INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
Ian Bickford ’95
Provost and Vice President

“In Me Is No Delay”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“In Me Is No Delay”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>History Professor Nancy Yanoshak Retirees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jamie Hutchinson Retirees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Impact on the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alumni in Film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Event Spotlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Around Bard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Campus News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Student Spotlight: Maria Presti ’12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The magazine is a publication of the Office of Institutional Advancement and the Office of Communications.

Design by Kelly Cade, Cade & Company Graphic Design.

Photo contributors: John Dolan, Derek Goodwin, Dan Karp, Studio Route 7, wikicommons

We welcome your feedback! Please send your suggestions, corrections, and responses to editors@simons-rock.edu.

Inside cover photo: College and Academy student representatives gather on the steps of the Kellogg Music Center during the April Discovery Day.
In July 1837, Charles Darwin sketched in his notebook the first instance of a branching structure that would govern his idea of speciation and origin. This first iteration of a now manifestly familiar image is both rough and complete, speculative and decisive, surrounded by marginal notes and leading either from or to (an important and elusive distinction) a single phrase at the top of the page: “I think.”

The sketch and the phrase together either rehearse or reverse the Descartesian axiom, convening a diagram of existence as if in completion of the grammatical phrase “I think, therefore . . . ,” or working backward and upward through that phrase, “I am, therefore . . .” Thinking is either the origin or the outcome of being.

The notorious pun in the title of Darwin’s much later work on human origin—which no small number of Simon’s Rockers have encountered in seminar classrooms; for me it was with Gabriel Asfar as guide—was capsuled in his argument’s germ. In *The Descent of Man*, to descend is both to rise, climbing the limbs of what Darwin called the Tree of Life, and to fall, alluding to the Tree of Knowledge, doubly echoing the language of the scriptural narrative that the text seeks to overturn and replace. Both narratives, Creationist and Darwinian, hinge upon the same metaphor of knowledge as vertiginous and forbidden, and Darwin’s own sense of the epistemological perils of his thinking is legible throughout his journals and in the record of his
hesitation to publish his findings. He knew he was in dangerous territory, and it was with awareness that he watched the image of embargoed knowledge—the tree—emerging under his hand as he plotted the points of the first genealogical chart.

Darwin was primed to appreciate and appropriate this pivoting metaphor. As a naturalist aboard the HMS Beagle, rounding Tierra del Fuego, arriving at the Galápagos Islands, continuing west to Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, and back again to South America, it was his habit going ashore always to choose from his small shipboard library a copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. His recursive reading of that poem informed his increasing understanding of the swarming variety of the natural world and his initial conjecture about natural selection as the framework for evolution. Milton's resonance in Darwin's process was more than contrast or counterpoint, more than Genesis posed against Nature in any form of stark relief. Instead, as literary critic Gillian Beer was first to note, it was in Milton's involved language, license for radical rethinking of Creation:

达尔文的素描给了他理解和欣赏这个转折点的象征。作为 HMS Beagle 的自然学家，当他在火地岛周围航行，到达加拉帕戈斯群岛，继续向西到澳大利亚，好望角，然后又回到南美洲，他总是在登岸时总是从他的小船上的图书馆中选择一本 Milton 的《失乐园》。他的反复阅读这本诗让他对自然世界和他早期关于自然选择作为进化学框架的理解有更深的理解。 Milton 的存在在达尔文的实验过程中的影响不仅仅是在对比或者反面，而是他把 Nature 与 Genesis 的对立放在了一个鲜明的对比中。相反，像文学批评家 Gillian Beer 第一次指出的那样，这本诗的复杂语言，赋予了达尔文一个可以对创造进行根本性重新思考的许可。它不是一种禁止，不是一种限制。就像达尔文的素描，这棵树翻转了上帝的许诺，把知识的 origin 和 evolution 象征出来。

If I saw the resemblance then, I didn’t write it down, but Darwin’s first sketch reminds me now of nothing so much as the sapling that symbolizes the origin and the evolution of Simon’s Rock. The resemblance is more than a coincidence of lines. It extends into a shared attitude of discovery, ideas emerging from a process of reading and writing, the significance of beginnings as well as aspirations. Both images speak equally to a past and to a future, both evoke invention and creativity, and both are provocations to thinking. “I think” is both pinnacle and starting point.

In his most explicit allusion to *Paradise Lost*, elsewhere in his journals, Darwin is preoccupied with Milton’s description of Chaos as a shifting, unstable, contingent environment. Yet his later works establish broader metaphorical and rhetorical structures that speak to his iterative return to the poem, reaching its conclusion, starting again from the beginning. I imagine him reading the final lines, as Adam and Eve depart Paradise, with recognition of what is gained and lost in knowledge:

The world was all before them, where to choose Their place of rest, and Providence their guide: They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow, Through Eden took their solitary way.

The poem is blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), but indulges a few rhymes, the last in Eve’s voice immediately before the departure from the garden: to Adam, “Whence thou returnst, and whither wentst, I know;” “In me is no delay; with thee to go . . .” Knowing and going are wrapped in a formal as well as a thematic relationship, and while Milton’s last two lines are not explicitly a couplet—that is, they are not joined in rhyme—they are suspended in the whisper of a rhyme as the slow steps of exile reconvene the poetics of Eve’s chosen verbs, *to go, to know, to stay*, before emptying in the poem’s last word into a rhyme that never happens, an inarticulate and impossible wish. The last word is *way*. And unvoiced yet audible: *to go, to stay*, the essential narrative cru of the poem enclosed in syllables that are only traces within the poetic structure, hints, suggestions, ghosts.

As Simon’s Rock approaches the 50th anniversary of its founding and the 40th anniversary of its first conferred Bachelor of Arts degrees; as we mark the 15th anniversary of the Bard High School Early Colleges; and as alumni and friends gather on campus for a series of celebrations of the place and the idea that brought us all together, the College is even more what it has always been, a place where knowledge is not forbidden or restricted, where all voices announce, with Eve, “In me is no delay,” and where the tree is an invitation, not a prohibition. Like Darwin’s sketch, the sapling turns over the scriptural metaphor, returning the metaphor to new resonance and value. And like Darwin’s sketch, the sapling represents the beginning of an idea that is now firmly rooted and fully foliaged. When Pat Sharpe and Ba Win moved to New York City in June 2001 to discover whether the Simon’s
We might then think of the “early” in “early college” as carrying a double meaning. Our students start college earlier than conventional expectations, but those expectations are, in fact, historically unconventional, even anomalous. College at 18, with the high school diploma as a gatekeeping credential, is a 20th-century convention, and its ossification as the only “normal” entry point is an effect of other trends—standardization, professionalization, and monetization—that Simon’s Rock and our partners in the Bard Early Colleges also challenge and seek to reverse. Our early model is both new and old, late and early, experimental and proven, exploratory and situated.

