



# The York University Magazine

Club Monaco, Joe Fresh, Staples:  
Joe Mimran's design for living

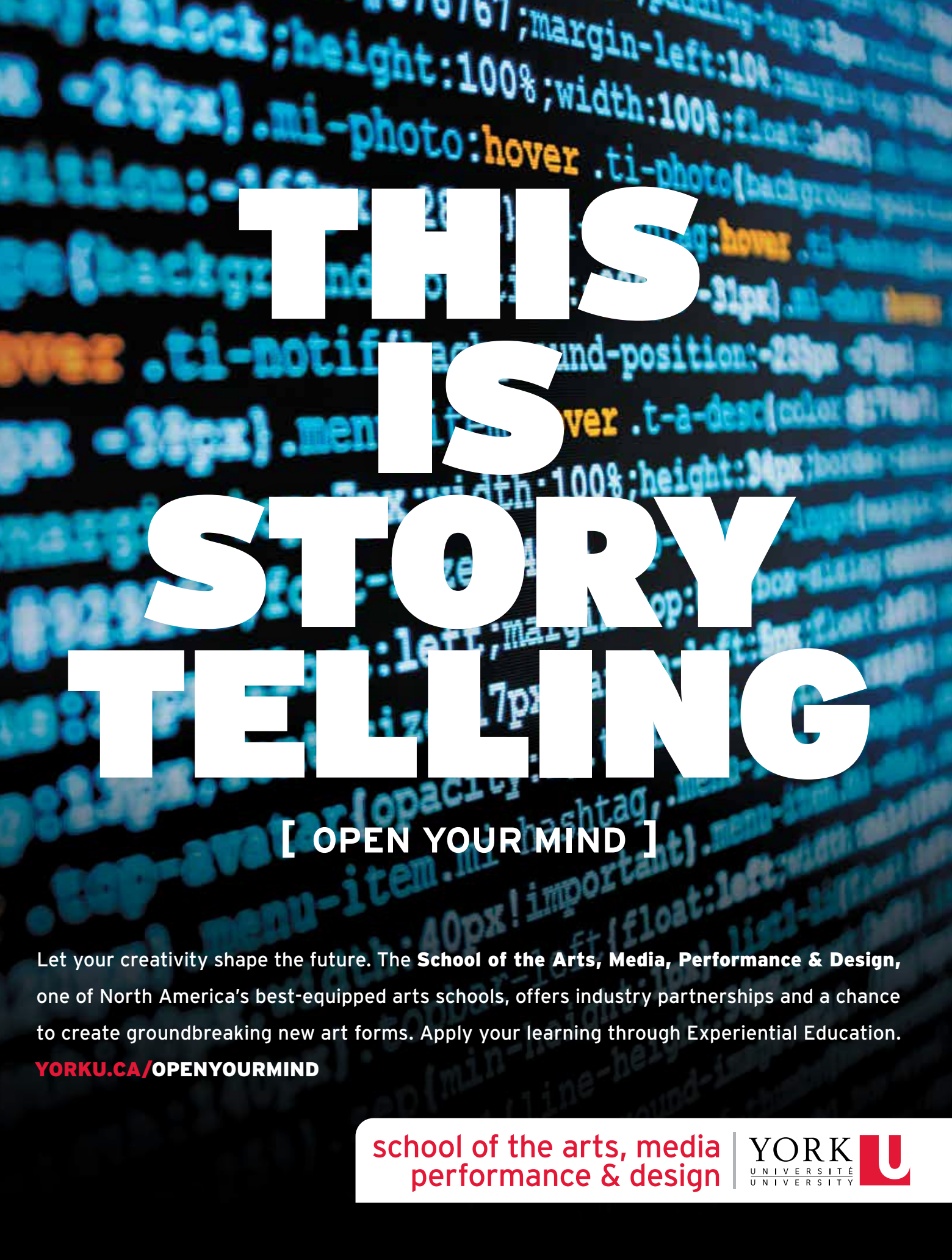
# In Style

Winter 2020

# PLUS

Measuring the Proton  
Last Dance  
Philosophy in Action





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**The  
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Natasha Henry photographed by Sofie Kirk



## THE PRESIDENT



**RHONDA L. LENTON**  
PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

**MANY OF YOU** have heard me talk about the four pillars that underpin York's vision to offer a broad demographic of students access to a high-quality, research-intensive university committed to the public good. Those pillars are access, connectedness, excellence and impact. When I talk about connectedness, I am referring not only to how members of the York community connect with each other and how our students connect with their studies, but also to the need for cross-sector collaboration to tackle the grand challenges we face locally and internationally.

