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THE I DEA E XCH ANGE

Entrepreneur to entrepreneur: Joe Popolo and Jere Doyle speak about their business mindsets and how their contributions to the Edmund H. Shea Jr. Center for Entrepreneurship have paid dividends for Carroll School of Management students.

ON THE COVER—(L-R) Theresa Betancourt, Salem Professor in Global Practice at the Boston College School of Social Work, and Navyn Salem, founder and CEO of Edesia Nutrition, enjoy the rose garden of St. Mary’s Hall.

COMMEN TS?
Email BeaconMag@bc.edu

One of the highlights from the Board of Regents Pilgrimage, the Black Madonna at Montserrat sits behind a sheet of glass; an aperture in the window allows visitors to kiss or touch her hand.

Bob and Judy Winston’s gift to the McMullen Museum of Art is one of sheer vision.

MY BEACON

For one former Eagle soccer player, giving to help build new locker rooms for the sport he loves wasn’t about the money.

Former BC baseball captain and ALS hero Pete Frates (center) and his family along with head baseball coach Mike Gambino (far left) and William V. Campbell Director of Athletics Martin Jarmond (third from left) attend a June 26 press conference announcing the naming of Phase II of the Harrington Athletics Village in Frates’ honor.
there are few classes anywhere in academia that inspire the admiration, respect, and even reverence of Boston College’s PULSE program for service learning. Alumni often cite it not only as their most important experience at BC, but also as one of the seminal influences of their lives. Thanks to one dedicated BC family, PULSE has not only survived a half century, it is flourishing.

CONTINUED
love,” wrote St. Ignatius of Loyola, “ought to be shown more in deeds than in words.”

In dozens of neighborhoods across Boston, PULSE students engage in those loving deeds, caring for people in need—just as they have since the very first PULSE course was taught. At Rosie’s Place and the Pine Street Inn, they feed the hungry and clothe the homeless. In Boys & Girls Clubs, in YMCAs, in schools, they befriend at-risk children, assist in classrooms, and help with homework. They help addicts reenter society; they help prisoners find jobs upon release. They speak with desperate callers on the Samaritans’ crisis hotline.

And then they bring those experiences—profound, confusing, frightening, moving, challenging—back to the Heights.

It’s a holistic, deeply Jesuit idea: service to others firmly grounded in a context both academic and self-reflective. Ask Robert Cooney ’74, P’08, ’10, why PULSE has such an important place at BC, and he’ll tell you simply: “PULSE is the BC mission in action.” The program enters its second half century greatly strengthened—and with the potential to impact many more lives—thanks to generous gifts from Cooney and his wife, Loretta. Their support has already allowed the University to expand PULSE and increase the number of participants; they have also established an endowment which will benefit the program for generations to come. In recognition of the family’s transformative philanthropy, the PULSE program leader will be known as the Cooney Family Director. Meghan Sweeney has been named the inaugural holder of the position. Cooney, a longtime BC Trustee and now Trustee Associate, explains that the couple wanted to establish an endowment in support of the program’s leadership—“excellent faculty are the lifeblood of a university,” he says—and also have an immediate impact on its growth.

According to Sweeney, PULSE cultivates a “different way of seeing,” and it showed Rachel Drew ’20 a way to combine her love of volunteerism and her desire to teach, setting her on a path she’d never considered. “I worked one-on-one with a student as a tutor—and a mentor and friend—in a public housing development in Brighton,” she recalls. “Through the eyes of this young girl, I viewed education in such a different way than I ever had. It completely changed the type of education that I saw myself doing. I decided I wanted to work in an urban public school and focus on speakers...
of other languages in classrooms where only English is spoken.”

PULSE’s power, Sweeney explains, lies in its multifaceted approach. “PULSE educates students in multiple parts of their lives—intellectual, spiritual, moral. If you ask someone 10, 15, 20 years out what they remember, it’s where they served and who they served. The classroom work interprets that experience. It’s sort of like the back room, the framework.

“Experience alone is not what transforms someone. It’s the action and then the reflection on it.”

That fundamentally Jesuit insight is the inspiration behind PULSE, says cofounder Patrick Byrne ’69, who has taught in the program throughout its five decades. In the late 1960s, BC students frequently protested that theology and philosophy weren’t relevant to the “real world.” Byrne and Joseph Flanagan, S.J., the then-chair of the philosophy department, set out to integrate social action and academic reflection. Based in both the theology and philosophy departments, PULSE—which is not an acronym, despite urban legend to the contrary—took its inspiration from St. Ignatius’ exhortation to serve others, to “help souls,” as his early followers put it, and from Aristotle, who wrote: “What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing.” The result was a new way of integrating classroom instruction with direct service that would come to be called service learning.

Bob and Loretta Cooney took a special interest in PULSE after their daughter, Ellen ’08, and daughter-in-law, Kate ’10, both had life-changing experiences in the program. When Ellen realized that PULSE routinely had to turn away well over 100 students each year due to limited space, she urged her parents to help.

“We saw a need that we were happy to fill,” says Loretta Cooney. “It’s such an impressive program.”

The result has been a major program expansion. The Cooneys are delighted to see PULSE grow as they’d hoped, and equally pleased that Sweeney is the inaugural holder of their directorship. An Episcopal priest who has been a hospital chaplain and campus minister as well as a theology professor, “Meghan is truly the perfect PULSE director,” says Bob. “It’s so important to have someone who understands this combination of classroom learning and service opportunity. Meghan’s devoted her career to that.” Adds Loretta, “She really inspires the students.”

The family members who inspired Bob and Loretta Cooney to get involved with PULSE share their satisfaction. Ellen and Kate Cooney each say that they hated the idea of any student who wanted to take PULSE being turned away. “PULSE gave me a perspective that informs everything I do—a lens to view the world where the disenfranchised are an important part of the picture,” says Ellen. “Anyone who is open to that experience should have it.”