To go. To stay.

Rock idea could grow beyond the Simon’s Rock campus, there were only a handful of early entry and dual enrollment programs available nationally to younger scholars ready for more than their high schools could provide. Now there are more than 300 programs where, despite rapid speciation among them, our idea is recognizably the progenitor. The Bard Early Colleges in New York, Newark, Cleveland, Baltimore, and New Orleans are among the most celebrated and demonstrably successful public educational sites in the United States, where college faculty practice a transformative pedagogy across high school and college classrooms. The phrase “early college” is codified in federal policy in answer to the successes of our programs and of programs like ours. And the spread of the Simon’s Rock idea has produced a new paradigm in which students and families are asking not only where to go to college, but when to go to college, a question with profound implications for entrenched and layered problems of college cost, access, and completion.

Just as meaningful as the reach of our convening idea is the reach of our own community. Our 50th entering class, the class of ’16, will join a multigenerational community of alumni who remember the excitement and with it the anxiety, the hope and the newness, the affirmation and the wonder of their first day at Simon’s Rock, and the sense, on their last day, of a “world . . . all before them”—a complicated feeling, rich with the tensions and apparent contradictions of Milton’s lines. We go “hand in hand” yet “solitary,” and, in going, we are also staying, because Simon’s Rock is both a place and a way, a location and a direction, and if the place is a harbor for the mind, the mind—again with reference to Milton—is also a place.

It is an afterthought, but perhaps of interest, to note that Darwin started medical school at Edinburgh at 16, and that Milton entered Cambridge at the same age—embarrassed because his best friend started two years younger, at 14. Martin Luther King Jr. entered Morehouse College with early admission at the age of 15: already feeling the urgency of his future work, as his friend and close colleague Dr. Bernard Lafayette Jr. narrated to a packed house at the Daniel Arts Center at Simon’s Rock this February, he saw no reason to wait. And in Benjamin Franklin’s design for higher education, eventually to become the University of Pennsylvania, students between ages 13 and 16 matriculated from what was simply called the Academy into what was simply called the College.

“Our students start college earlier than conventional expectations, but those expectations are, in fact, historically unconventional, even anomalous.”

—Provost Ian Bickford

We might then think of the “early” in “early college” as carrying a double meaning. Our students start college earlier than conventional expectations, but those expectations are, in fact, historically unconventional, even anomalous. College at 18, with the high school diploma as a gatekeeping credential, is a 20th-century convention, and its ossification as the only “normal” entry point is an effect of other trends—standardization, professionalization, and monetization—that Simon’s Rock and our partners in the Bard Early Colleges also challenge and seek to reverse. Our early model is both new and old, late and early, experimental and proven, exploratory and situated.

To go. To stay. 🌞
JOAN: What brought you to Simon’s Rock 32 years ago?

NANCE: I had no idea what an Early College was, but Simon’s Rock was advertising for a European historian, so I decided to apply. I had taken a lot of European history, had a minor in French history, and thought I could teach outside of my Russian history specialty. During the campus interview process I devoted my sample class to Soviet foreign policy in order to show that I could go beyond my area of 16th-century Muscovy. Having some difficulty finding levity in the topic, which I knew would be helpful, I stopped at one point and said in my best hokey Russian accent: “Okeey. Time for djoke.” I didn’t actually have a joke, but folks laughed when I explained that this is what my old Russian language teacher would do when she realized she was losing us. When the application was successful, my friends said “good first job!” I thought so, too, in particular since historians were a dime a dozen at the time (probably still now). I fell in love with the place, and never seriously thought of going anywhere else. I was so impressed by the students, and my colleagues, happy to learn I had a lot of flexibility in what I taught, and was intrigued by our interdisciplinary mission.

JOAN: What have been the most rewarding and the most challenging aspects of your career?

NANCE: The most rewarding aspects of my career at Simon’s Rock have been the warm relationships that I have been able to establish with friends and colleagues on the faculty, staff, and administration, and the intellectual and personal growth that these made possible. Likewise, my students have been a joy, and their ideas, their accomplishments, and their views on the life of the mind a continual revelation.

It has been wonderful to team-teach with colleagues, and to create courses that responded to students’ needs and new interests. Who knew that a specialist in 16th-century Muscovy would end up teaching courses about Michel Foucault, Apocalypses (secular and religious), gays in American movies, and Love and Death in Western Civilization?

Also rewarding has been my service to the college, in particular as Social Studies Division Head for nearly a decade, and as a co-director for the Institute for Early College Pedagogy. I want to highlight the latter since it built on the Writing and Thinking Techniques that are at the heart of our pedagogy, and was meant to spread the word about our contributions to innovative teaching, in early colleges and just plain colleges. I was very happy to learn that Ian Bickford, our new Provost, is planning a more developed iteration of this project via the Center for Early College Pedagogy.

JOAN: What have been your teaching goals for undergraduate students learning history and historical methodology?

NANCE: I think we all benefit from some degree of “historical literacy,” i.e. a basic idea of important events, processes, people, from the past. As individuals, we would lose our identities and be very vulnerable if we suffered from amnesia. Similarly, our collective or shared identities are in many ways dependent on historical knowledge, and without it we suffer.

That said, I try not to mandate which version of the past my students choose although I am clear that I see some versions as far more accurate than others (i.e. “Holocaust Denial is not good!). I suspect that many folks who take a history course but do not major or concentrate in history, do not retain a large store of so-called historical facts. What is far more important is that they develop a critical approach to those facts, which have no meaning in themselves. From my courses, I hope that students learn how to make sense of them, use them for what they might teach about the human condition, and figure out how they might relate such knowledge to their own lives and current situations. And this is why what my courses stress, in the first instance, is historical method, i.e. those approaches to knowledge central to historical scholarship, and which share with other academic disciplines a healthy skepticism toward received knowledge.

In specific terms, this means learning how to evaluate historical evidence, the raw data from the past; learning how to evaluate what other historians have made of it, i.e. what is termed historiography or “the history of history”; and learning how to create a new synthesis, bringing one’s own
JOAN: What are you most proud of?

NANCE: Certainly, two of my proudest moments were receiving first the Glover and, a few years later, the Drumm awards. We faculty are all proud of the high standards that we set for our students, and in return I think we recognize that they set high standards for us. Our students are tough, feisty, creative, and never satisfied with the cliché or the easy answer whether it comes from their texts, from their peers, or from their teachers. I was humbled that our seniors who are our most experienced, and I would say our most demanding Simon’s Rock students, thought me worthy of these two honors, because to me it meant that they thought I had lived up to their expectations. When we first instituted these awards, I was a bit uncomfortable, and I want to end on that note: I think all of my colleagues deserve them, because they work so hard and are so smart and dedicated. That said, I am doubly honored to have been singled out.