Climate change is one of those challenges – arguably the most serious threat facing humankind. In June, the Parliament of Canada passed a motion declaring a climate emergency. In September, tens of thousands of Canadians participated in the Climate Strike, and in October, courageous activist Greta Thunberg toured the country with her urgent call to action. While climate change has been on the public agenda for many years now, the past year has seen this issue take a central place in the minds of citizens around the world.

The complexity of the problem means that no single group – not governments, NGOs, activists, businesses nor universities – can hope to tackle it alone. We need to work together across sectors and across borders to develop the innovative ideas, policies and technologies required to address the climate emergency. I firmly believe that universities have a central role to play as hubs for this kind of multi-sector collaboration, and I am proud that York University is embracing our responsibility to be a driver for change.

Our commitment to building a more sustainable world begins right here on campus. For the seventh straight year, York has been ranked among Canada's Greenest Employers. As part of our sustainability strategy, we have reduced annual electrical consumption by nearly 35 million kilowatt-hours and recycled almost 4 million kilograms of waste. We have recently opened two new world-leading sustainable buildings on campus, the Second Student Centre and the Rob and Cheryl McEwen Graduate Study and Research Building. Our Faculty of Environmental Studies is now a key data hub for the Global Footprint Network, an international initiative that seeks to measure and monitor our impact on the natural world. York has also just launched the President's Sustainability Innovation Fund, which provides financial support to students, staff and faculty for sustainability projects on campus.

Everyone in the York community should be proud of these achievements. But there is much more work to be done. As part of our 2019-20 key priorities, I have asked Vice President of Finance and Administration Carol McAulay to develop aggressive carbon-reduction targets for the University through a consultative and collaborative process with the entire community. When it comes to reducing our carbon footprint, I know York can lead by example.

Beyond campus, York will continue to form new partnerships with industry, policymakers and communities as we work to build a more sustainable world. The exciting thing about forging new connections is that we also directly benefit students while developing innovative solutions to urgent social problems. Through experiential and work-integrated learning – where students are partnered with employers and community groups to apply their skills and gain practical experience – we prepare our graduates to thrive in the global knowledge economy and to be the future leaders and problem-solvers our society needs.

The challenge before us is vast. Together with our partners around the world, the York community of students, faculty, staff and alumni is facing the climate emergency head-on.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD

## EDITOR'S NOTES



philosopher Eric Meslin, whose examination of ethical issues relating to human life, biology and the environment is informed by a balanced point of view.

To leap means to bound forward, something the Toronto Raptors did when they hired Drake as their global ambassador on the way to becoming the reigning NBA champions – the focus of our sports management story. Last (but far from least) is our cover feature article on Canadian fashion and design entrepreneur Joe Mimran, a proud York alum who has built a career jumping from project to project with inimitable style. You can bet this local legend – the force behind Club Monaco, Joe Fresh and the Staples rebrand – isn't complaining about having an extra calendar day this year. Knowing him, he'll turn it into something beautiful. May you be inspired to do the same.

– DEIRDRE KELLY

### Great Leap Forward

**YOU CAN REGARD A LEAP YEAR** in one of two ways: as an extra day spent slogging away at work, or as another 24 hours to use your monthly transit pass with no additional charge – a glass-half-full situation. A leap year synchronizes the calendar with Earth's journey around the sun. Our planet doesn't revolve once every 365 days; it travels a quarter of a day more – delays that, if ignored, can add up over centuries, creating a world out of whack with the cosmos.

That's what happened after Egyptian astronomers proposed a fixed 364-day calendar during the reign of Ptolemy II. Over time, that calendar fell out of step with the changing seasons, prompting Julius Caesar in the Roman era and Pope Gregory XIII in the 16th century to fix the disparity with the addition of a leap day every four years. A gross simplification, but it shows how the leap day isn't just some random creation. As a new day born of knowledge and calculated insights, it puts us back into the flow of things. A world of natural rhythms.