Kate agrees. “I gained a direction I hadn’t had before, a realization that my skills could be put to a greater purpose if I focused my career on service to others,” she says. “PULSE was one of the most profound experiences I’d ever had. I’d never worked with kids before, but I found my passion for urban education working in an after-school program in the South End at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church.” PULSE spun her around and set her on a path that led her to join the Jesuit Volunteer Corps after graduation, followed by a stint with Teach for America. Most recently, she has been the director of learning support at the Chicago Jesuit Academy, a full-scholarship school on Chicago’s West Side.

Kate’s story—like Ellen’s, like Rachel’s, like those of so many PULSE students—illustrates PULSE’s singular ability to help students transform good intentions into meaningful action. “What makes PULSE so powerful—not only for students, but for the people they serve as well,” says Sweeney, “is that our students truly grow—it’s formative for them, and then there’s a ripple effect. A single PULSE student, beginning with a single volunteer placement, can touch so many lives for the better.”

Everybody says “PULSE changes lives.” Does it really? Visit bc.edu/beacon for two young Eagles’ perspectives.
Emerging from the Basque Country’s sun-drenched hills is the sprawling Sanctuary of Loyola. Dominating the broad façade, the great dome of its basilica, with its fenestrated lantern reaching toward the sky, heralds the treasure that lies just beyond. Before the triple portico, visitors congregate on an open plaza, while behind the complex, an expanse of green lawns and paved pathways stretches toward the hills beyond.

On the third floor of what is described as “the heart of the sanctuary” is a small room, converted into a chapel. A sign above the entrance reads AQUI SE ENTREGO A DIOS ÍNIGO DE LOYOLA: “Here, Ignatius of Loyola surrendered himself to God.” This is the Chapel of Conversion, and it is the first stop on “the Pilgrimage” for the Boston College Board of Regents, an advisory group composed of leaders among BC’s alumni, parents, and friends.

The Pilgrimage, which traces Ignatius’ 1522 journey from his birthplace in Loyola eastward across Spain en route to Jerusalem, is not new to Boston College—University leadership, Trustees, professors, and students have been traversing its 650-kilometer Spanish leg for almost a decade—but June 2018 marked the first excursion made by Regents.

Kathy ’83 and Mike Cote ’83, ’07, ’09, ’11, ’17, co-chairs of the Regents’ Committee on Leadership Development, reflect on their experience: “It’s the difference between talking about something, reading about something, and actually experiencing that something,” says Mike. “It changed my life at the core and had a profound impact on my understanding of Jesuit theology, my connection to Boston College, and my connection to God. To see where St. Ignatius was born, to see the chapel where he underwent his conversion, to see the cave in Manresa where he wrote The Spiritual Exercises—which I now carry with me on my travels—the reality hits you in a way you can’t imagine.”

Kathy recalls “walking through the holy house where St. Ignatius was taken after his injury; it’s a very rustic, old, simple place, where a person who has profoundly impacted the lives of millions of people through education was converted to having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When he was lying there recovering, he had no idea of the road ahead or what the destination was. That’s the
Day 3: Regents pose in Pamplona, Spain, with University Secretary and Director of the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies Casey Beaumier, S.J. (front row, far left); University President William P. Leahy, S.J., (second from left); and Haub Vice President for University Mission and Ministry Jack Butler, S.J., (second row, second from right).

takeaway for us as Regents. It’s not immediately clear how we alumni, parents, and friends on the Board of Regents will positively impact a dynamic university like Boston College, but by collectively working, bringing our faith and ideas to the table, something great is going to percolate out of it.”

The Pilgrimage was designed to instruct Regents in the origin of the Jesuit order through a spiritually and historically immersive initiation; a symbolic foundation of their regency. “The Pilgrimage taught me that if you are going to be a Regent, if you’re going to do it, you have to make a commitment,” says previous Regents’ Committee on Formation co-chair Mary Rather ’82. “Commitment to an ideal is what makes Boston College Boston College. It’s how students differentiate themselves, to be men and women for others and set the world aflame. It’s not just words on paper. It’s very serious, and I felt it throughout the entire trip.”

A Regent’s charter is trinitarian in nature. In their work as advisors, ambassadors, and benefactors, Regents must harness both vocational expertise and love for Boston College into tangible outcomes: events, programming, and direct investment into the most strategic University priorities. Each board member serves on advisory committees that devise strategies and recommendations for key thematic areas of the University such as financial aid, formation, global engagement, integrated science and society, and leadership development. True to the Ignatian way, the Regents have proven to be contemplatives in action.

Already, their recommendations have yielded actions that have enriched the BC community. Among the fruits of their labor is Timeout, an experience designed for BC alumni and parents modeled after the undergraduate retreat, Halftime. Like its inspiration, Timeout is an invitation to step back and engage in quiet contemplation. “Timeout was directly influenced by the reflection we practiced on the Pilgrimage,” says Mary’s husband, University Trustee and previous Regents’ Committee on Formation co-chair, Jon Rather ’82. “Formation really is the secret sauce of the Jesuits, and what makes BC distinctive from other universities. The committee was thrilled when BC followed our recommendation to pilot and repeat Timeout.”

Ignatius set course for Jerusalem on horseback. His destination was specific, but his path remained open to grace. Today, a neatly drafted line on a map presents that path as though it were somehow obvious, inevitable. But the Regents know better. Pilgrim, Board of Trustees vice chair, and Board of Regents chair, John Fish, P’13, ’18, avers, “Years from now, Boston College will reflect upon its stature as the premier Jesuit, Catholic university in the United States and identify the assembly of the Board of Regents as a most significant event leading to that achievement. Though the course remains to be charted, the board is poised to confidently embark into that unknown, fortified by a deep appreciation for our University’s heritage and potential for good in the world. For some of us, it started in a humble chapel in Spain.”