I admire our students while they are here, and have been in communication with a number of alums over these 30-plus years. It is very rewarding to see them make their way in the world, in ways that are smart, creative, compassionate, and ever independent-minded. I care about them all, but one thing I have to highlight as a “most proud” aspect of these relationships, is that I am still in touch with two students from my first two years at Simon’s Rock: Carlton Rounds and J.T. Way. They are both highly accomplished and highly caring individuals who have devoted themselves to the life of the mind and to service to others. Among other things, J.T. lived in Guatemala for a decade, founded a school for Mayan children, has his own foundation, and is devoted to global social transformation in the United States and outside of it. I would be honored to know these fine men even had they not been my students and, of course, I take no credit whatsoever for their myriad successes!

Finally, I am very proud of editing our book, Educating Outside the Lines. That was my project as Faculty Fellow, and it was both fun and challenging to use it to think in a sustained fashion about what we have to offer higher education not only as the pioneer Early College but also simply as an innovative college with high standards that synthesized educational progressivism with the classical tradition. Importantly, the collection was truly a collaborative work, in its development and in its denouement. We had an open process, anyone who was interested could participate; we free-wrote and gave each other feedback; and we ended with 29 authors, which included 16 faculty, two administrators, nine then-current students and two alums.

I am, of course, not a disinterested observer, but I will say that in my view, the quality of what we produced is very high. We cover aspects of the Simon’s Rock curriculum and community that range from an analysis of what our Writing and Thinking Workshop accomplishes to a consideration of the imbrication of our teaching and that of higher education in more general terms with global capitalism. And we clearly articulate what is central to our pedagogy, what I call the “pedagogical relationship.” We do not simply feature a “student-centered” pedagogy, as the current educational cliché goes. Rather, what we establish is a pedagogical two-way street. There is great respect and affection between faculty and students, and in my view it is this connection that makes what we do possible.

Facility challenge students to develop their potential to the fullest, and do their best to help them reach it. Students, in turn, make us better. As I said above, students have high expectations of us. They do not allow us to retreat into a position where we are the sole purveyors of knowledge, the sole authority. Rather we have to be ready to explain why we think as we do; to engage in genuine dialogues; and to learn from them as we respond with thoughtfulness and respect to their ideas. ✽
Jamie Hutchinson Retires (Almost)

by Rebecca Fiske, Faculty in Languages and Literature

Say, for example, you’re a Simon’s Rock student and you’ve had one of those mid-semester days that seem to last five seconds and five hundred years. Say, for example, your head is swirling and you no longer know right from left, up from down. Say, for example, your academic advisor is Jamie Hutchinson, and you manage to wind your way up Hall College Center’s big staircase, take that left-hand turn, and find yourself outside his office door, the one he’s occupied for the last four decades. Most likely, he’d open his door even wider, look at you, smile his infectious smile, tell you to come in, and offer you a seat. You may not be able to explain what was wrong, and you may find yourself talking about thesis statements or Walt Whitman or the liminal frontier of the West or even the foxes of Housatonic, Massachusetts, but one thing would be certain: when you were done, life would all make sense again.

Jamie Hutchinson has a real gift for putting most things in their proper perspective. He came to Simon’s Rock, fresh PhD in hand, in 1976. He was a tall, lanky, California hippie, wearing a tee-shirt, faded Levi’s, and hiking boots. In fact, in spite of time passing, years flowing, Jamie remains pretty much the same, from his choice of simple attire to his love of the natural world and the transcendence of language. Forty years of devotion to one place, to Bard College at Simon’s Rock in particular, is extraordinary. Jamie has seen the college through five decades, through lean times and flush times, violent times and peaceful times, sad times and joyous times. How do we honor 40 years of seminars, writing and thinking workshops, advising meetings, tutorials, scholarship, and more? How do we recognize that Jamie has taught over 3,600 Rockers? That’s nearly four times the number of words in this article, and it is my point blank, “Jamie, are you really going to pack up and leave this office?” He looked at me quizzically. “Of course not. I’ll still teach a course or two, if they’ll have me, still do the Summer Young Writers Workshop. I just want more free time.” That was all I needed to hear. Things once again were put in their proper perspective.

In his own words, Jamie explains his love of mentoring: “My best classes are always ones where the students feel as if they have a degree of ownership.” Jamie doesn’t expend a lot of energy on social media, so he likely doesn’t know that former students have written glowing reviews of him. Many attest to more than a degree of ownership under his mentoring. Here’s just one example: “I had Jamie in 1980! He was tough. I almost quit school because I got my first and only ‘F’ on my first paper. He spent three hours with me and reviewed, line by line, my mistakes. I owe him so much. I have successfully written federal, state and private grants and had my HUD grant rated one of the top nine in the country! Thanks for being so hard, Jamie!” Others remark about his wisdom, his kindness, and even his wit. And, of course, we who have had the chance to work with Jamie as a colleague and experience his gentle insistence and deeply held convictions during all manner of committee meetings, email threads, and even impromptu hallway debates, are keenly aware that his convictions not only signify Simon’s Rock’s mission, they helped to form it. Writing should be at the core of our curriculum because it cannot be divorced from critical and creative thinking. Texts should be read slowly, deeply, over an extended period of time, not crammed into tiny blocks for quick consumption. Words matter; ideas matter; freedom to think for oneself matters. Over these past forty years, Jamie Hutchinson has been an invaluable teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend to countless Rockers. We are all the richer for having him in our lives. And now, Jamie is retiring. At least, he thinks he’s retiring.

A few weeks ago, I was having one of those Simon’s Rock days that seem to last five seconds and five years. I managed to find my way outside his office door. And, he smiled, opened his door wider, invited me in and offered me a seat. He was preparing for his Poe, Hawthorne and Melville class. As I listened to his explanation of some intricate point in one of Poe’s short stories, it dawned on me: there is no way Jamie can retire. So, I asked him, point blank, “Jamie, are you really going to pack up and leave this office?” He looked at me quizzically. “Of course not. I’ll still teach a course or two, if they’ll have me, still do the Summer Young Writers Workshop. I just want more free time.” That was all I needed to hear. Things once again were put in their proper perspective. Jamie Hutchinson is, and is not, retiring from a 40-year teaching career at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, directly after graduation in May 2016. In his newly acquired free time, my hunch is Jamie will have even more freedom to continue to be a faithful thinker, writer, professor, mentor, and friend. ☀️
Simon’s Rock in the Community

by Katie Boswell, Faculty in Social Studies

Bard College at Simon’s Rock has been a vibrant intellectual community and supportive home for students, faculty, and staff for almost 50 years. The only liberal arts institution in Southern Berkshire County, the College’s location on a country road a short distance from Great Barrington belies its importance as a presence and hub of activities for the broader region. Campus members occasionally even refer to the “Simon’s Rock bubble” as a way of expressing a perceived insularity from the school’s cultural surroundings, while area residents may have only partial knowledge of the varied campus goings-on.

