriate care, including a way to destigmatize women who have been formerly incarcerated by giving them meaningful, empowering work.”

In fact, the doula training program has been so successful it has spawned a collective of its own — Roots of Labor in the East Bay. Now, together, doulas from Roots of Labor are servicing the Santa Rita Jail alongside those from Birth Justice Project.

“People on the outside, most of them have somebody going to the birth with them,” Stanley says. “And people in jail don’t have that at all — they don’t even have access to that. Giving these women the opportunity to have love and compassion and someone who’s there just for them, that’s what we want to provide.”

What’s a Doula?

Doulas are nonmedical laypersons who provide emotional support and physical comfort to women during childbirth. Doulas can receive certification through many organizations, but they do not perform clinical tasks and do not have direct communication with or responsibility to a woman’s care provider (Midwives, by comparison, are licensed professionals who provide obstetric prenatal care and deliver babies.) Studies have shown that women who have continuous support during labor reap many benefits, including shorter labor, reduced use of analgesics and anesthetics, decreased cesarean rates and improved Apgar scores (a shorthand reporting system for the status of an infant at birth). Provided by Professor Roberta Durham, R.N.
When California Gov. Jerry Brown signed a landmark bill into law banning physicians from engaging in same-sex orientation change efforts on minors — the practice of converting same-sex attraction to heterosexual attraction in children and teens — he had these celebratory words for Twitter: “These practices have no basis in science or medicine, and they will now be relegated to the dustbin of quackery.”

Brown’s success was immediately challenged by a group of medical practitioners and parents claiming the law infringed on their First Amendment rights, resulting in the case of Pickup v. Brown.
The group initiated two appeals, including one at the federal level, where the U.S. Supreme Court refused to even hear the issue, effectively upholding California’s decision.

While most people following the case were concerned with the topic at hand — the protection of minors versus the rights of their parents — Cal State East Bay Assistant Professor Jason Smith, J.D., had his eye on a deeper issue, one that is currently playing out on the national stage:

“The question is, when your physician is speaking to you, is that the practice of medicine and can I regulate it, or is it speech, which is not regulated?” he says. “And on the client side... do you want to know if your physician is being restricted by law from telling you something?”

It’s the subject of work by Smith and Professor Wendy Parmet of Boston’s Northeastern University School of Law, who are exploring how several states are struggling to define the boundaries between freedom of speech and professional conduct in the medical field. The pair have recently published two papers in the New England Journal of Medicine and presented another at the Ohio Law Review Symposium on the First Amendment.

Together, the legal scholars are exploring the different ways states are handling cases Smith calls “culturally contentious” — those concerning sexual orientation, abortion and gun control.

Of those examples, he points to the legislation that inspired him and Parmet to start writing — Florida’s Firearm Owners’ Privacy Act, which marked a pivotal moment in the regulation of physician speech by prohibiting doctors from asking patients about gun ownership or possession. Similar to inquiries about seat belt use, smoking, exposure to lead paint, etc., questions about gun ownership are routinely asked during medical exams, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association and other physician organizations.

The new law was soon challenged in court, with physicians asserting that the number of youth injured and killed by guns made the issue a public health matter they should be involved in screening for. Some patients, however, claimed doctors were infringing on their Second Amendment rights by discouraging gun ownership. Floridians battled it out from 2011-17, including an en banc (in bench) review in the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, wherein every judge in the district looked at the case. Gun owners were initially on the winning side but finally, in March, the ruling was settled in favor of the physicians.

For better or worse, the desire to pass new legislation on these issues is gaining speed. The AMA reports a dozen other states have considered similar legislation to Florida’s gun debate, and according to the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBT advocacy group, several jurisdictions have either followed California in banning same-sex orientation change efforts on minors or are considering doing so.

“These cases are cropping up across the country and they’re all being handled differently, which creates a climate that is ripe for review by the Supreme Court,” Smith says. “If the Supreme Court changes the doctrine for everybody and says, ‘No, you cannot regulate what physicians do in that way’ then things like the same-sex orientation law in California would likely be overturned.”

What, then, is the answer?

For constituents, political engagement may be key. “Pay attention to what’s going on in your state and local legislature,” Smith says. “With our current political climate, I think you’ll see more attempts of states trying to pass new laws — restricting access to abortion in particular, since that was specifically discussed during our recent elections.”

But the final word, in the professor’s opinion, is not a matter of more or less regulation, but rather of de-politicizing the doctor-patient relationship entirely.

“Abortion, guns, same-sex conversion therapy — they’re all contested cultural and political issues,” he says. “I think the question is, do we want to have the argument about those issues in the doctor’s office? And without knowing it? If we all agree that the doctor’s focus should solely be the health of the patient, then the regulation of the practice of medicine should support that — and only that.”
How Alumna Ruth Bley lit the eastern span of the Bay Bridge — and redefined the region’s skyline

California Gov. Frank Merriam couldn’t have known when he read those lines at the opening ceremony of the Bay Bridge in November 1936 how many human generations of pioneers it would take to sustain the most vital and intensely traveled artery in the region.

He also couldn’t have predicted — though he was surely aware of — the incredible forces of nature at work in the bay. Forces that kept the project locked in the dream stage for decades, and demanded the state’s best engineers to find a way to span 8 miles of water through torrential winds, corrosive saltwater and hibernating fault lines.

Eventually, those challenges were met, but then the Loma Prieta earthquake struck in 1989. At a magnitude of 6.9, the 1989 quake ripped through the fault lines that run parallel to the Bay Bridge on both sides, causing a portion of its top deck to collapse. Politicians of the day began earnestly planning the bridge’s replacement — a massive undertaking that...

BY KRISTA DOSSETTI
required a fresh wave of pioneers to not only improve upon one of the most difficult suspension bridges ever built, but to construct something worthy of defining the East Bay skyline.

A new icon.