Commitment to an ideal is what makes Boston College Boston College.

MARY RATHER ’82, FORMER REGENTS’ COMMITTEE ON FORMATION CO-CHAIR

BY THE NUMBERS

98 REGENTS
15 STATES REPRESENTED
6 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED
106 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SUPPORTED WITH CHARITABLE GIFTS
20+ ENGAGEMENT EVENTS AND PROGRAMS HOSTED
WE ASKED JOE ’89 AND CHRIS POPOLO, P’20, ’23, AND JERE DOYLE ’87, P’15, ’21, THE POPOLO FAMILY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EDMUND H. SHEA JR. CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FOR THEIR TWO CENTS ON HOW GREAT IDEAS HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD, AND HOW THE SHEA CENTER HAS BECOME THE EDUCATIONAL STARSHIP EQUIPPING STUDENTS TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO ENTREPRENEUR HAS GONE BEFORE.
Entrepreneurship is what to you?

Joe Popolo—If you’re an entrepreneur, a true entrepreneur, you are cutting the bridge behind you. And you’re going forward in pursuit of that problem. If that doesn’t work, you move to the next one. You’re a risk taker—someone willing to live with the consequences. I don’t know if there are statistics on what percentage of entrepreneurs fail, but it’s got to be a large number.

Jere Doyle—I think entrepreneurship is irrational. Because the rational person would say, “This could never be done. No way.” So, you’re an optimist, Joe?

J.P.—Yes, I’ve been accused of being that before.

Is optimism, then, a prerequisite for success?

J.P.—Well, certainly to be successful as an entrepreneur you have to believe there’s a better way than the status quo. I don’t think you’d be successful as a pessimistic entrepreneur. To your earlier point, Jere, a rational person would say, “No, that’s too big a lift. I can go do something else.” I love a definition I heard many years ago: Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity with total disregard to current resources.

Joe, in an article published online on the Carroll School of Management website you note that one of your favorite quotes is “The reasonable man...

J.P.—Or woman.

...or woman, “...adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress relies on the unreasonable man.” Do you feel that progress necessarily casts aside ethics or some sort of moral imperative? Or is there a need to bring those two together?

J.P.—Well, I think the latter is clearly the case. That’s what makes Boston College unique in terms of its pursuit of entrepreneurship in the context of a Jesuit, Catholic university. BC understands that it’s not just about the transaction. That’s why I’m so excited to help support Jere’s work here at Boston College where a faith component is part of the entrepreneurship equation.

What are the strengths that Boston College brings to the higher-ed space and in particular the Shea Center for Entrepreneurship?

J.P.—BC is unique. It’s a great academic institution in one of the greatest cities in the world. And when you layer on the Jesuit, Catholic experience that permeates the University, it really makes it a very, very special place. As for the Shea Center, I think entrepreneurship—capitalism—without some sort of moral compass can be problematic. And I think that’s, again, why it’s so exciting for us to support Jere, because here entrepreneurship is discussed and taught in the context of “what does this mean for the whole person and for the people around me, and for the greater good?”

Chris Popolo—I’d like to add to that. With everything that is going on in higher ed today, not all universities are serving their students as well as they could be. We’re pleased to support Boston College because it attends to the whole student.

Jere, graduates are entering a job market where technologies and services are changing in the blink of an eye. How do you equip your students in the face of such impermanence?

J.D.—Well, I think what we’re trying to do is teach a mindset.

Among their many philanthropic pursuits, Joe and Chris Popolo have named the executive directorship of the Edmund H. Shea Jr. Center for Entrepreneurship. Says Chris, “Not all universities are serving their students as well as they could be. We’re pleased to support Boston College because it attends to the whole student.”
And the mindset is to be curious, the mindset is to take risks. And we’re teaching how to poke holes in places, and then read the data—be analytical. Of course, there’s the nuts and bolts of it: how to start a business; how to set it up legally; how to market and get a product out there; how to hire a team; how to raise money, financing for startups. But it starts with the mindset. I think that’s ultimately our biggest goal.

Joe, what is it about Boston College that makes it a priority in your giving?

J.P. —Chris would say that it’s my irrational love of this college [laughs]. My father got his MBA here. My grandfather, after whom we named the Edward Connelly Football Scholarship, was accepted to Boston College in the 1920s but was not able to attend because he had to go out and get a job to support his family. So BC has always been part of my life. And then, of course, I had a great experience here, and we’re continuing the involvement by having two kids here. BC is a pretty central part of our giving. We’ve been very blessed. It’s great to be able to turn around and give back to the University that does so much for students, many of whom have to have significant financial help to come here.

Joe and Chris, how has becoming BC parents—first with Katherine “Kit” ’20 and now with Joseph III “Buck” ’23—added dimension to your experience of BC?

J.P. —Well, it’s interesting, the University was on the cusp of greatness when I was here—it was the Flutie era. And then over a short period of time the University rose up very quickly and has gotten to be so beautiful—but it has continued to rise in every objective, every standard. I’m not sure I would get in today, it’s gotten so competitive. Kit has had a great experience here. She was a Jenks Scholar and also a D1 athlete on the crew team.

C.P. —The only data points I have from BC back in the day are from Joe and his friends, and they tended to lean to the social aspects [laughs], but I’ve been really pleased with Kit’s experience academically, socially, and extracurricularly.

Joe Popolo (left) and Jere Doyle came to Cadigan Alumni Center for a conversation and photo session in May 2019.

Could you say that the work the center does is born out of the University’s mission?