Nonetheless, a positive reciprocal relationship has in fact long existed between Simon’s Rock and the residents and institutions of Berkshire County. Lectures, visiting scholars, periodic conferences, and other, more frequent programs bring campus and local residents together to explore common interests and concerns. Tied to the College’s academic program and its courses, long-running seminars in the Arts and Social Studies Divisions bring visiting artists and scholars to Simon’s Rock for exhibitions and presentations. More recently, the Center for Food Studies’ annual Think Food conference has become an important point of exchange for those passionate about local food culture, social justice, and sustainability issues. According to Center Director and Faculty in French Dr. Maryann Tebben, “The conference connects people who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to be in the same room together.” It is this promise of lively and informative conversation that brings campus and area residents together for such events.

It is the Daniel Arts Center (DAC) and, by extension, the Kellogg Music Center, along with the Kilpatrick Athletic Center’s (KAC) year-round activities, that elevate Simon’s Rock’s presence in the region. The DAC hosts exhibitions in the Hillman-Jackson Gallery and theatrical, dance, and music productions in the Black Box and McConnell Theater. Of particular note is the Sunday chamber concert series organized by Dr. Larry Wallach, in which he frequently performs. Alongside the Arts Division and its varied programs, the Kilpatrick Athletic Center is also responsible for connecting campus and community. Community members flock to the KAC’s athletic and aquatic facilities and classes. Swim and Aquatics Safety Coordinator and Swim Coach Bill Meier remembers that a key objective of the KAC’s initial mission was to bring together students and a more intergenerational, diverse population in a mutually beneficial way to integrate College and community for now 17 years. Coach Meier remembers, “Because of this Athletic Center, more people have come up here. There’s more of an awareness of the free concerts and the free programs that are available to people. There has become much more of a community presence on this college campus.” Evidence of such collaboration can be found in April’s “Swimming Saves Lives” program, in which KAC members from the PaceMakers (Simon’s Rock’s U.S. Masters Swimming Club adult swim team) provided free adult swim lessons to Berkshire County residents. Faculty and students simultaneously worked on a study to better understand the program’s efficacy, leading to true cooperation between campus and community.

Beyond campus, students, faculty, and staff take part in a range of activities to further create and maintain ties to the broader community—and from these activities, all participants derive tremendous benefit. Two particular ways this occurs is through community service and service learning courses, which require some component of off-campus collaboration with local institutions, as well as the application of skills learned in class in conducting hands-on research. Faculty member in Psychology Eden-Renée Hayes explains that such programs lead to greater exposure for the college: “Those in the community then know that this is what Simon’s Rock is . . . this is what Simon’s Rock does . . . this is what Simon’s Rock values are. They then have access to the skills faculty possess or learn more from student research about their institutions.”

Now a junior with a concentration in mathematics and physics, Grant Parker registered in his freshman year for the cultural anthropology class “Life Histories” to fulfill his A.A. Cultural Perspectives requirement. Grant learned that for this class, he would not only read biographies, but would also create one from a series of interviews with a resident from Construct, Inc., an organization providing temporary housing and career counseling to homeless men and women in Great Barrington. Grant learned that for this class, he would not only read biographies, but would also create one from a series of interviews with a resident from Construct, Inc., an organization providing temporary housing and career counseling to homeless men and women in Great Barrington. Grant remembers this experience as transformative. “I was learning more about people than I ever thought I would learn about in my undergraduate career . . . I no longer view my course of study as just physics and math. I know I am not just someone who studies physics, but also someone who must go into the world considering how people interact with one another.” Grant recalls how his collaboration with the Construct, Inc. resident—a person he continues to see when in town—helped him better know the town in which he resided, and also gain perspective on an unfamiliar way of life.
We know from experience that a lot of attention is given to Simon’s Rock students, in and out of the classroom. We seldom have the opportunity to learn how this attention and the majors students choose continue to influence their lives and career decisions long after they leave Simon’s Rock. In an effort to begin this conversation, we interviewed a number of alumni working in film and compiled a series of artist profiles centered on how the two ideas of “in college” and “after college” blend together—how that transition is linear, and what parts of one’s foundation obtained while at Simon’s Rock are retained over time.

**Eva Sollberger ’89**

Eva Sollberger earned her BA in 1993, back when there were not nearly the same filming tools available. Rather, the work she did in seemingly unrelated classes and experiences informs her work to this day. Wendy Shifrin’s dance class helped Eva understand movement and stage presence. In Pat Sharpe’s literature class, she learned to analyze stories and pick apart what makes them compelling. And working with Floyd Robinson in the Snack Bar taught her how to make conversation with people from different backgrounds, honing her interviewing skills.

In 2007, Eva launched her web video series “Stuck in Vermont” in Seven Days, Vermont’s alternative newsweekly. She used skills she acquired at Simon’s Rock in ways she could not have foreseen.

“I studied anthropology with Fran Mascia-Lees and often apply my ethnographic studies to documentary filmmaking. We discussed how impossible it is for ethnographers to report objectively from the field,” Eva says. “In my work, I embrace my own subjectivity and am up front about my voice in my videos. I never claim to be telling the truth. This is my version of truth, and it’s highly edited and produced.”

This approach earned Eva first place awards for feature video, entertainment video, and sports video from the New England Newspaper & Press Association (NENPA). Her videos have been viewed more than three million times on YouTube.

On her finding her path to film, Eva recalls, “I also have a memory from my senior thesis opening art show, when Arthur Hillman looked at my work (multimedia, which included mixed collage pieces and recorded audio) and said, ‘You should be doing video.’ I said, ‘Yeah, right, who can afford that?’ Well, Arthur, it took me some years, but I make videos now!”

**David Felix Sutcliffe ’98**

David Felix Sutcliffe, a Sundance Award–winning director and producer, spends most of his time working in documentary filmmaking. His movies explore stories and narratives overlooked by the mainstream media in the United States. David’s past films—ADAMA and (T)ERROR—have focused on issues of national security, specifically the plight of innocent Muslim Americans affected by counterterrorism initiatives.