It’s where Cal State East Bay alumna Ruth Bley (B.S. ’82, Geology; M.S. ’88, Geology) enters the evolutionary tale of the incredible conduit. Bley is a geologist by training, entrepreneur by calling — and pioneer by nature. Bleyco, her namesake business, has been the winning bidder for building the lighting and electrical components at several BART stations and nearly every bridge in the region, including the new span of the Bay Bridge — a job set in motion more than 20 years before it was finally completed in 2013.

And with those achievements comes the responsibility of providing safe passage for hundreds of thousands of travelers who depend on her work each day. It’s no job for the faint of heart.

“I think it’s all about ambition and focus and trying to get it done,” Bley says of three decades at the helm of her own construction business. “And being a little bit aggressive.”

**SOLID FOUNDATION**

Bley had chosen to study geology in college out of a long curiosity about rocks and stone, and an affinity for collecting them since childhood. She originally left the Bay Area to attend Cal Poly, but returned to Castro Valley when her father, who also had a storied career in Bay Area construction, did what his daughter had long been begging him to do: Buy land in the country where she could raise and ride horses. It was enough to convince the equestrian (now a champion event rider in her 50s, and sponsor/mentor to young female riders) to come home and enroll at then-Cal State Hayward.

Still, her plans for the future were indefinite.

“My father thought I had too much spare time on my hands when I was in my master’s program,” Bley says with a laugh and roll of the eyes. “So he put me to work at his company (Dome Construction) part-time and eventually I went full-time.”

But, she adds, there was never any intention of her working in the family business.

“Because I had always loved animals, [my parents] encouraged me to be a veterinarian,” Bley says. “Or they would say I could be a teacher or a nurse.” But it wasn’t that the Bleys were trying to prevent their daughter from taking a different path, she explains.

“They were just more traditional. I didn’t think of [a career] in construction, but no one else thought of it either.”

In fact, that role had already been tabbed for Bley’s brother, who at just a year older than her was already working at the family company. And with her father stepping down, Bley candidly says she “didn’t get along with” his business partner and began looking for opportunities on her own.

“I just didn’t think there was going to be any place for me to go in that company at the time — and in hindsight I was probably wrong,” she says. “I could probably have just continued on and been a part of eventually buying him out, but I think I was trying to figure out what I could do on my own so that I could be in control. I don’t micromanage and I’m not controlling; but I like to be in control of what I’m doing. Truthfully, I’ve never looked back.”

**STRIKING OUT**

Bley founded Bleyco in 1987, one year before completing her degree from Cal State East Bay. Though she did consider a job in geology, by the time she finished her master’s, Bley says the idea of going back to an entry-level position — and starting pay — had little appeal compared to being her own boss.

However, plenty of lessons carried over.

“Cal State East Bay had what I believe to be one of the best geology departments anywhere,” Bley says. “I think going out in the field [in geology] — you have to be comfortable with it and you have to be able to figure things out, and I learned that at Cal State East Bay. And in construction, you have to be comfortable going out to the job site and figuring things out. And they both have that three-dimensional aspect, which either I’m good at or I just really like.”

The ability to figure things out, and the young entrepreneur’s mounting independence, is eventually how large-scale transportation projects became a mainstay of Bleyco’s project lineup.

Bley pieced together small jobs for her first decade in business, but on the heels of Prop 209 in the late ’90s — which eliminated affirmative action measures at the state level in California — she began going after federally funded contracts, particularly through Caltrans, where there were still opportunities for small and women-owned businesses to carve out money from large contracts. And to gain competitive edge, she expanded her business to include electrical work by teaming up with now-vice president of Bleyco, Chris Berge.

“We still had to be the low number [in the bidding process],” she says. “But they were incentivized to use us and potentially be a little bit nicer — though I don’t know if that last part is true. 

Bleyco’s construction team worked around the clock to build the lighting and various electrical components of the eastern span of the Bay Bridge. COURTESY OF RUTH BLEY
Bley specifically recalls her first meeting with transportation officials over a small change to a contract, which she thought would be a simple, quick discussion. “All of a sudden, [I walked into the room] and it was like one person — me — and 20 people to discuss this one change order, all men,” she says. “They try to outnumber you. You have to learn to stand your ground. Construction tactics, it’s what it is. I’ll always remember that first meeting — and the subsequent meetings were always kind of like that, too.”

“STANDING OUT”

Bley started winning contracts to work on various aspects of the bridge’s lighting and electrical for bridges — lesser-known ones at first, such as the High and Park street bridges linking Oakland and Alameda — and a series of jobs for BART, including portions of the Hayward, Castro Valley, Milpitas and North Concord stations.

Then, the bridge work began in earnest with a five-piece contract for an integrated security platform called Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, which involved wiring and installing surveillance cameras on the San Mateo and San Rafael bridges, among others.

“Bley started winning contracts to work on various aspects of the bridge’s lighting and electrical for bridges — lesser-known ones at first, such as the High and Park street bridges linking Oakland and Alameda — and a series of jobs for BART, including portions of the Hayward, Castro Valley, Milpitas and North Concord stations.

Yet Bley is surprisingly nonchalant about the most high-profile, high-stakes job of her career.

“We don’t do dog and pony shows. We have a reputation for doing the stuff that we’re doing.”

Bley also serves on the board of Women Construction Owners & Executives, USA, and on small business councils for Caltrans, California High-Speed Rail Authority and California’s Department of General Services, where she pushes hard for representation of female and small-business owners in a world dominated by corporate conglomerates — a lesson she knows well from having struck out on her own all those years ago.

“We need to make sure that women are represented on all of these councils,” she says. “It’s funny because we started on a lot of BART work, so it’s been a lot of transportation type stuff — so helping the public works project to date, are now a part of its notorious history. But from Bley’s point of view, those issues also had unexpected positive side effects.