J.P. —Absolutely. If you think about how we’re going to make society better for the greatest number of people, I firmly believe that it’s through free markets and free people. I think the center perfectly complements the ultimate Jesuit mission, certainly, of being men and women for others. And that’s BC.

J.D. —Our mission at the Shea Center is not to have kids start companies—though some companies are started from the Shea Center, and that’s awesome. But most kids go through and don’t start companies. Many go work at startups. And that’s just as entrepreneurial.

She’s going to be a Portico leader next year. She really jumped in up to her neck and got involved as much as she could. And she was part of the reason why Buck decided to come here.

C.P. —The only data points I have from BC back in the day are from Joe and his friends, and they tended to lean to the social aspects [laughs], but I’ve been really pleased with Kit’s experience academically, socially, and extracurricularly.

I think entrepreneurship—capitalism—without some sort of moral compass can be problematic.

JOE POPOLO

Thank you, both.
Social work grapples with some of the most difficult issues imaginable—for example, Salem Professor in Global Practice Theresa Betancourt works with former African child soldiers trying to reenter their communities (see page 10 for more). How do you approach such complicated problems?

At BCSSW, we are fundamentally interested in improving the lives of the most vulnerable. This requires a nuanced understanding of very complex social challenges—and that understanding opens the pathway to designing better interventions that will alleviate these problems.

We also need to include the perspectives of individuals, families, and communities embedded in these problems to inform our understanding and the design of our interventions. For example, in my own work on energy and poverty, we start with examining the community and its needs. Then we look at the renewable energy solutions from engineering that are viable in the social, behavioral, livelihood, and resource conditions of that community.

Then we have to ensure that the intervention works in the context of lives people live. And that gets us to the cusp of another challenge: once you know that an intervention is right, how do you scale it for societal benefit? Therein lies the complexity and the art of intervening. Therein lies our mission.

You’ve said that tackling these difficult issues requires reaching outside the School of Social Work to engage with other disciplines. How does BCSSW partner with other areas of the University to do that?

Universities are set up along disciplines—disciplines bound us. But social problems do not come in neat packages. They are messy. Societal issues involve complex human behavior, and when you dig deep, we are forced to transcend disciplines that we have kept segregated in the university for centuries. If we focus only through our disciplinary lens on a problem, we might be overlooking an opportunity to find an innovative solution. Instead, the problem persists, and there is a minimal social impact.

I am arguing that new understandings and solutions to seemingly intractable social problems are located at the intersections of disciplines. Working across these disciplines is not easy. It requires respect and a commitment on the part of the university and faculty to engage in healthy debate when differences in disciplinary orientations arise. It takes courage to abandon insular thinking to educate and train the next generation to build better societies.

How do you see the Schiller Institute for Integrated Science and Society contributing to these efforts?

The opportunity for the School of Social Work to be a partner in the Schiller Institute is one of the reasons I came to BC in 2016. Through the institute, the University will have the resources and an opportunity to pursue transdisciplinary education and research to address complex societal challenges. The institute’s collaborative spaces, emphasis on team science, and problem-solving across disciplines with people and communities will bring us new and innovative solutions. We in the University will be relevant to affecting the human condition.

If we as universities are to matter for our societies, then we must develop knowledge that matters to the real world. This is the mission of the Schiller Institute: integrating different disciplines to improve societal well-being. Integrating the sciences without a focus on the societal impact is a cul-de-sac.

With the Schiller Institute as a force multiplier for collaboration with social work and other disciplines, Boston College is building the university of the future.
THROUGH THE SALEM PROFESSORSHIP IN GLOBAL PRACTICE, NAVYN SALEM AND HER HUSBAND, PAUL, ARE DETERMINED TO IGNITE GLOBAL SOCIAL CHANGE. THE INAUGURAL SALEM PROFESSOR, THERESA BETANCOURT, SHARES THEIR VISION: A DEEP BELIEF THAT CREATIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER. BETANCOURT IS TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF TRAUMATIZED FAMILIES AROUND THE WORLD—AND THE SALEMS’ GIFT WILL HELP EXTEND THAT VITAL WORK EVEN FURTHER.

The tale of a social scientist and a social entrepreneur is a tale that without anything else is one worthy of being told. Add the fact that these women of shared drive and purpose connected at the Heights, and you have a remarkable tale but one that is not unusual by BC standards since here there is a pull, a tide that sweeps people into the University, and then pushes them out into the world to deliver on this providence.

Betancourt came to BC in 2017 as the inaugural Salem Professor in Global Practice at the Boston College School of Social Work (BCSSW), a position endowed by Navyn Salem ’94, H’12, the founder and CEO of Edesia Nutrition, along with her husband, Paul, a private equity financier and chair of Edesia’s board. Resources provided by the professorship support Betancourt’s research. It was, says the school’s dean, Gautam...
Navyn Salem (center) explored the concept of social entrepreneurship after her first visit to her father’s homeland of Tanzania. From it, she founded Edesia, which today treats two million children a year suffering from malnutrition.

Yadama, “a dynamic match.”

“Navyn’s all about improving lives, particularly for vulnerable children—and not only doing something for just one child or a few, but figuring out solutions at scale. That’s Navyn; that’s also Theresa Betancourt, and that’s the philosophy I have for the BC School of Social Work,” says the dean.

Meeting for the first time in Yadama’s office, the two women recognized kindred spirits. “I quickly learned that we like to hang out in similar places,” reminisced Salem at the April 2018 event celebrating the inauguration of the Salem Professorship. “There are not many people in the world who can advise me on how best to get from the airport in Sierra Leone to the capital of Freetown or which ferry service is best to take.” Sierra Leone is a focal point for each of them. Betancourt has worked with former child soldiers since the end of Sierra Leone’s civil war in 2002; Salem, whose company is working—successfully—toward ending malnutrition, travels to the country frequently.