When asked to talk about the effect Simon’s Rock had on him, he points out that his experiences at Simon’s Rock were specific, and that the interpersonal moments and specific classes were the most lasting parts of his time on campus. Simon’s Rock professor Audrey Kerr, who taught African-American studies, English, and folklore from 1997 to 2001, had a profound influence. Having grown up in a biracial family, his class with Audrey was life changing. Not only did it shape his own experience, it also inspired him to look at his childhood through a different lens. Through her teaching, he felt compassion for his sisters and began to understand what growing up was like for them. He brings this critical examination of life to his work today. At the moment, he’s working on a project about racial disparity as perpetuated by the right wing and white extremists.

In February, David returned to campus to help kick off Uncommon Journeys, a new speaker series that celebrates the unique paths and exceptional successes of Simon’s Rock alumni. Audrey joined David as moderator for the pre-screening discussion of his film (T)ERROR in the Daniel Arts Center.

**Ben Pender-Cudlip ’01**

Documentarian Ben Pender-Cudlip feels that Simon’s Rock equipped him for the spontaneous nature of his genre of filmmaking. He explains, “Simon’s Rock prepared me by encouraging me to take ownership of my
education.” He likes how the Rock gave him the liberty to direct his own path. “As it turns out, much of documentary filmmaking involves making it up as you go along. That’s something I feel prepared for,” he says.

This fluid philosophy is evident in all of his endeavors. Ben entered Simon’s Rock focused on math and science, but his career pivoted when he had to fulfill his art requirement and decided to take Larry Burke’s film course, Art of Film. He became “deeply interested in the craft of documentary.” His filmography does not revolve around a certain issue; instead, he follows the course of his interests, covering a variety of topics, including quirky artists, charter and district schools, and stories from my family,” reiterating his unique way of approaching everything. “Sometimes I’m aesthetically attracted to a story or the methods I might use to represent it, and sometimes I make films about stories that I think are important,” he adds.

Reflecting back on Simon’s Rock, Ben remembers, “Not only was Larry Burke’s mentorship influential, Nancy Bonvillain’s Anthropology Goes to the Movies taught me a lot about the troubling ways that indigenous peoples are represented on film. The lessons I learned there have been really helpful in my current project: a feature documentary about Native Americans who were taken from their homes as children and raised by white families.” For more information, including a trailer, visit dawnland.org.

A Lasting Imprint

Interviewing each of these filmmakers revealed two common themes: the indelible influence of Simon’s Rock, not only on their careers but on every aspect of their lives; and the unique mindset that Simon’s Rock fosters—which remains instrumental to these artists today.

Lisa Myers ’02

Set designer Lisa Myers describes her Simon’s Rock experience in superlative terms. Lisa talks about how art historian Joan Del Plato’s tutorial in museology and visual studies influenced her: “I started to think more about art as it is presented to the viewer, the spaces in which we view and experience art, and how expansive the possibility of different mediums actually is.” During her time at Simon’s Rock, Lisa primarily studied art history and studio arts, not filmmaking. Explaining the effect of this experience on her current career, she says, “Being trained in traditional methods gave me a great understanding of techniques and my own abilities, but that was the pivotal moment I opened myself to the idea of applying those skills to different fields.” This broadened idea made it possible for her to use her vast skill set to creatively approach set building as an interactive process. “With our sets, we establish the first layer of the story, to be built upon by the other departments,” she explains. “We have to communicate the story of a space visually.” Lisa’s Simon’s Rock liberal arts education has been influential in her ability to synthesize and collaborate between mediums and departments.

She has many projects planned for the future; her favorite genres are character-driven dramas and comedies. Look for her upcoming project releases: Manhattan Night, starring Adrien Brody; My Blind Brother, starring Adam Scott, Nick Kroll, and Jenny Slate; and The Land, featuring Erykah Badu.

MORE ALUMNI IN FILM

Simon’s Rock alumni hold a wide variety of positions in the film industry, including directors, producers, writers, visual artists, and camera operators.

Joel ’71 and Ethan ’74 Coen are Oscar award-winning filmmakers of Fargo and No Country For Old Men. The critically acclaimed Coens’ work includes Raising Arizona, cult favorite The Big Lebowski, Bridge of Spies (screenwriters), and most recently Hail, Caesar!

Perry Hall ’84 has worked with four Academy Award-winning filmmakers (John Gaeta, Nicholas Brooks, Eugenio Zanetti, Thomas Knoll) and has lectured as an invited artist at Industrial Light and Magic. He also works as a screenwriter currently under contract with Light Cone Pictures in New York. Perry’s unique “painting films” can be seen in the Academy Award-winning “painted world” sequences of the 1998 Robin Williams film What Dreams May Come and more recently in actress Scarlett Johansson’s eyes in director Luc Besson’s 2014 film Lucy.

Ambika Leigh ’93, an award-winning director, editor, and producer, has worked with Academy Award-winning producer Mark R. Harris (Crash and Gods and Monsters) as a development executive and creative producer. As the owner of On Purpose Pictures, she has directed, produced and/or edited dozens of films, including in-depth interviews with over 30 Emmy nominees.

Kate Twomey ’08 finished her studies in Cinema Studies & Documentary Film at NYU and is currently at the Copenhagen Institute for Interaction Design focusing on transmedia storytelling and interactive documentary.

Zev Vel ’12 moved to New York City to continue his career in film working with Camera and Lighting departments. He has worked on a variety of films and commercials with clients including AT&T, Aeropostale, Chevrolet, and notable individuals, including Al Gore. Zev continues to work as a director of photography.
This Spring, Provost Ian Bickford ’95 led salons in five cities to discuss the future of Simon’s Rock and early college with alumni, parents, friends, faculty, and other members of our community. Below are images from these seminar-style conversational gatherings.

Provost Ian Bickford ’95 leads the Berkshire salon discussion. Seated abreast are professors David Myers and Pat Sharpe, Jeremy Dunn ’81, and Geoffrey Sokolsky ’78.

Ba Win, Vice President of Early College Policies and Programs, discussing Simon’s Rock history at the NYC salon.

Ella Brice, David Byrd ’78, and Brian Barth ’77 AP’15 at the Berkshire salon.

Amanda Johnston ’11 shares her perspective at the Berkshire salon.

Amber Brody and Academy parent Jeff Gardere AP’15 enjoying the NYC salon.

Ann Geisman P’13 with Ian in NYC.

Hannah Thompson ’10 and Haley Oller ’09 reconnect at the NYC salon.
Simon’s Rock trumpet teacher and distinguished artist Allan Dean headlined the Faculty Concert Series: Allan Dean and Friends. Larry Wallach accompanied on piano. Along with Ron Barron on trombone and Ron Gorevic on violin, the friends performed works by Eric Ewazen, Manuel De Falla, Herbert J. Clarke, Scott Joplin, and others.