“The lighting was spec’d out to be a different kind of lighting but the delays, delays, delays led to the point where the technology on LED lighting had developed and we could do it,” she says. “The lights that Caltrans originally wanted were the traditional bridge lights — it was going to be, you know, boring bridge lighting … I think we were instrumental in influencing Caltrans’ idea about what type of lights to use on the bridge because we had the relationship with Musco, the manufacturer for the lighting. As the LED technology progressed, they jumped in and said they could make a light that would work on the Bay Bridge, and then we, along with the engineers, got Caltrans to agree to it. It was fun to be involved with.”

Bley is also careful to point out that what drives, pedestrians and cyclists actually see is far less than the whole picture. “You have to look at bridges in connection. Look at the Benicia Bridge — the lighting on top is really nothing, but the electrical under-structure is substantial. And the Bay Bridge, that bridge brings electrical out to Treasure Island. People depend on that power.”

In the end, she’s confident in the result. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge. “It was not worth all of the angst that it created,” she says of the press about construction problems on the Bay Bridge.

“FIGHTING TALL”

With her business on solid ground, Bley has been able to devote more time to her passions in recent years, including reflecting on her role in the making of the East Bay’s iconic standing joke is that when we go to Reno or whatever, we never have assistance to women-owned businesses. I’m considering a graduate, but unfortunately, I don’t think there’s that many of me out there, which I’d like to see more of.”

And finally, when she isn’t in her office or out on a job site or climbing the 500-foot spire of a bridge (why take the elevator?), Bley is almost certainly atop a horse on her 120-acre Castro Valley ranch — a place she takes comfort in, and one that keeps her head sharp for business.

“Actually we want to get out and galaxy cross-country at 550 kilometers per minute, jumping solid obstacles that look like cars, you have to be aggressive enough to want to do that,” she says. “And I think construction’s the same way. You have to think that you can do it — and if you don’t think you can, don’t bother submitting a number.”

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A swimming pool. Flashes of a video game. A TV with burn marks down one side. They’re fragments of Cal State East Bay senior Tisha Ortiz’s earliest memories — and the only ones she has of a place called home.

Ortiz was just 4 years old when Child Protective Services knocked on her door, where her parents’ drug and alcohol abuse had taken precedence over feeding their daughter.

The journey that followed is far from uncommon, Ortiz says. Years of abuse, unstable living situations, harrowing episodes of self-harm and finally, treatment — in the form of powerful medications intended to drown out depression and anger.

In fact, legislators and advocacy groups are finding this is the norm for thousands of kids living within “the system” nationwide. These children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are prescribed medication 3.5 times more frequently than all other children ages 12-18, and 50 percent of those meds are psychotropics — drugs that alter brain function, creating changes in mood, behavior and perception.

While Ortiz is no exception, one thing about her is different: She’s speaking out. This is her story.
HER BEGINNINGS

Ortiz’s entry into the child welfare system started well. Her first placement lasted from ages 4-8, and she remembers her foster family as stable and loving. However, when she was returned to her parent’s care from ages 8-12, their combined substance abuse — worsened in the midst of a divorce — wreaked lasting havoc on her life. “My mother [had been] a big drug user,” she explains, “and she developed mental health issues as a result. If I forgot to take the trash out, she would yell at me — she would leave us and be out, or pick me up by my hair.”

“My father was in a men’s home and was getting out soon!” Ortiz continues, “he’d pay a woman to take care of me, and her son locked me up in closets and sexually abused me. I would go to the shower and he would figure out how to lock the door and abuse me there. He would bring his friends over to laugh at me. It took me a year to learn that this was happening.”

But by then, her father was using drugs again. He was soon arrested and she re-entered foster care.

For the next six years, Ortiz bounced between neighborhoods, group foster homes, and did a stint with extended family in Arizona. At each juncture, she returned to the mainstay of foster youth in the area — the Betty Jo McNeece Receiving Home in El Centro, California.

“I spent my 10th, 11th and 12th birthdays there,” she says. “And eventually they start asking you, ‘what do you do this time?’ The message is that you’re a bad kid — that it’s your fault you’re in foster care.”

HOW IT HAPPENS

According to Cal State East Bay Associate Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Social Work Holly Yugis, LCSW, experiences like Ortiz’s result from systemic failures in child welfare and behavioral health services, including insufficient training to handle complex behavioral issues; overwhelming caseloads; and breakdowns in communication between state agencies.

And frequently, Yugis explains, meds get prescribed based on how difficult those changes are for a child to navigate.

“When kids face trauma, the neurochemistry of their brain gets wired such that it’s on hyperarousal,” says Yugis, who has experience at UCLA’s Renink Neuropsychiatric Hospital for adolescents. “A child who is operating from a state of hyperarousal is really different from a kid who hasn’t had that experience... if you add more changes on top of what has already been experienced, you’re just triggering behavioral issues.”

Yugis believes medicines have a place in treatment, but says they aren’t “absolutely” being overprescribed, frequently mismanaged, and there’s a crippling shortage of child psychiatrists. “Often, it’s an adult psychiatrist or a pediatrician or a regular doc [who’s prescribing] meds that haven’t been researched for use in kids — and a lot of the problem is that people aren’t monitoring the medications correctly.”

PRESCRIPTION FOR TRAUMA

Following years of Ortiz’s active engagement and understanding what she believes were post-traumatic stress disorder. At 14, she was put on her first psychotropic medication. By 18, she was on a daily cocktail of antidepressants and mood stabilizers, amounting to 12 pills per day.

“All these labels they’re tried to put on me — bipolar, borderline personality disorder — I just never felt like any of those were me,” Ortiz says. “People come back from war and they have PTSD, and I felt they had been overmedicated. Ortiz answered that call, and frequently, Yugis explains, meds get prescribed based on how difficult those changes are for a child to navigate.

So what do you do this time? The message is that you’re a bad kid — that it’s your fault you’re in foster care.”