Betancourt investigates the effects of trauma on children, developing programs to help them heal from seemingly incomprehensible, irresolvable horrors. “I reached a point,” she says, “where I needed to go beyond collecting data on traumatized children and figure out a way to create change.”

Since 2002, Betancourt has directed the Research Program on Children and Adversity (RPCA), which hosts a pioneering long-term study of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone. Over the country’s brutal 11-year civil war, as many as 20,000 boys and girls, with an average age of 10, were abducted and forced into armed groups. They were frequently raped, forced to use alcohol and drugs, subjected to hard labor and violence, and forced to commit atrocities against their own families and communities.

Betancourt and her team set out to understand what had happened to these children’s lives in the aftermath of war. Their research identified a constellation of mental health challenges that made it difficult for these young people to pursue an education or hold a job and compromised their personal relationships. The team developed a youth readiness program to address these challenges, helping them regulate their emotions and develop coping skills. “We can’t undo those horrific, violent events that occurred in the lives of young people. But we can do things about the post-conflict environment,” says Betancourt.

Betancourt’s work in Sierra Leone has made an international impact. But its origins lie in a log cabin in the small Yupik community of Bethel, Alaska, deep in the tundra, where she grew up. “It’s not the Alaska you see in the tourist magazines, with big mountains and trees; it’s really isolated in the permafrost, no plumbing, no paved roads,” she explains. Her father had worked in Ethiopia during the early years of the Peace Corps. “He came back to Ohio and didn’t think teaching there sounded as exciting as making a difference and continuing that sort of social justice mission. So he was the science teacher, the math teacher, and the fire chief in Bethel,” she recalls. Her mother led an early infant learning program, flying to remote villages to work with families, many of whom were affected by fetal alcohol syndrome. “During my childhood, Bethel topped per capita rates of violence in...
the United States because of the toxic mix of alcohol, guns, and all the social problems you can imagine when people lose their culture and sense of grounding,” says Betancourt. It was, she says, the genesis of her desire to help communities that lacked resources and were under threat.

Betancourt explains that across cultures, concepts of emotions, illness, the self, and the body differ so significantly that definitions of normal and abnormal behavior are quite different. “A lot of times, we’ll see the assumption that Western tools and Western measures just need to be translated and foisted on a new setting. But I know from growing up in Bethel that that’s exactly the wrong approach to take.”

While Betancourt was learning to ride a snowmobile and speak the indigenous Yupik language, the young Salem was absorbing her mother’s Quaker faith and activism along with her immigrant father’s Muslim Indian heritage and stories of the Tanzanian village where he grew up. “My dad taught me about the real world, one without access to basic necessities like food, water, and health care; my mom taught me to stand up for what you believe in,” Salem recalls. “If you see social injustice, get up and do something about it. March, protest, speak up, take action, get arrested for your cause, whatever it takes. My mom would have us making anti-war posters with our Crayola marker sets when we were six years old, then throw us in a red wagon and off to the peace rally we would go.”

As a senior at BC, Salem found a new something to get up and do. Her roommates talked her into joining the Appalachia Volunteers Program. Initially bemused by the idea of spending spring break in West Virginia building houses with Habitat for Humanity (“I thought, why not Mexico or Fort Lauderdale?”), she was surprised to find she loved it. “It was freezing cold, we worked hard all day and slept in really uncomfortable bunk beds, and we had the best time of our lives. The feeling of collaboration in the collective mission to help others was so powerful. It never left me. Still to this day, I prefer to be working on behalf of those most vulnerable in uncomfortable places.”

That powerful experience primed her for her first trip to Tanzania. Salem’s father had grown up in Dar es Salaam, where his family had emigrated from India in the late 1800s. Soon after Salem’s graduation from BC, he took her and her brother to see his homeland. “I remember visiting the Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam,” she recalls. “And there, I witnessed something that has never left me. It was the sound of a mother’s crying. I listened to her scream in anguish upon learning that her child had died. I had wandered into this unknown land, completely unarmed and unprepared. I didn’t have any answers. I knew then that my job was to learn, train, and get ready for battle, to come back armed with solutions that would spread hope and that could change the world.”

She was determined to do something. But she wasn’t sure what. “My mind was spinning with so many ideas I couldn’t see straight.”

At last, she found her inspiration—though she had to fight for it. She wanted to visit a factory she’d read about, to the confusion of the nonprofit agency organizing the trip, which primarily took foreign visitors to schools, clinics, and the like. “They were all noble endeavors based on the all-too-familiar model of raising money and then providing aid,” explains Salem. Finally, she convinced the agency to let her tour the factory—and there it was, she says: “the most brilliant business model I had ever seen.”

“First, there was a line out the door; people were waiting for jobs. On the factory floor, I saw 3,000 women earning paychecks which would pay for shelter, medicine, food, education, and more for their families. I began to understand how important job creation was as a tool to tackle poverty.
"But there was more. They were making mosquito nets. So not only was this company contributing to economic development, but they were also creating a product that happened to solve a major global health problem—malaria. Wildly impressed, I thought, ‘what if I used these same principles and applied them to malnutrition?’"

Salem had already learned that malnutrition was killing five million children under the age of five every year—more than AIDS, TB, and malaria combined.

"Even more shocking than this horrifying statistic is that these deaths are completely preventable," says Salem, "100 percent preventable. These children simply need food and nutrition, a basic human right, needed by every child on planet Earth."

Just two years later, Salem founded Edesia Nutrition with the mission to treat and prevent malnutrition in the world’s most vulnerable populations. She partnered with a French company, Nutriset, which had developed a concentrated, easily digestible, protein-rich, shelf-stable supplement they called Plumpy’Nut. She established a factory in the state where she and Paul are raising their daughters, Rhode Island, which had the third-highest unemployment rate in the U.S. at the time.