The idea of keeping pace with the times runs through this issue. Inside are stories on protons, waste reduction and early-stage drug development, among other groundbreaking research projects at York University. Alumni profiles include dancer and choreographer Christopher House – making a leap of his own as outgoing artistic director of Toronto Dance Theatre – and

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### ON THE COVER



Joe Mimran  
 photographed  
 by Mike Ford



# View

OUTLOOK & IDEAS

# Quick Relief

*York fast-tracks drug research*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS ROBINSON

**A MAJOR GRANT** from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada will boost early-stage drug development research at York University's Faculty of Science, allowing for new pharmaceuticals to be brought to market faster than before.

The \$900,000 endowment will enable Department of Chemistry professors Ryan Hili, York Research Chair in Molecular Evolution, and Sergey Krylov, York Research Chair in Bioanalytical Chemistry, to advance their interdisciplinary research into new technologies, facilitating faster routes for chemical testing.

Pre-clinical stages of drug development require many thousands of validated hits, chemical compounds which are confirmed to bind to a therapeutic target (usually a protein). The technologies in development at York will facilitate fast and reliable delivery of a large number of validated hits for later-stage testing.

Developed in collaboration with pharmaceutical companies Alphora Research and GlaxoSmithKline Canada and the instrumentation development company SCIEX, the new technologies use algorithmization and robust control methods to support the automation of key processes in the early stages of drug development.

"The more validated hits we have at the very beginning," says Krylov, "the higher the chance the drug-development campaign will be successful."

Commercialization through future licensing agreements is expected to provide the supporting companies and others with a faster entry point into the multi-phase drug-testing process.

"Automated identification of validated hits will save pharmaceutical companies time and money, leading to faster development of more affordable drugs," Krylov says. ●

## HOW BIG IS A PROTON?

*York scientists solve a subatomic mystery*

**ONE OF THREE PARTICLES THAT MAKE UP** all atoms, the tiny positively charged proton has recently been given a precise measurement by researchers at York University's Faculty of Science.

Their breakthrough study, published in *Science*, finds the proton to have a radius of only 0.833 femtometres, a measurement smaller than a trillionth of a millimetre and about five per cent smaller than the official value given more than a decade ago based on older measurements.

The radius appeared to have a different size when measured with electrons, as opposed to muons, the electron's heavier cousin. This unexpected difference, first noted by physicists a decade ago, has been referred to as the "proton radius puzzle." Following a long process of experimentation, the York researchers have now been able to resolve it.

"After eight years of working on this experiment, we are pleased to record such a high-precision measurement, which solves the elusive proton radius puzzle," says Distinguished Research Professor Eric Hessels, Department of Physics & Astronomy, the internationally recognized physicist and expert in atomic physics who led the York University study. "The level of precision required to determine the proton size made this the most difficult measurement our laboratory has ever attempted." The result has far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the laws of physics, such as the theory of quantum electrodynamics, which describes how light and matter interact. ●



# One Too Many

*Human bondage in Upper Canada*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOFIE KIRK

**T**HE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, the covert network of escape routes that brought at least 30,000 fugitive slaves from the American South into Canada, has long been a point of national pride. Canadians like the idea that the former British colony served as a terminus for freedom fighters fleeing persecution south of the border during the first half of the 19th century.

It provides us with a sense of moral superiority over Americans – a status many Canadian history books, in their retelling of the Underground Railroad story, take pains to emphasize.

But while Canada did, once upon a time, provide a haven to African-American freedom-seekers, it shouldn't feel smug about it.

The former British colony did its own share of enslaving, argues Natasha Henry (BA '99, BEd '99, MEd '16), a York University PhD student in the Department of History who is studying the subjugation of Black people in Upper Canada as part of her doctoral thesis.

In the 1960s, a comprehensive study was done on slavery in Lower Canada, but nothing similar has been undertaken for Upper Canada.

Henry's research reveals that the enslavement of Black people continued for approximately 200 years in Canada until the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 eradicated the practice across the British Empire the following year. "That fact isn't well-known," she says.

"Unfortunately, even in 2020, there are many people who still are not aware of the history of the enslavement of Black people here in Ontario. My interest lies in trying to ensure that more people are aware of it, to understand our very own Canadian slave past and to recognize and honour those experiences that have been silenced and forgotten for a very long time."

The first enslaved Black people in Canada came after

the founding of New France on the shores of the Saint Lawrence River early in the 17th century.