HOW IT STOPS

The life experience of former foster youth such as Ortiz is key. In August 2010, the day after Ortiz turned 18, she arrived on a flight to the Bay Area, where she was met by a representative from Cal State East Bay’s Renaissance Scholars program, which supports foster youth through college.

Despite having graduated with school, Ortiz had difficulty acclimating to university life and dealing with her PTSD and medications on her own. By November, her living situation was crumbling.

Renissance Scholars connected her with West Coast Children’s Clinic, which provides case management and therapy services for 17- to 21-year-olds transitioning out of foster or group homes.

“It was the first time I had therapy that dealt with the things that happened when I was younger,” Ortiz says. “All the therapy I did before was based on ‘What’s going on in your foster home?’ — not what was going on with the trauma I had experienced.”

Though Ortiz did end up leaving Cal State East Bay for a time, her treatment plan, a focal from the National Center for Youth Law calling for testimony from former foster youth who felt they had been overmedicated. Ortiz answered that call, and was tapped to speak at the state capitol. She described how medical records and prescribing physicians to improved records-keeping and sharing among health professionals.

William Grimm, senior attorney at NCYL, is a constant at her side. Grimm has been litigating child welfare cases since the 1980s, and is currently overseeing advocacy for a suite of new bills called the Psych Drugs Action Campaign.

“We know there are certain types of mental health services that are more effective and certainly much safer than psychotropic meds,” Grimm explains. “Once we reduce the reliance on these unsafe medications, we need to put in place the type of mental health services that are effective and safe for kids, and expand their access to those services.”

This year, alongside Grimm and NCYL Senior Policy Associate Anna Johnson, Ortiz will focus on implementing the new bills so they have an immediate effect on kids in the system. Johnson, her supervisor and personal mentor, reports that Ortiz helped develop the questions that will be used to survey children in group homes about how they feel about the medicines they’re on; provided feedback on new protocols for the monitoring and administration of medications; contributed to a workbook and foster care mental health bill of rights for children; and more.

“She’ll never experience the change she’s advocating for — her time in the system is done,” Johnson says. “It’s out of her sense of justice, and wanting this to happen for anyone that she doesn’t want.”

As for Ortiz, who returned to Cal State East Bay in 2014 and is a criminal justice major, she hopes to someday follow in Grimm’s footsteps and become a lawyer who defends foster youth. She’s also looking forward to graduating in 2018.

“Since I was in kindergarten, I remember walking to school and telling myself, I don’t want to be like my parents. And as I got older, it just expanded to I want to go to college! And What do I want to be? Even though I doubt myself sometimes, I just keep going. My biggest fear is getting so close and not making it.”

The Movement to Stop Overmedicating

In 2015, the San Jose Mercury News completed a year-long investigation of overmedicated foster children called “Drugging Our Kids.” The seven-part story showed that efforts to stop overmedication reach back to 1999, yet definitive progress has been slow until recently.

Alysa Joymara Coleman (B.A. ’15, Sociology) participated in the story. Coleman, a member of the National Center for Youth Law’s child welfare and psychotropic medication committees, and a child welfare intern for the Alameda County Department of Children and Family Services, will soon graduate from UC Berkeley with a master’s degree in social work — and plans to dedicate her career to changing the system she grew up in.

“None of the medication I took addressed the issues I was dealing with surrounding depression and anxiety,” Coleman says. “I want to work in this community because this is where I was born. I have a desire to improve this system because I want to assist young people from falling through the cracks that I felt through.”

Since the story’s publication in the Mercury News, California legislators have renewed efforts and passed a suite of bills to stop the overprescription of medications within the child welfare system.
Assistant Professor Nazzy Pakpour researches the link between malaria transmission and a rising global epidemic

BY MARCUS WOO

N azzy Pakpour’s fascination with insects began when she was a child in Iran. She used to catch big, slow, winged, cockroach-like bugs and glue a string to their backs so she could keep them as her pets.

“I was a weird child,” she says.

By the time she had immigrated to the United States and entered high school, her interest in the creepy-crawly was full-blown. It was then that she put together her first insect collection, and the summer before college, she worked at the Smithsonian Insect Museum, where she held tarantula feedings for swarms of museum-goers.

Today, she no longer keeps insects on leashes or conducts demonstrations of their car-nage. But as an assistant professor of biology at Cal State East Bay, Pakpour still loves bugs, and today is an expert on parasites and immunology.

“They’re so weird,” she says. “It’s like living with aliens. You can look at the biology of any species and [each is] so unique and different.”

And she surrounds herself with them. Her office holds wooden cases filled with a variety of critters, and several (live) Vietnamese walking sticks hang out in a tank above her desk. Take a walk a couple floors down to her lab and you’ll find fruit flies breeding for research in jars of sticky brown fly food.

Bizarre and fascinating, yes. But for the entomologist, insects are also serious business.

DEADLY BITE

Take the mosquito, which is one of the deadliest animals in the world thanks to its role as a powerful vector for malaria. The disease threatens nearly half the world’s population, and although prevention efforts have lowered illness and death rates in recent years, malaria remains a killer in 95 countries — primarily those in sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organization reported that in 2015, 214 million people became sick with malaria and 438,000 died of the disease.
The fever, headache, chills, vomiting — and sometimes coma and death — that occur with the illness happen when the malaria parasite reproduces inside the body, having invaded its host via the saliva of a biting, infected mosquito. When other mosquitoes bite the person, they can become infected too and spread the disease.

But scientists still have much to learn about what increases infection rates for the mosquitoes themselves. For example, scientists are now studying how a variety of outside factors can boost or impede transmission — including other diseases or infections within the host, such as HIV.

Pakpour wants to understand the role of one such disease that's becoming its own global epidemic: diabetes.