Edesia has been saving lives for a decade now—nourishing more than nine million children to date in more than 50 countries. Betancourt points out the synergy between Edesia and her own work with youth facing extreme adversity. “Navyn’s delivering a fundamental component of children’s basic security needs and human rights. Child development is not a hierarchy. Children need to be safe from violence, they need food, shelter, and medical care; they need education and economic security; and they need a loving attachment figure. These elements are interdependent and interrelated. That’s why the Salem professorship was such an honor, to have someone who’s also worked on these topics support my work.”

Salem says she hadn’t anticipated “how much overlap there really was between the work we do at Edesia and Theresa’s RCPA. I am really thrilled about the partnership she has forged with the government of Rwanda and other collaborators such as the World Bank USAID to promote early childhood development.” Funded by a grant from the LEGO Foundation, this partnership will scale up Betancourt’s work on early childhood development and violence prevention in the poorest of poor Rwandan households. “It’s this sort of impact that we are all striving for in our work,” she adds.

Betancourt says BC is exactly the right place for her research; it’s no surprise that BC brought her together with Salem. “I really appreciate BC’s commitment to advancing the lives of the most vulnerable, the most stricken by poverty, war, crises of migration. That social justice orientation is very much the Jesuit ethos, and it’s what attracted me to the University,” she says. “Navyn, too, is morally oriented towards making an impact.”

Salem is looking forward to working more closely with Betancourt. “It’s been an amazing journey together,” she says. Thanks to their synergy harnessed through Boston College, the lives of innumerable children across the world will be the better for it.

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THE MAKING OF A SOCIAL WARRIOR

THERESA BETANCOURT, ScD, MA

APPOINTMENTS CURRENTLY HELD: The inaugural Salem Professor in Global Practice at the Boston College School of Social Work and director of the Research Program on Children and Adversity (RCPA).

FIELD OF STUDY: Global mental health, child development, mental health services research, and implementation science. Specifically, factors shaping processes of risk and resilience in children, youth, and families facing adversity.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF STUDY: Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Ethiopia, northern Uganda, India, and resettled refugees in the United States.

EARLY RECOLLECTION THAT HAS IN SOME WAY CONTRIBUTED TO THE WORK SHE DOES TODAY: “Bethel [Alaska] is the kind of place where pulling together really matters. There was one time during my childhood when the town power generator caught on fire. In the dead of winter, that’s life-threatening in negative 90 degrees Fahrenheit with the windchill factor. So those of us who had wood-burning stoves brought in people dependent on electric power for heat. My parents must have stuffed 30 people into our house, trying to keep warm.”

One of the reasons I came to work at this University was the dedication to social justice that is in the lifeblood of BC.

THERESA BETANCOURT
Robert “Bob” Winston ’60 lights up when he catches sight of two students working at the information desk of the McMullen Museum of Art. “Are you seniors?” he asks. “Do you have jobs?” It’s a month before graduation, and they’re finishing term papers and studying for finals—and yes, they tell him with mingled pride and relief, they’ve both accepted job offers. Winston congratulates and encourages them for a few more minutes before moving on.

Bob and his wife, Judy, are here to celebrate the newly established Robert L. and Judith T. Winston Directorship of the McMullen Museum of Art, the most recent in a long history of transformative gifts the couple have made to Boston College.

The Winstons’ philanthropy at BC is united by a single goal: to develop young men and women who will, as Bob Winston puts it, “make the right decision when no one’s looking.” Winston was a BC undergraduate when, inspired by both his ROTC experience and BC’s Jesuit ethos, he first embraced the code of ethics that has been his lifelong polestar. As he likes to say, “Bob Winston’s my name, ethical leadership is my aim.”

If you want to know about other people, learn what’s important to them—and that’s usually art.

Bob Winston

The Winstons are acutely concerned by what they see as a dangerously angry culture that has, according to Winston, “lost its moral compass.” They want to help the next generation reclaim public civility and personal integrity, to become the leaders the world needs.

To this end, the couple believe that art has a distinctive power to bridge societal differences, developing

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University benefactors Judith and Robert Winston visit the McMullen Museum of Art, which Provost and Dean of Faculties David Quigley calls “a true jewel of Boston College.”
empathetic men and women who value other people and perspectives—a philosophy articulated by Leo Tolstoy in his famous essay “What Is Art?,” in which he argued that art is “a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity.” The Winstons share Tolstoy’s vision, and that belief inspired them to support the McMullen Museum long before it was a museum.

Under the leadership of Winston Director and Professor of Art History Nancy Netzer, the McMullen has pursued a singular vision: encouraging interdisciplinary research and collaboration with scholars across the University and around the world. Critic Stephen Kinzer, writing in the New York Times, has called the McMullen a new kind of university museum mounting “innovative, multidisciplinary shows” that “reach far beyond traditional art history” to create political, historical, and cultural context.

“I admire her,” Bob Winston says, “because she demands excellence and achieves it. She’s a visionary leader.”

The couple’s support of the museum has included helping to establish the McMullen Ambassadors program, which hires students—including the two Bob Winston spoke with in the lobby—to serve as museum greeters, researchers, and collaborators on projects and initiatives that give them curatorial experience, which is rare at the undergraduate level. Netzer agrees with Winston that the museum can play an important role in developing future leaders.

“We share in the Winstons’ hope that if we present future generations of students with the best ideas and tools, those students will go on to put them in the service of a better future for all of us,” she says.

And as Bob Winston chats with a pair of students in the McMullen lobby, that is indeed his hope—that, like him, they have found their own personal lodestar in the ethos of the Heights. He imagines a future where young men and women like these do, in his words, “bring a little humanity to the world.” They are the next generation of leaders, and they give him hope.