Gradually, slavery increased in other parts of Canada, particularly between the years 1775 and 1783. That is when scores of American colonists loyal to the British during the American Revolution fled with their human property across the border, settling in the Maritime provinces, as well as Lower and Upper Canada, as Quebec and Ontario, respectively, were then known.

Most enslaved Black people were brought to the New World and forced to work on agricultural plantations, something that Canada's harsh winters and shorter growing seasons could not sustain. Consequently, slaves were far less numerous in Canada than in the much warmer West Indies, Latin America and United States.

There were 3.9 million slaves south of the border, according to 1860 census figures. In comparison, only 500 enslaved Black people were in Upper Canada at any given time, says one account Henry studied for her research. But for the scholar, who has entitled her dissertation *One Too Many*, that hardly seems the point.

"I am trying to disrupt the idea that since the numbers overall were small, slavery was insignificant," she says.

In addition to Ontario archival records, Henry is also looking at diaries, ledger books and personal correspondence as part of her ongoing research to uncover real-life names and narratives that might help to illuminate the experience of enslaved Black people on an individual level.

The eventual goal is to compile these human stories and any new information she discovers into a digital database to help make the history of enslaved Black people in Canada accessible to all.

"I want to take this academic research beyond these walls, bring it into schools and out into the open," Henry says. "I want young people to be engaged in our history, even the history we sometimes don't want to acknowledge." ●





*Canadian retail guru  
Joe Mimran  
stands out from the crowd  
in more (stylish) ways  
than one*

**BY DEIRDRE KELLY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD**



# No Average Joe



**IS JOE MIMRAN (BA '74)  
THE BUSIEST  
ENTREPRENEUR  
IN CANADA?**

The celebrated York grad is not just on the go – he's firing on all cylinders, directing both his own private equity investment firm and a product development and design company that bears his instantly recognizable name.

In his spare time, he sits on several boards in an advisory capacity, or creates new product

for the revamped Staples Working and Learning Company or Tilley Endurables, the Canadian travel-wear brand he recently pulled back from the brink of insolvency.

Mimran does it all looking like he just stepped off a yacht moored in the Mediterranean: a tailored Italian wool seersucker blazer, custom-made white shirt, stretch white trousers, a large gold Rolex and large, dark designer glasses on an amiable suntanned face haloed by brilliantined silver hair worn long at the collar like a rock star's.

**M**IMRAN WORKS IN FASHION and knows all about the power of a well-groomed image. But it's not a put-on. When you meet him in person, he's as nice as he appears – looking you in the eye, easily answering questions, making you feel not like you have intruded on his busy day but like you have somehow enhanced it – which is a real knack. “I love to see people succeed,” he says, “and I love to have fun when I work and to enjoy myself when I work, and I love being around creative people. I come from a rough background and can be tough, but I'd rather treat others in a very beautiful way.”

Joe Fresh, the affordable clothing brand Canadian super-market chain Loblaws named for him, later taking it around the world, easily represents his approachability. His runway shows at Toronto Fashion Week were always standing-room-only affairs, studded with celebrities in the front row and on the catwalk. Mimran made fast fashion both chic and desirable when he served as the brand's creative director from 2006 to 2014. He just as quickly took responsibility for any shortcomings when Bangladeshi factories where Joe Fresh product was made imploded in 2013, killing more than 1,000 people. Other fashion brands that also had ties to the Rana Plaza disaster tended to look the other way, heightening Mimran's fundamental decency by comparison. JOE FRESH DOES THE RIGHT THING read a headline from the day, detailing not just the remorse but also the steps taken by the company, including monetary compensation to ensure that Bangladesh's manufacturing sector, an important source of income for local labourers, develops in accordance with strict safety protocols.

Post-Joe Fresh, Mimran's nice-guy status swelled when, starting in 2015 and continuing for three seasons, he took a star turn on the popular Canadian reality television show

*Dragons' Den*. He hardly ever breathed fire, however. He rarely met a new idea he didn't like. “I came across as a softie,” he says. “I would relate to the people who could see something that wasn't obvious and turn it into a business opportunity, giving it room to gestate. I am empathetic to the passion of young entrepreneurs.”