EARLY RESULTS

Pakpour’s recent research suggests that diabetes may in fact make malaria transmission more prevalent. Experiments involving two different malaria strains, the lethal Plasmodium berghei and nonlethal Plasmodium yoelii, found that Type 2 diabetic mice infected with malaria transferred the parasites to mosquitoes at a rate about one-third times higher than healthy mice.

This study, published by Pakpour last year with two colleagues at UC Davis, could have critical implications for controlling the spread of malaria where it is already most dangerous — Africa.

Diabetes affects 422 million adults throughout the world, according to WHO. But the rate of the disease is rising even faster in the areas most vulnerable to malaria. The International Diabetes Federation predicts the number of adults with Type 2 diabetes in Africa will more than double by 2040, reaching 34.2 million. The IDF also estimates that more than two-thirds of people with diabetes are undiagnosed (and some people with malaria don’t show symptoms), meaning up to 22.8 million Type 2 diabetics could start spreading malaria at a higher rate without knowing it in the next two decades.

That’s the worst-case scenario, though, and Pakpour’s research is still preliminary. But if diabetes does have a hand in spreading malaria, the big question is, how?

“There’s a certain beauty in the complexity of malaria transmission — it’s this intricate dance between three organisms.”

Pakpour — if she can determine what increases infection rates for the mosquitoes — may be able to find ways to disrupt transmission.

In addition to her work exploring the link between malaria transmission and diabetes, Assistant Professor Nazzy Pakpour is also interested in how technology can control the spread of the disease, for instance, through drones.

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by replicating itself asexually within the body — this is the life cycle. At one point while in a human host, the parasite faces a decision: An individual organism either reproduces or becomes a gametocyte, which can leave the body and infect a mosquito. Less than 1 percent of the parasites becomes gametocytes.

But diabetes might change that. "One idea is that there are more [gametocytes], so the mosquito is more likely to be infected," Pakpour says. Diabetes often causes low-grade inflammation, a source of stress that might provoke more gametocytes to form. The stress may also induce those gametocytes to congregate in the skin or blood, where a mosquito is more likely to pick them up. "Maybe it's not a difference in numbers but a difference in location," she says.

Both scenarios would result in the parasite spreading.

Pakpour is starting further experiments at Cal State East Bay to see whether these ideas, or a combination of them, are right. The university recently opened an insectary, a facility that houses specimens for research and teaching. There, Pakpour will be growing her mosquitoes and doing all her research on campus — and involving more students.

"Which shouldn't be too hard. After all, her enthusiasm for research on campus — and involving more students. Pakpour will be growing her mosquitoes and doing all her research on campus — and involving more students.

FUTURE TESTING
The professor already has a few hypotheses that could explain the connection.

One possibility, Pakpour says, is the presence of excess insulin, the hormone that regulates blood sugar. Some diabetics don’t process insulin well, so high levels can stay in their blood. It turns out that insulin affects a mosquito’s immune system, too. "The mosquito has an immune response, and a lot of the time it can fight off the malaria infection," she explains. "But insulin seems to dampen that down and make them more susceptible [to contracting malaria]."

Another possibility is that diabetes may somehow affect the transition between two particular stages of the parasite’s life cycle. At one point while in a human host, the parasite faces a decision: An individual organism either reproduces or becomes a gametocyte, which can leave the body and infect a mosquito. Less than 1 percent of the parasites becomes gametocytes.

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"Which shouldn’t be too hard. After all, her enthusiasm for research on campus — and involving more students. Pakpour will be growing her mosquitoes and doing all her research on campus — and involving more students.

Pakpour already has a few hypotheses that could explain the connection.

One possibility, Pakpour says, is the presence of excess insulin, the hormone that regulates blood sugar. Some diabetics don’t process insulin well, so high levels can stay in their blood. It turns out that insulin affects a mosquito’s immune system, too. "The mosquito has an immune response, and a lot of the time it can fight off the malaria infection," she explains. "But insulin seems to dampen that down and make them more susceptible [to contracting malaria]."

Another possibility is that diabetes may somehow affect the transition between two particular stages of the parasite’s life cycle. At one point while in a human host, the parasite faces a decision: An individual organism either reproduces or becomes a gametocyte, which can leave the body and infect a mosquito. Less than 1 percent of the parasites becomes gametocytes.
In his nearly 20 years of work with teens and young adults, alum
num Damon Packwood (M.A.’14, Multimedia Studies) has al
ways had an important rule:

“Pay attention to what your students are doing when they’re not
doing what you told them to,” he says.

In Packwood’s case, when he started teaching tech to young people
in Oakland, he would repeatedly turn around to find his students
playing video games on their phones. “I really just wanted to get their
attention,” he says. So, on a lark, he offered a one-hour session during
the students’ lunch break to talk to them about the prospect of mak-
ing websites for video games.

“They weren’t impressed.”

“It went OK,” he says. “But they just kept bugging me, week after
week, saying that what they really wanted to learn was how to make
the actual video games. Eventually I offered another one-hour lesson,
which turned into Friday night classes, and then the six hours on Sat-
urdays we do now.”

Formally, the courses are offered under Packwood’s own blossom-
ing social enterprise nonprofit, Gameheads, which is rapidly chang-
ing the national conversation around how to increase diversity in tech.

“Cal State East Bay’s multimedia program has a very different per-
pective on technology that resonated with me, and that I think res-
donates with the community,” Packwood says. “They don’t just look at
tech from a computer science perspective. [Cal State East Bay] talks
about tech as a cultural shift that’s happening.”

In 2014, students from Gameheads completed their first video
games, building them from the ground up, based on themes of per-
sonal impact. The games were submitted to compete for Electronic
Software Association LOFT Video Game Innovation Fellowships,
which include $1,000 in prize money, paid admission to E3 — the
world’s premier trade show for games and related products — and
the opportunity to send one representative from each team to the
White House.

That first year, Gameheads walked away with one fellowship, and
in 2016, Packwood reports his team dominated the competition by
earning four of the 20 available spots.