Bob and Judy Winston have done so much to harness our University’s unique potential to be a leader in museum pedagogy, investigative practice, and presentation.

NANCY NETZER, ROBERT L. AND JUDITH T. WINSTON DIRECTOR OF THE McMULLEN MUSEUM OF ART

Today, the McMullen Museum has grown from one small gallery to a three-story center of research, curation, and collaboration in a renovated Renaissance Revival palazzo on BC’s Brighton campus, and close to a million visitors have enjoyed its remarkable offerings.

Paying tribute to the Winstons’ role in the museum’s growth, Netzer says, “Bob and Judy Winston have done so much to harness our University’s unique potential to be a leader in museum pedagogy, investigative practice, and presentation.” The Winstons, in turn, cite Netzer herself as their inspiration in endowing her position.

Above and right: Students enjoy events beyond the scheduled museum programming, such as Art After Dark, which occurs several times during the academic year and allows students to take in the exhibitions on display, socialize, and even perform.

BEACON

See which of the past McMullen exhibitions led Bob Winston to rethink what he knew about the world. Visit bc.edu/beacon
What is a legacy? In the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, Alexander answers this question by saying it’s “planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.” This year, the Shaw Society, which honors those who have sown seeds at Boston College through planned gifts, or what the industry calls legacy gifts, reached a landmark tally of 3,000 members.

“What more genuine thing can you do than offer a piece of your legacy?” asks Dave Griffith ’68, University Trustee and chair of the Shaw Society. “BC absolutely changed my life—the people I met, the new things I did.” Among those new things was earning a seat in the University Chorale, on which Dave reflects, “It bolstered my confidence and gave me my voice. We sang the most beautiful music; it was just unbelievable. To have had our three children—David ’00, Kathryn ’02, and Megan ’06—attend BC three decades later, I think I’m the luckiest guy on the planet. So because BC left such an impression on me and changed my life, my wife, Janet, and I always wanted to give back in many ways.”

And give back in many ways they have. The Griffiths’ philanthropy has bolstered student financial aid, BC athletics, and even Dave’s beloved University Chorale. Their charitable lead trust—a type of planned gift that generates revenue for the University during the donor’s lifetime—fueled the women’s ice hockey locker room renovations in 2017.

With Griffith’s leadership, the Shaw Society welcomed 1,285 new members during the Light the World campaign (2008–2016). Griffith also included BC in his own will. “I’m a planner. I can’t help it. It’s who I am,” says Griffith. “Life happens, so you’re always better off to do a little planning, and making a legacy gift is really easy, easy to do.”

Asked what he would say to those considering making a planned gift part of their philanthropy, Dave offered, “If you’re going to make a legacy gift, you want to do it for a place you know is going to be there in 100 years. When you give to BC, you know you’re helping preserve the ideal of a Jesuit, Catholic education for generations to come. You know that you’re giving it to one of the premier Catholic universities in the country.”

Learn how to join the Shaw Society at bc.edu/shaw
PETE’S PLACE

A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO BUILD A BASEBALL CENTER NAMED FOR ONE OF BC’S MOST INSPIRING STUDENT-ATHLETES.

THE FRATE TRAIN:
Julie Frates, wife of Peter Frates, dumps a bucket of ice water on her husband at Fenway Park while friends and family look on. It was at this moment when Frate’s impact on ALS awareness began.

made possible by the generosity of John Harrington ’57, MBA’66, H’10, P’82, ’89; the Yawkey Foundations; and other Boston College donors, the Pete Frates Center will mean different things to different people: a new era for the sports it serves or BC baseball’s entry into 21st-century Division I competition, capitalizing on a strong 2019 season. But for head baseball coach Mike Gambino, it’s about the man who made an indelible mark at the Heights and has become an icon around the world for his work raising funds and awareness for a disease often associated with the legendary Yankees first baseman Lou Gehrig.

Pete Frates ’07 was a star outfielder and team captain at BC. Just five years after his graduation, at the age of 27, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurodegenerative disease that is always fatal. Gambino, who has remained a close friend since coaching him at the Heights, vividly recalls the phone call when Frates shared the devastating news. It was a Friday, and Gambino was in Clemson for a game. He began to say he’d call Frates back. “And then as soon as I heard his voice I knew: this was a different phone call,” Gambino recalls.

That Monday morning, Frates and his father, John, were in Gambino’s office—already making a plan. He remembers, “Pete said, ‘Here’s what we’re doing. We’re not going to feel sorry for ourselves. We have a great opportunity here. There hasn’t been any progress made on this disease in years. That’s unacceptable.’”

As a player, Frates was known for his intense dedication and tireless work ethic. “He was the guy who showed up early and stayed late, every day,” recalls Gambino. “He willed
himself to be a good player.” But his lasting impact on his teammates came off the field.

Frates’ first priority was always his team. After his diagnosis, the ALS community immediately became his new priority, his new team. Ultimately, the dedication and determination Pete Frates exhibited on the baseball field would ignite a worldwide push for ALS.

On a sunny August day in 2014, Pete Frates sat in his wheelchair in the Fenway Park outfield while friends and family—the Frate Train, as they’ve dubbed themselves—filled a cooler with ice and water. His wife, Julie ’12, raised the pail and doused him thoroughly, and Pete became the latest participant in the already viral Ice Bucket Challenge for ALS.

Frates wasn’t the first to shiver for a cause. Earlier that year, several celebrities had engaged in similar fundraising stunts for a variety of causes. The “challenge” was to either donate $100 to charity, or film yourself dumping a bucket of ice water over your head and challenge others via social media.