David Felix Sutcliffe ’98 and former Simon’s Rock faculty member Dr. Audrey Kerr give a pre-screening talk about the making of T(E)RROR at the inaugural Uncommon Journeys event.

The 3rd Annual ThinkFood Conference included a panel discussion with local food producers: (L-R) Maryann Tebben, head of The Center for Food Studies; Maddie Elling, Hosta Hill; Richard Bourdon, Berkshire Mountain Bakery; Alana Chernila, cookbook author & food writer; Sean Stanton, North Plain & Blue Hill Farms.

Arielle King ’14 performs a solo at the 1st Annual Gospel Concert.

Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr. met with Provost Ian Bickford before taking the stage in the Daniel Arts Center to talk about the civil rights movement and its impact on today’s social climate.

Last fall, the all-student cast and crew of The Simon’s Rock Theatre Program produced Thornton Wilder’s The Skin of Our Teeth.
Bard College Finalizes Purchase of Montgomery Place

Bard College has finalized the purchase of Montgomery Place, a 380-acre estate adjacent to the Bard campus. The property, which includes significant historic and cultural assets, is contiguous with the campus from River Road to the Hudson River in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Bard will begin creating a master plan to guide the integration of the two campuses and utilize the new facilities in a manner consistent with the College’s commitment to historic preservation, public access, and the environment. “This is an historic moment for Bard,” said Bard College President Leon Botstein. “The integration of the current campus with the Montgomery Place property will create a unified 1,000-acre campus.” The College intends to maintain public access to Montgomery Place, preserve its landscape, and maintain the farm. Botstein added that new curricular and programmatic opportunities will emerge from this transformative purchase.

The newly created Social Justice Committee on Programming (SJCP)—organized by resident director Quintin Cross and junior Andre Santana ’13—developed an impressive lineup of events for the spring semester including performances, workshops, and talks geared toward opening up diversity discussions and increasing participation on campus. The series kicked off in January with a packed house at the First Annual Gospel Concert, a performance conceived and organized by sophomore Arielle King ’14 and the SJCP that brought together five choirs from western Massachusetts and upstate New York.

Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College Releases Comprehensive Analysis of Rapidly Growing U.S. Commercial Drone Services Industry

A new study released by The Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College provides a comprehensive analysis of the U.S. commercial drone services industry by examining nearly 3,000 Federal Aviation Administration non-recreational drone use permits known as Section 333 exemptions. “Analysis of U.S. Drone Exemptions 2014-15” presents a variety of significant data-driven conclusions about the contours of the evolving industry landscape.

As the domestic drone industry in the United States continues to grow, stakeholders are increasingly looking for reliable sources of data on which to build policies and strategies.

The Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College, founded in 2012, is an interdisciplinary research institution that examines the novel and complex opportunities and challenges presented by unmanned technologies in both the military and civilian sphere.

Bard High School Early Colleges Singled Out

In his March 2016, state of the city address, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka singled out BHSEC Newark for its culture of critical thinking and its students’ high ranking on state assessments. BHSEC Baltimore was profiled earlier this year by the Baltimore Sun as an extraordinary new opportunity for young people in Baltimore public schools. BHSEC Queens student Emery Powell won first prize in the Dana Foundation’s ‘Design a Brain’ contest (a prestigious prize for young people in neuroscience).

The College purchased the property from Historic Hudson Valley, the historical preservation organization that has owned Montgomery Place since the late 1980s.
Anastasia Samoylova, faculty in photography, gave a presentation about her creative work at the 2016 National Conference for the Society for Photographic Education in Las Vegas, Nevada, on March 10th. In a February interview with In-Between journal of digital arts, Ana discussed her work, influences, and breaking the boundaries of conventional photographic genres.

Sandy Cleary, director of the Daniel Arts Center, is the co-producer of the award-winning, feature-length documentary film, Reza Abdoh: Theatre Visionary. Centered on the life and work of legendary avant-garde theater director Reza Abdoh and his company, Dar A Luz, the film explores the profound impact of the director’s explosive work, 20 years after his death from AIDS.

Mileta Roe, associate professor of Spanish and comparative literature, gave a talk entitled “Ars Medica: Narrative Nonfiction and Medicine” at the Tenth International Conference of Literary Journalism Studies, May 2015, at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. Her work traces the origins of nonfiction writing in medical fields—from file notes to case studies to the explosion of interest in the medical humanities.

Mileta also published an interview with award-winning Mexican journalist Alma Guillermoprieto in Literary Journalism Studies (Vol. 6, No. 2, Fall 2014). Guillermoprieto, whose work has appeared in the New Yorker, the New York Review of Books, Gatopardo, El País, and many others, spoke about the dangers facing journalists today and the changing state of text-based journalism. “Politics and poverty, corruption and inequity, survival and belief, the throes of modernity, and the inevitability of international (and imperial) ignorance are just some of the themes that emerge from Guillermoprieto’s work,” Mileta noted in her introduction.

Yinxue Zhao, visiting faculty in languages and literature, was awarded a Luce Mini Grant on Asian and Environmental Studies to fund her research trip to Northern China last summer. Yinxue documented stories, historic texts and poetry, and interviewed locals about sacred trees in Shanxi, Shannxi provinces, Beijing. Hannah Ferus ’13 and Wanying Li ’12 assisted Yinxue in the early part of the trip.

As China modernizes, there is an increasing passion in historic areas for restoring tradition and cultural values associated with the harmony between nature and humanity. Yinxue’s research focuses on the rituals and attitudes practiced toward sacred trees and other symbols of the natural world, and the important role of linguistic components. To the locals, sacred trees are spiritual idols, historic symbols in memory of migrations, significant figures, poetic inspiration for literati, and more. Yinxue will feature outcomes of her trip in a documentary, which will include firsthand examples of the influential role tradition plays in contemporary Chinese society. She expects to complete her documentary next year.

Eric Kramer, faculty in physics, and senior Ethan Ackelsberg ’12 authored a second paper together, “Do Vacuoles Obscure the Evidence for Auxin Homeostasis?” published in the January issue of Molecular Plant.

This latest paper continues Eric and Ethan’s research on auxin, extending the work done last year that was published in the scientific journal Frontiers, “Auxin Metabolism Rates and Implications for Plant Development.” Both papers are concerned with the quantification of previously vague ideas about auxin production and action within the plant and its impact on plant growth and development.