Quyen-Vi Nguyen, an Oakland native, served as art and story de-
signer for one of the winning teams. Nguyen helped to create a mul-
tiple adventure game centered on fear of the unknown, which she
says serves as a metaphor for teenage mental health issues.

According to Ian Pollock, associate professor of multimedia stud-
ers and a mentor to Packwood at Cal State East Bay, themes like
the one Nguyen and her team explored are further legitimizing gaming
as a contemporary art form.

“People are talking about these games like ['Gone with the Wind'] or ['Star W ars'] — games are the literature of
this generation,” Pollock says. “Game narratives are what’s shaping
young people’s ideas and dreams and hopes and fears for the future.
And it will have a very real impact on our world in the years to come.”

Nguyen agrees that Gameheads has opened up new possibilities
for her. “The process of going through [making a game], learning to
code — I have so much more confidence now. I’ve always been driven
to go to college, but … I knew now I could have a career in tech.”

It’s the type of transformation Packwood is after — and that has
pushed him to the forefront of a national stage, including being asked to
speak at the White House Conference on STEM Education in 2016.

“Oakland was heavily represented [at the White House], which
proves that we’re leading the way in the diversity in tech move-
ment,” Packwood says. “In the hopes of us wanting to diversify the
technology industry is asking, once everyone is represented, what is
what will each representative bring from their culture into the 21st century?”

To learn more about Gameheads, visit gameheadsoakland.org.
Rich Robbins is not a scientist, but he knows the value of science education. Robbins is a real estate developer who helped build the biotech industry in the East Bay in the 1970s, leasing his buildings to industry heavyweights such as Bayer, Chiron, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab and a swarm of start-ups. Today, his footprint stretches along the Emeryville/Berkeley corridor up to Richmond, and south of San Francisco to Silicon Valley.

In more recent years, Robbins has added to his focus of developing buildings and is now nurturing the scientists who will someday work in them — including students from Cal State East Bay, where he has given and pledged more than $500,000 to the university’s Institute for STEM Education.

The Institute was founded in 2011 to serve as a cradle-to-career organization to improve STEM education on a regional scale. Robbins’ involvement began with the fortuitous confluence of the biotech industry and the buildings his company, Wareham Development, owns. When he saw what the companies required, he remodeled buildings to fit their needs. When building codes failed to support them, he helped change the codes.

“You get lucky and learn by making a lot of mistakes and asking a lot of questions,” he says. “Which is what we’re talking about with the kids.”

When he learned six years ago that Bayer, one of his tenants, was about to hold a kick-off event announcing the $540,000 grant they had given to Cal State East Bay to fund the start of the Institute for STEM Education, Robbins was intrigued and offered the use of his soaring lobby space at the Emery Station East complex to mark the occasion. It was there that he met Bayer’s U.S. President Greg Babe, who flew out for the launch.

“He said to me, ‘Rich, there are too many lab coats unfilled,’ “ Robbins recalls. “There are not enough people of color in lab coats. We’ve got to teach the teachers.’ I put out my hand, and I was about to shake hands with him, when he said, ‘Do something better. I want your money.’”

By the end of the ceremony, Robbins announced he would fund a three-year grant to train K-12 teachers in the rigorous Next Generation Science Standards (a statewide curriculum overhaul that requires teachers to engage in hands-on, interdisciplinary science). And since then, he has also helped support career awareness opportunities that connect students to working scientists in the field, exposing them to what it takes to be STEM professionals.

“In this country, we’re failing to give the newest generation the education and the skill sets that are required for jobs with dignity in math and science,” Robbins says. “The real issue is how do we generate this interest, especially among kids from challenged communities? I see Cal State East Bay working to address this issue with projects like CIRCLe Labs, which bring science and scientists into lower-income neighborhoods beyond the school day. And creating paid internships — what better way to learn? We don’t want one-year funding for programs like these. We need a thread of continuity. We’re building a platform.”

Rich Robbins leases buildings to biotech companies, and he’s now supporting the budding scientists who will someday work in them.

GARVIN TSO

By Dan Fost
PENNY FECK (B.A. ’76, History) re-nominated to the governing board of San Lorenzo Unified School District, where she serves as president.

PHIL ROSS (B.A. ’74, Mass Communication) is the winner of a CFO award from the North Bay Business Journal. Chan works for Santa Rosa-based Reliance Steel & Aluminum, a prominent metals service center company in North America. Chan has been named an independent accounting. Previously, he worked at the Certified Public Accountants in North America. He also worked for the Long Beach Acceptance Corp., where he ended his tenure as regional vice president of operations. Chan is also the executive vice president and chief financial officer of Pacific Premier Bancorp, Previously, Shindler's two self-published books: "Blue Blooding: They Tried to Kill Me and Empowerment," a firsthand account of true events. Previously, Ross was a newspaper writer.

JOHN SHINDLER (B.S. ’77, Business Administration) is executive vice president and chief financial officer of Pacific Premier Bancorp. Previously, Shindler was CFO for Pacific Premier Bank in Irvine and also worked for the Long Beach Acceptance Corp., where he ended his tenure as regional vice president of operations. Shindler continues to be a director of The Pioneers.

RICHARD KINNEY (B.A. ’83, Music) is the mayor of San Pablo, where he has lived and worked for 15 years. His work with a middle and high school band, assistant basketball coach for the San Pablo and Richmond police departments and the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office.

JAMES MURPHY (B.A. ’84, Psychology) has been appointed executive vice president and chief financial officer of the San Lorenzo Unified School District. Previously, Sands served as chief of staff for three years in the community for 17 years and served as a life-long volunteer in various roles. Kinney’s work for the community for 17 years and served as a life-long volunteer in various roles. Kinney’s work for the community for 17 years and served as a life-long volunteer in various roles. Kinney’s work for the community for 17 years and served as a life-long volunteer in various roles.