Frates’ close friend and fellow ALS patient Pat Quinn took the challenge in June of that year. When he uploaded his video to Facebook, he tagged Pete Frates. Frates would later recall, “This is exactly what I was waiting for.”

Within days, Pete Frates and the Frate Train turned dumping freezing water over their heads into a fundraising juggernaut. Frates reached out to friends in the athletic community, including Boston Red Sox owner John Henry, the New England Patriots’ Julian Edelman and Tom Brady, and the Atlanta Falcons’ Matt Ryan ’07. They tagged other high-profile celebrities, and the challenge became the very definition of a social media sensation—incredibly, more than 17 million videos would eventually be uploaded. Legions of athletes and celebrities, including LeBron James, Steven Spielberg, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates, and even former president George W. Bush, took the challenge. The entire Red Sox, Patriots, and New York Jets teams got wet; so did a group of nuns in Dublin, Ireland.

By the time Pete went to Fenway, the Ice Bucket Challenge was just weeks old and had already raised more than $200 million, and with more than 2.5 million new donors contributing to the ALS Association. As Gambino points out, “It’s hard to remember that before Pete, most people had very little idea what ALS was. Now, because of the Ice Bucket Challenge—because of Pete—they know.” Nancy Frates ’80, Pete Frates’ mother, sums it up: “The Ice Bucket Challenge was the paradigm shift in a disease base that had been relatively status quo for 150 years.”

Appropriately, the Pete Frates Center will shift the paradigm for BC’s baseball and softball players. Soon, they will enjoy facilities essential to student-athlete development on and off the field, says Gambino. “Part of what makes a Jesuit education so important and so valuable is that we’re obsessed with the formation and development of our student-athletes,” he explains. It’s not only about the hitting tunnels, indoor turf field, and other training spaces, exciting as they are. The center will also include spaces for study, for relaxation, and for developing the team bond. “The clubhouse is so important,” says Gambino. “It’s where relationships are built, where good conversations, and sometimes hard conversations, are held.”

The building is a game-changer; its name an inspiration. “Not every kid is going to change the world like Pete, but they can, in their own way, live the way Pete has as a person of character and with a life of integrity,” says Gambino. Martin Jarmond, the William V. Campbell Director of Athletics, agrees, saying: “Pete embodies our Jesuit motto of ‘men and women for others’ better than anyone I know.” And like the place named in his honor, that’s a powerful influence.

Learn more about the Pete Frates Center at bc.edu/greaterheights

A HOME TO CALL THEIR OWN

The Pete Frates Center, a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to Boston College baseball and softball, will open in the summer of 2020, as phase II of the Harrington Athletics Village.

› 31,000-square-foot indoor facility
› Locker rooms for baseball and softball teams
› Seven hitting tunnels with retractable cages
› Indoor turf field for year-round practice
› Strength and conditioning space
› Sports medicine and training areas
› Hospitality area for donors and alumni

RENDERING OF THE NEW PETE FRATES CENTER IN HARRINGTON ATHLETICS VILLAGE
“There was the sense of a real community at BC, like people really cared about you. Dick Kelley (the late Richard Kelley ’87, MA’89, assistant athletics director for media relations) had a big impact on me. I respected and admired him a lot. He had an interest in my feelings not just about soccer or sports, but about life in general. He always asked what I wanted for the future. In a spiritual way, he guided me in the right direction.”

What lights the fire under a winning sports team? According to men’s soccer coach Ed Kelly, P’06, ’07, ’10, it isn’t the coach’s emphasis on strategies or tactics. It’s not even the native talent of the players. It’s what happens in the locker room: the bond among the players, the mentorship of team leaders, the work ethic that drives the team.

When Kelly arrived at BC 32 years ago, the soccer program was struggling. Just two years later, his team was the Big East champion, the first of 13 NCAA tournament appearances.

This past spring, Kelly pulled off another electrifying win. “It was time—well past time,” he says wryly—to update the men’s soccer locker rooms. “They were far from a collegiate standard,” he admits. Kelly had a vision: give players the facilities they need, and inspire them by honoring the rich history of the program.

So he encouraged soccer alumni to support the renovation, recognizing their generosity by naming lockers for them. “I wanted to be able to point around the room and show recruits and team members the great players who came before them,” he explains.

Even for a coach used to winning, the effort was a stunning success. Within three weeks, more than 90 past players fully funded the new locker rooms that were completed just in time for the 2019 season. Many of them had played for Kelly—but not all. Kelly was amazed to be contacted by members of BC’s very first soccer team, a club team formed in 1967. “There are no archives, no records from that time,” he says. “I didn’t even know BC had a soccer team then.”

Richard Quinn ’67 says they certainly did, and he has very fond memories of playing on it. “I was so glad to help out the kids playing today,” he says. “I’m very proud of how far Eagles soccer has come.”

Former BC captain Alejandro Bedoya ’09, now captain of Major League Soccer’s Philadelphia Union, remembers his own days in the locker room at Conte Forum as formative. He still maintains strong relationships with many former teammates. “Locker room culture is a very big thing; it’s where you spend the most time,” he says. “The coach is at the helm, but he’s relying on guys like me, captains or other experienced players, to create those intimate moments and build a team family.”
BEACON+ is the online complement to Beacon: Signal Achievements in Advancing Boston College. The content on this website is drawn from the stories found in the print version but is original unto itself, offering stories within the stories. New interviews, fresh video components, image galleries, and podcasts will provide a more complete picture of the many donors and their contributions to Boston College through these different mediums on one website. BEACON+ will be a new platform to showcase these signal achievements in advancing Boston College.

Visit bc.edu/beacon to view this immersive experience, starting with all-access red carpet and behind-the-scenes looks at Pops on the Heights: The Barbara and Jim Cleary Scholarship Gala, now in its 27th year.