Last spring, David Myers, faculty in chemistry and mathematics, and colleague Harold Hastings, faculty in computer science, accompanied students Sofia Rafikova ’13 and Jody Leonard ’11 to the Connecticut Valley Section of the American Chemical Society Undergraduate Research Symposium. Sofia and Jody presented research on experimental and computational investigation of the Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction. The research was conducted in the summer of 2014 under the guidance of Harold Hastings, assisted by David and Patty Dooley, faculty in chemistry.

David’s position on the executive board of the Connecticut Valley Section of the organization opens opportunities for students to participate in conferences and gain real-world experience.

As a member of the board of the International Center for Undergraduate Chemistry (ICUC), an international organization devoted to undergraduate chemistry education, David helps shape the mission and future of the organization. Through his collaboration with the ICUC, David has co-authored four papers published in Anuario Latinoamericano de Educación Química.
Did we miss your latest publication? Please be sure to share your news with us at editors@simons-rock.edu.

Award Winning Simon’s Rock Website

The newly designed website took home a Bronze Award in the 3rd Annual Education Digital Marketing Awards for creativity, marketing execution, message impact, technology application and innovation content.

The 20th Annual Webby Awards in the Web named Simon’s Rock an Official Honoree in the Best Home/Welcome Page category. With nearly 13,000 entries received from almost all 50 US states and 65 countries, the Official Honoree distinction is awarded to the top 20% of all work entered that exhibits remarkable achievement.

Aaron Williams, faculty in computer science, has a couple of research projects in progress. The first is based on the popular “Buttons & Scissors” puzzle app. Last year three seniors, Harrison Gregg ’11, Jody Leonard ’11, and Aaron Santiago ’11 proved that the puzzle achieves a level of difficulty known as “NP-Hardness” within theoretical computer science. Aaron and his students wrote a paper that was accepted at the 27th Canadian Conference on Computational Geometry. The students presented the results, and the paper was published in the conference proceedings.

In spring of 2015, Williams attended a Hardness of Games workshop organized by Erik Demaine of MIT at McGill’s Bellairs Research Institute in Barbados. To further advance the Buttons & Scissors analysis, Aaron presented several open problems—all solved by attendees—and later published and presented at the 18th Japan Conference on Discrete and Computational Geometry and Graphs in Kyoto, Japan.

The second project revolves around Aaron’s ongoing research program on Gray codes and de Bruijn sequences. The work included new publications in the journals of *Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science*. Last summer, Aaron hired Oscar Hernandez ’13 as a research intern. The two worked together almost daily, and last June attended the Connections in Discrete Mathematics conference in Vancouver, along with faculty in mathematics Pat Dragon. Aaron, Oscar, and Pat collaborated on a conference submission. In April 2016, Aaron and Oscar presented “the Grandma De Bruijn Sequence” at the international conference in Mexico.

**SIMON’S ROCK BOOKSHELF**

Nancy Bonvillain
edited *The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology* (Routledge, 2015)

Julia Clairborne Johnson P’15
*Be Frank with Me* (William Morrow/Harper Collins Publishers, 2016)

Rebecca Fiske
wrote a chapter in *Ethical Issues and Citizen Rights in the Era of Digital Government Surveillance* (IGI Global, 2016)

Mishka Shubalu ’92
*I Swear I’ll Make It Up to You* (Public Affairs, 2016)

**CAMPUS NEWS**

Aaron Williams

Aaron Williams, faculty in computer science, has a couple of research projects in progress. The first is based on the popular “Buttons & Scissors” puzzle app. Last year three seniors, Harrison Gregg ’11, Jody Leonard ’11, and Aaron Santiago ’11 proved that the puzzle achieves a level of difficulty known as “NP-Hardness” within theoretical computer science. Aaron and his students wrote a paper that was accepted at the 27th Canadian Conference on Computational Geometry. The students presented the results, and the paper was published in the conference proceedings.

In spring of 2015, Williams attended a Hardness of Games workshop organized by Erik Demaine of MIT at McGill’s Bellairs Research Institute in Barbados. To further advance the Buttons & Scissors analysis, Aaron presented several open problems—all solved by attendees—and later published and presented at the 18th Japan Conference on Discrete and Computational Geometry and Graphs in Kyoto, Japan.

The second project revolves around Aaron’s ongoing research program on Gray codes and de Bruijn sequences. The work included new publications in the journals of *Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science*. Last summer, Aaron hired Oscar Hernandez ’13 as a research intern. The two worked together almost daily, and last June attended the Connections in Discrete Mathematics conference in Vancouver, along with faculty in mathematics Pat Dragon. Aaron, Oscar, and Pat collaborated on a conference submission. In April 2016, Aaron and Oscar presented “the Grandma De Bruijn Sequence” at the international conference in Mexico.
Annual Fund Scholars

Since 2011, supporters of the Simon’s Rock annual fund scholarships—generous donors who contributed $5,000 or more in a given year—have made a difference in the lives of 72 students who belong at our early college in the Berkshires. With your help, Simon’s Rock will celebrate its 50th anniversary by naming 50 Annual Fund Scholars in the 2016-2017 academic year.

WHY I GIVE:
Meghan Kirksey ’94 came to Simon’s Rock from the National Cathedral School in Washington, DC. She received an Acceleration to Excellence scholarship from Simon’s Rock, and went on to complete a combined MD/PhD program at Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University and The Rockefeller University. She is now an anesthesiologist at The Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. Meghan and her wife, Tynisha Wynder, established the Alida Kirksey and Samantha Wynder Scholarship in 2014, which provides financial aid to a Simon’s Rock student. “This scholarship is our way of giving another student access to the opportunities that Simon’s Rock opened up to me. It’s a blessing to have the opportunity to give back to this community.”

Betty Hall Legacy Society

The Betty Hall Legacy Society recognizes the devotion and generosity of those who choose to plan a special gift to Simon’s Rock. Such contributions can be achieved through a will, retirement account beneficiary designation, life insurance beneficiary designation, or charitable gift annuities and remainder trusts.

Did you know that through planned giving, you can support the future of Simon’s Rock, and future Simon’s Rock students, while receiving fixed payments for life? Or that you can contribute to the Simon’s Rock mission for generations to come without using funds in your bank account today? You can even make a gift of your home now, continue to live in it, and receive tax benefits today.

If you have already included Simon’s Rock in your estate plan, please let us know so that we can acknowledge your gift and properly recognize you as a member of The Betty Hall Legacy Society.

As a member of The Betty Hall Legacy Society, in addition to being celebrated annually in Simon’s Rock Magazine, you will receive special invitations to campus events, such as Honors Convocation and Commencement. Also, you will have the opportunity to meet or enjoy a meal with the provost when he is in your region, and receive periodic communications about ways to continue doing well by doing good.