STACEY HELLEY (B.A. ’97, French; B.A. ’10, Music) recently obtained a doctoral degree in music from USC’s Thornton School of Music. Helley is the founder of Bay Area Children’s Programs such as Music Together and Kick Sing. She is an experienced marketing consultant and has worked with the Ameri-Camellia Community Action Agency Central Sierra Connect project.

PHIL SNOW (B.A. ’78, Physics) has been named an independent practice director of CH2M, an international consulting firm. Previously, Sands worked as consultant and has worked with various community organizations, such as Uncommon Good. Project Sister and Rush House.

JEFF CARSON (B.S. ’82, Business Administration) is a professor at San Jose State University. He has volunteered for the crisis and suicide prevention hotline for six years. Carson works as operations and maintenance coordinator for the city of Hayward, where he helps to launch renewable energy and water recycling projects that brought state and national attention to the city. Carson has nearly 20 years of experience in the energy sector.

DAVE LAWLOW (B.S. ’92, Business Administration) is the executive director of the East Bay Association of Schools. He also worked for the Long Beach Acceptance Corp., where he ended his tenure as regional vice president of operations. Shindler’s two self-published books: "Blue Blooding: They Tried to Kill Me and Empowerment," a firsthand account of true events. Previously, Ross was a newspaper writer.

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graduated with honors from Western State Law School and was previously an attorney at an employment law firm. She has finance experience from her time as a financial supply chain analyst for E. & J. Gallo Winery.

JOJO GUINGAO (B.A. ’03) is the first vice president of digital analytics at Adolfo Equity Ventures, based in his native Philippines. Guingao has previously worked for a number of global software companies such as Autodesk, Ernst and most recently Navagis, a Google partner.

WALTER CAMARA (B.A. ’02, History) recently published the article “Enigma in The Cryptogram, the journal of the American Cryptogram Association. The article focuses on clarifying the debate between the symbols use of the numbers 666 versus 616 in Revelation 11:9.

HOWAN CHAN (B.S. ’00, Business Administration/B.A. ’04) is associate dean of global campus at Kansas State University. Hayrn is also a management professor at UC Berkeley and a board member of the Cal State East Bay Alumni Association. Previously, he served as director of graduate programs and stressing education services at CSU Northridge.

NIGUEL PABA (B.S. ’06, Business Administration) is controller and manager of service delivery at Accounting.com, a virtual accounting firm. Paba has more than 12 years of experience. Previously, he worked as a business manager. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family and exercising.

CLAUDIA GUEZDA (M.P.A. ’07), currently the financial aid director and leadership doctoral student and the director of Cal State East Bay’s Early Assessment Program, was recently awarded the Cal State East Bay’s (M.P.A. ’07), currently the financial aid director and leadership doctoral student and the director of Cal State East Bay’s Early Assessment Program, was recently awarded the Cal State East Bay’s Outstanding Public Service Award.

LAUREN LOLA (B.A. ’15, Business Administration) is a postdoctoral researcher at the Buck Institute for Research on Aging in Novato. After graduating from Cal State East Bay, she worked for a Fortune 100 company. In 2016, Lola was awarded the Cell and发育 Research and Development Award.

SABINE GUHA (M.S. ’11, Biological Sciences) is a research scientist at the Buck Institute for Research on Aging in Novato. After graduating from Cal State East Bay, she worked for a Fortune 100 company. In 2016, Lola was awarded the Cell and发育 Research and Development Award.

HANK COSHNEAR (M.S. ’16, Biological Sciences) is a research associate at Salk Inc. a diagnostics service facility that makes cellular testing products for the sciences industries. Coshnear reports he is working on a quicker and more accurate method for “capturing exosomes in liquid biopsies,” which could be applied to a range of diagnostics, from cancer to prenatal testing.

LONG HUYHN (B.S. ’03, Business Administration/B.A. ’04) is a former assistant professor at Cal State East Bay Alumni Association. Previously, he served as director of graduate programs and stressing education services at CSU Northridge.

BAHUL KURUVILLA (M.S. ’01, Computer Sciences) is president and CEO of IT consulting, staffing, executive search and disability staffing company recognized as a Top Asian American Business of 2016 by the National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP). Kuruvilla has previously held several key executive roles in life science and information technology.

RAUL YANKINS (B.A. ’12, Business Administration) is a former head coach of the Major League Baseball’s baseball training center in Chongqing, China. After graduating from Cal State East Bay, he joined the faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Yankins joined the faculty in August 2016.

CAL STATE EAST BAY MAGAZINE SPRING 2017

ALUMNI

FOREVER PIONEERS

From left, KIRAN GOEL GULATI (B.A. ’79) owns Kiran Gula & Associates, a real estate development firm and a chair of the Department of Regulatory Affairs and Compliance at UC Berkeley. CHERYL CABLE (B.A. ’79, Computer Science) is a retired manager at the University of California, Berkeley, and is the daughter of the late UC Berkeley Professor Emeritus Emil R. KALRA, who taught in the university’s philosophy department and was a key figure in establishing the university’s philosophy major. Kalra and Cable are the authors of a book about philosophy titled “The Philosopher’s Stone.”

MAZIN PALTACHEV (B.S. ’03, Engineering) is the author of several books on renewable energy and energy efficiency. He is currently an associate professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at UC Berkeley.

JAKE MCKINNEY (B.A. ’14, Business Administration) is a full-service government relations and development executive with a focus on higher education and public policy.

CHRIS KEMSLEY (B.S. ’03, Business Administration) is a web developer and software engineer with a focus on web development and mobile applications.

RANJIT HIRANANDANI (B.S. ’01, Engineering) is a senior executive with over 20 years of experience in the technology industry. He has held various executive positions at leading technology companies and has been recognized for his contributions to the development of technology products and services.