Mimran comes by that feeling naturally. Born in Morocco in 1952, he came to Canada from Casablanca at age four with his older brother Saul and his parents, Eli and Esther Mimran. Dad worked in distribution and mom, a couturier in the old country, as a maker of made-to-measure clothes for women in the family's adopted city of Toronto. Both were endowed with an entrepreneurial spirit that their children absorbed while living on the edges of Forest Hill, one of Toronto's wealthiest neighbourhoods. From the get-go, the Mimrans stood out. They were penniless, but everyone in that tight-knit family had drive and determination in addition to oodles of style, the result of growing up in a small two-bedroom apartment littered with sewing needles and bolts of fine fabrics. “I had a houndstooth suit at the age of 12,” Mimran says. “I was into fashion for sure.”

But he didn't have money and relied on his mother to help him cut a figure. It didn't take long for that dependency to chafe and ultimately motivate him to work hard to get what he wanted out of life. And what he wanted was bigger than the family's cramped living quarters. “I remember sitting around the kitchen table watching how my parents struggled,” Mimran says. “I became a business guy because I always knew not to be poor.” Going to Forest Hill Collegiate, known as a rich kids' public school with a tough academic curriculum, “gave me the fire as well,” he adds. “I shared a bedroom with my brother, and it was also our den. It forced me to move out early as a young man and choose a business profession tied to fashion, a marriage of my two loves.”

## I had a houndstooth suit at the age of 12. I was into fashion.

If he wanted to sell clothes for people to wear, Mimran thought he had better first figure out what makes people tick and so, in 1970, he enrolled at York University. Four years later, he graduated with a sociology degree studded with other courses, mostly in the arts. His classes took place at the Keele Campus, then at the northernmost reaches of the city. Mimran usually drove up from downtown and remembers that the commute was terrible and the parking even worse. But once he got to the University, he uncovered a treasure trove of intellectual people and activity that mightily stimulated him. Every success he has had over the years, from launching Club Monaco and the Alfred Sung brand of clothing and fragrances in the 1980s to the progressive medicinal cannabis companies he backs today, can be traced back to the mind-expanding time he spent at York, Mimran says.

“I took art history, which exposed me to the arts, and I took Japanese cinema, which the prof insisted on showing without subtitles, wanting us just to watch for their artistic nature and not their stories. I also took a course called Parables of Reality, which talked about futurism – something extremely relevant to what I do today – and I still go back to it in my mind for insights about history and culture and how the world functions.” He also read literature at York, where he was fortunate to have acclaimed Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood as one of his TAs. Author and film scholar Murray Pomerance taught him creative writing and much more. “He was a real brain and he helped challenge me,” Mimran recalls. “He said I had this ability to concentrate on what really mattered, that I had a laser-focused perspective. It was a skill I didn't really know I had at the time. But he brought it out. I am grateful to him to this day.”

Reached in Toronto, Pomerance, now retired, says Mimran left an indelible impression. “He remembers the details, but

I remember Joe – inquisitive, a hungry open-eyed readiness to learn just about anything from any angle, just a kind of hunger that was really rare. And charming. Of course, Joe always is and always was charming,” Pomerance elaborates. “It would be a lie to say I remember any of the details of the interaction because, you know, I've had thousands of students since. But Joe being who he is, we had a very nice time together.”

Smart, sociable and stylish – an almost perfect combination of God-given attributes necessary to make it in life. But Mimran was not taking any chances. After studying the arts at York – and briefly opening a Yorkville art gallery while he was still a student at the University, his first entrepreneurial venture – Mimran told himself that if he were to succeed in business, as he'd promised himself, he'd have to develop a skill set. That goal compelled him to return to university to study accountancy. He had married young – to first wife Sharon Mimran, today a celebrated interior designer – and before too long had fathered three children. He needed to put food on the table and so took a desk job, working for Coopers & Lybrand. It wasn't as boring as it sounds. Mimran has always had a gift for numbers. He liked the work. He found it almost fulfilling. But his creative side was just as dominant. He soon found a way to let his left brain and his right live in harmony. He joined his family's fashion business.