Would you like to learn more about how you can get involved? Please contact Jacqueline Pierce at jpierce@simons-rock.edu or 413-528-7253. Together with Jackie, you can explore how planning for the future of Simon’s Rock can help you achieve financial security while making a significant, generous contribution to the lives of those who belong in the Simon’s Rock community.

50th Anniversary Memorabilia Show

Do you have mementos (e.g., t-shirts, pennants, mugs, an ID card, posters, etc.) from your Simon’s Rock days to share during the 50th Anniversary celebration? Be a part of the Simon’s Rock Memorabilia show at Reunion this July. For more information, please contact Jonathan Lothrop ’82 at jlothrop66@gmail.com or Margaret Cherin, college archivist, at mcherin@simons-rock.edu.

Share Your Simon’s Rock Story

Help us launch the 50th Anniversary, and be part of history! Do you have a story or memory about your time at Simon’s Rock to share? Be part of the Oral History project! Opportunities to share your story on audio recording will be available during Reunion Weekend. Let us know you are interested, or find out more by contacting Margaret Cherin, college archivist, at mcherin@simons-rock.edu.
The Pete Baumann Scholarship

Simon’s Rock joyfully celebrated the naming of a scholarship in honor of beloved staff member Pete Baumann on March 11. To mark Pete’s 80th birthday—and his nearly 50 years of service to Simon’s Rock—alumni, staff, faculty, and friends contributed $15,792 to name the Pete Baumann Scholarship. Pete was surprised and moved by this tribute, and his birthday gathering was testament to the ways in which the conscientiousness and commitment of one individual can inspire an entire community. Thanks to committee co-chairs Beth Moser and Beth Sack—and to committee members Katie Archey; Meriweather Clark Connors ’76 and Cathy Ingram; Joan DelPlato; Evelyn Douglas; Gabrielle Gelmann ’99; Joan Goodkind; Zachary Green ’99; Jan Hutchinson; Brian Mikesell and John Weinstein; Bernard F. Rodgers, Jr.; Don Roeder; Bob and Kathy Schmidt; and Diane Warner—the scholarship will support qualified students from Berkshire County in Pete’s honor.

The Wendy Shifrin Memorial Scholarship

Wendy Shifrin, our beloved Simon’s Rock dance professor, has been dearly missed since passing in March 2015. Her generous spirit and her drive to cultivate and nurture creative expression continue to be felt, both on campus and beyond. Many generous alumni, faculty, staff, family, and friends have made gifts to Simon’s Rock in Wendy’s memory. Her husband, Steve Moritz, along with Anne O’Dwyer, Joan DelPlato, Rich Montone, and Nancy Yanoshak, have led an ongoing fundraising effort to create the Wendy Shifrin Memorial Scholarship. To date, supporters have contributed $21,495. Wendy’s memorial scholarship will be awarded annually to a Bachelor of Arts student.

You can make additional contributions to the Pete Baumann Scholarship and the Wendy Shifrin Memorial Fund at simons-rock.edu/givenow.
Maria Presti ’12

Why did you attend Simon’s Rock?
Like most Rockers, I came to Simon’s Rock because high school wasn’t challenging enough or a right fit for me. In the tenth grade, we took a practice ACT exam as part of standardized testing. I put my email down on the bottom, thinking “why not?” I ended up scoring well. Emails started coming in and one caught my attention, “Go to college after the 10th or 11th grade!” Feeling bored and out of place in my school environment, I decided to ask my mother if I could apply.

Why do you want to go into biomedical research?
I love puzzles. Figuring out how the tiniest of things fit and work together to function in a larger system has always captivated me. What better way to solve puzzles and help others than biomedical research? I want to figure out why a single point mutation in a gene in a protein, or a small part of a working cell, can lead to disease or organ failure and then discover how to prevent the error from occurring or fix the existing problem so others do not have to suffer in the future.

Did you participate in any research projects as an undergrad at Simon’s Rock?
I have performed several research projects while at the Rock, mostly as part of labs for classes. These projects range from short and small projects (what wildlife is present in and near lower pond?) to much larger and longer projects (how does this wildlife change as the seasons do?). Last semester, I examined the effects of caffeine on emotional responses in adolescents as part of a group project for animal physiology. The project took about half of the semester and was completely designed by the small group I was in and myself. This semester, I am conducting another project with a small group also examining caffeine as part of the research methods class, but further details about the project are under wraps as the experiment is still in progress!

Over the summer I had the honor of working in the SUNY SURF Program. I worked in the Krendel lab studying the role of myosin in kidney functioning. I am expanding what I learned and worked on during the fellowship into my senior thesis, a yearlong self-designed project all seniors must complete before they graduate.

Tell us about your favorite professor(s)?
My answer would be Patty Dooley and David Myers. Both teach in the chemistry department at Simon’s Rock and have helped me grow in my love for chemistry and learning, as well as develop into a confident scientist who can express her ideas and question things she does not understand. Each challenges me to be the best I can be and go the extra mile in and outside of the classroom. They are excellent role models, leading by example. Patty is the embodiment of the expression “if you want something done, take action and do it,” and constantly reminds me that I must work hard to accomplish my goals. David reminds me that it is okay to be unsure sometimes and humor is the best way to get stress out when learning advanced chemistry. He constantly reminds me and his organic chemistry students that chemistry is fun.

What do you expect to be doing 10 years from now?
The dreaded future question. I hope to be out of graduate school with a PhD in either organic chemistry, biochemistry, or biomedical research and be working in a lab (or finishing a post-doc?) and teaching. I hope to have several publications out by then and maybe a family will be in the picture.

How do you think Simon’s Rock has prepared you for the future?
Simon’s Rock has taught me to:
Examine the world around me
Question what I do not understand
Articulate my ideas and opinions
Write about my findings
Present my ideas and findings to others
Collaborate with others to complete a common goal
(I was trying to come up with a clever acronym, but failed miserably)

What do you think will help you stand apart from others in your chosen field?
Well, I’ll have a BA a month after turning 20 years old and, if all goes as planned, I will graduate with a PhD at 25 years old. I participated in a research fellowship program in biomedical research (SUNY SURF) at the age of 19 and am not afraid to ask questions and, more importantly, seek answers. I am a stubborn and determined young woman who won’t listen when people say I cannot accomplish something.

When it’s time to leave, what will you miss most about Great Barrington?
Large cinnamon buns from Gypsy Joint . . . okay just kidding (although they ARE delicious). I’m really going to miss all the people I have met here. Great Barrington is home to many kind and caring people and countless amazing memories that I am never going to forget. ☺️
Reunion 2016
July 8-10

Honoring the Class of 1966
on their 50th Anniversary
and celebrating the Anniversary Classes

All alumni, former and current faculty,
and staff are invited!

For more info or to register: simons-rock.edu/reunion