LONG HUYNH (B.S. ’03, Business Administration/B.A. ’04) is associate dean of global campus at Kansas State University. Huynh is a former assistant professor at Cal State East Bay Alumni Association. Previously, he served as director of graduate programs and stressing education services at CSU Northridge.

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CAL STATE EAST BAY MAGAZINE SPRING 2017

ALUMNI
RYAN REY (B.A. ’09, Music; M.A. ’15, Music) is executive director and co-whirler-director of Composers Inc., a nonprofit that presents concerts of new music by American composers. Rey explains that Composers Inc. was started over 12 years ago by a group of local musicians, including Cal State East Bay professor Amyx. It is named close tie with university professors and alumni.

ETANIO YINDJA (B.A. ’16, Business Studies) has been provisionally appointed to represent Ward IV of the Contra Costa Community College District governing board. Walker-Roberts obtained a master’s degree in English from Arizona State University after graduating from Cal State East Bay and was heavily involved at the university during his time there. He obtained his associate’s degree and served on the community college board and as student body president from 2014-15.

SERGIO SÁNCHEZ (B.A. ’12, Theatre Arts) was one of eight artists to receive the 2016 Alameda County Arts Leadership Award. Sanchez is a decorated urban street dancer and member of the world-renowned and widely-recognized Beatz N’ Pieces Crew and member of the world-renowned and widely-recognized Famous Beatz N’ Pieces Crew. He has spent the past 10 years as an educator at Ohlone College and mentoring at-risk youth. In 2008, he established the All the Way Live Foundation, which works to help to empower youth in marginalized communities.

Made in the CSU

SCOTT ANTYX (B.A. ’96, Economics) and JUDY BELK (M.P.A. ’78) are being featured in the California State University’s annual Made in the CSU initiative in recognition of significant work and leadership in their fields. Anxy is founder and CEO of Anxyx, an Internet of Things strategy and execution agency. She is author of a new book called “Blinds” and was voted one of the Top 5 Global Speakers by Speaking.com and Top Global IoT Influencer & Expert by Inc. Magazine. Belk is president and CEO of the California Wellness Foundation, where she works to improve the health of underserved populations in California. Previously, she was senior vice president for Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors; vice president of global public affairs at Levi Strauss & Co.; and she currently serves on the boards of the Sundara Foundation in New York and the Marlborough School in Los Angeles. Belk was the university’s Distinguished Alumna of the Year in 1999.

In Memoriam

JOHN CAMBUS (left), professor emeritus of communication, died Jan. 20. Cambus began his university career at then-Cal State Hayward, where he taught for another five years. He also taught at Ohlone College and was heavily involved at the university during his time there. He was known for his curriculum development, two required courses’ principles, which came to be known as the Popular Topics course that remains in place today. Cambus also engaged in research throughout his life, from his dissertation on nuclear magnetic resonance to his work at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory to his participation in medical studies. He is listed as the inventor on a number of patents. Cambus was married to his wife, Linda, for 56 years and has three grandchildren.

EDWARD GENSER, professor emeritus of chemistry and biochemistry, died in June 2015, at the age of 79. Genser, who was with the university from 1970-88, was known for his curriculum development and the foundational principles of his course, The Principles That Course in chemistry which remains in place today. Genser was also engaged in research throughout his life, from his dissertation on nuclear magnetic resonance to his work at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory to his participation in medical studies. He is listed as the inventor on a number of patents. Genser is survived by his son and daughter, two grandchildren and five of seven siblings.

CYNTHIA LEE KATONA (B.A. ’86, English; M.A. ’72, English) died October 29, 2016, of pancreatic cancer. Katona started teaching at then-Cal State Hayward, but moved to Ohlone College of Technology in 1979, where she spent the duration of her career and made an indelible impact through her contribution to new courses, curriculum delivery methods, teaching in the journalism department and time spent as an advisor for the student newspaper. Katona was an avid traveler, author of several books, photographer and volunteer in her community.

EDWARD OSSMAN, professor emeritus of Accounting and Finance, died Dec. 9, 2016. Ossman received his bachelor’s degree from Loyola University and his MBA from DePaul University, during which time he also became a certified public accountant. He began teaching at then-Cal State Hayward in 1972 and remained with the university from 1970-88, when he also became a certified public accountant. He began teaching at then-Cal State Hayward in 1972 and remained with the university from 1970-88, when he also became a certified public accountant. He began teaching at then-Cal State Hayward in 1972 and remained with the university from 1970-88, when he also became a certified public accountant. He began teaching at then-Cal State Hayward in 1972 and remained with the university from 1970-88, when he also became a certified public accountant.

MARK VAN AKEN (right), professor emeritus of history, died Dec. 3, 2016. He taught at the university when it was called State College for Alameda County from 1960-65 and returned to Cal State Hayward from 1966-66. Van Aken was the author of three books on Latin-American history. Before joining the Cal State East Bay faculty, he taught at Memphis State University from 1966-68. He is survived by his wife of nearly 65 years, Delores, their son and three grandchildren.

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1. Complete an online form at: csueastbay.edu/alumni-privacy
2. Call toll-free: (866.414.8136)
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Think of the difference your gift will make for Cal State East Bay Pioneers. The CSU Office of the Chancellor estimates one in 10 CSU students is homeless or food insecure — and Cal State East Bay’s Project HOPE aims to fix that. But there are countless ways to support our students. To learn how you can help the university reach its $60 million goal for Rising in the East, the Campaign for Cal State East Bay, contact Richard Watters at 510.885.4811 or email richard.watters@csueastbay.edu.

Allen Warren (B.A. ’89, Political Science) is a Pioneer baseball legend, former Yankee and a Cal State East Bay Educational Foundation Board trustee. Warren has pledged a leadership gift to help start the university’s Project HOPE, which provides resources to homeless and food-insecure students. He recently met with Project HOPE’s Alex Baker (left), case management coordinator, to celebrate the Hayward campus’ new food pantry.