Ms. Originals opened on Richmond Street, near Spadina Avenue, at the heart of Toronto's *schmatte* trade, in 1977. The principals were Mimran, his brother Saul and their mother, Esther, whose sewing expertise had become so renowned that she needed bigger digs to cater to an expanding clientele. The idea was to make dresses. But Joe had a better idea. He suggested that the family business focus on power suits for the new class of working women who were just





## **It's not frivolous. Fashion moments are just bigger societal moments made visible.**

then entering the marketplace in droves, reaping the fruits of the 1960s feminist movement. An old-time dressmaker employed at the factory thought Mimran was out of his mind and told him so. “What do you know from tailoring?” he said not long before being shown the door. Mimran had trusted his instincts and would be proved right after Ms. Originals sales of pants for women went through the roof. “It’s all sociology at the end of the day,” he says, making a direct connection between what he learned at York and his ability to connect with consumers. “Fashion is a reflection of what is happening in society. It’s not frivolous. There’s a real purpose to it. Fashion moments are just bigger societal moments made visible.”

If that’s his guiding principle, it has served Mimran well over the years. “There are few in the global landscape that understand true style collaborations. Joe Mimran is very much one of them,” says Roger Gingerich, regional director of Fashion Group International Toronto. “Whether it’s an apparel collection for a major grocery chain or putting his stylish eye on office products, Joe is brilliant at understanding the consumer, the ultimate end user.”

After ensuring that women wore the pants in the family, he and his brother moved on to create Club Monaco, one of the world’s first “vertical integration” retail concepts, selling everything from white shirts to patterned throws and sleek chaises longues under the brand’s Caban lifestyle moniker. The first store opened on Queen Street West in the mid-1980s, just as that now-hip stretch of Toronto was finding its groove. The Mimrans were forerunners. Within a few years, they had a 69-store chain with 56 locations in Canada and 13 in the U.S. Ralph Lauren took notice of what the Mimrans were doing north of the border and, in 1999, shelled out an estimated US\$53 million to buy

the business and operate it under the aegis of the Polo Ralph Lauren label. Joe was contracted to continue to work for the company as president and CEO. But it was the first time he’d had to work for anyone but himself since his accountancy days, and it didn’t sit right with him. The following year he was out – free to reinvent himself yet again.

He remarried around this time to Kimberley Newport-Mimran, a former Caban retail director whose triumphant Pink Tartan women’s ready-to-wear label – another Canadian fashion success story – he helped launch in 2002. Today, the couple has a teenaged daughter and a lavish lifestyle with properties in Toronto, New York City and Palm Beach, Fla.

They work hard for the money, Staples being a recent case in point. Mimran has spent the past year helping the former office warehouse company become a lifestyle hub for stylish product designed for the fluid way people now live and work. “Integrity of design. It’s not a price-point issue. It is a mental fortitude issue. It is a philosophy,” he says. “It’s certainly important to me, and certainly important to other people. I think when you look at companies that are winning today, they are design-driven companies. Staples wants to be part of the community, they want you to have a place to find solutions, not just stuff. And I think they’re transforming themselves in a really interesting way.”

Change continues to shape Mimran and keep him, well, fresh. He remains open to new ideas, which is perhaps one reason he looks so good. Age can’t wither him. He is just too busy to slow down – a self-made man made good. “It’s always exciting when you can look at a project and say, what can I bring that’s new? What can I bring that’s relevant to the consumer today? What input can I bring to give added value?” he says. “These are the things you look at, as they are the things that get you going.” ●





BY DEIRDRE KELLY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD AND MCKENZIE JAMES

*Thinking outside the blue box*

# TRASH



**R**ECYCLING makes people feel good about themselves. It lets them think they are truly involved in helping the environment. But what if they aren't? What if the plastic they self-righteously toss into the blue bin every week is creating even more of a toxic mess than if they had just dropped it into the trash? Why is Canada's garbage problem growing bigger, not smaller, in the face of all this do-good effort? What if recycling itself is a system that isn't really working as it should? These are some of the questions that keep Calvin Lakhan (MES '10) awake at night.

A research scientist at York University, Lakhan makes a living studying waste and the economic, political, social and psychological detritus that seems to go along with it. He doesn't need Facebook images of single-use plastics clogging the world's oceans and waterways to tell him that our recycling programs are broken, slowly tipping the Earth ever more precipitously toward the very environmental disaster they were meant to address.

Rising costs and a dwindling world market for recyclables in the wake of China and Southeast Asian countries closing their borders to an ever-growing influx of foreign trash have left many a Canadian city struggling to manage growing mountains of garbage, which once sold for profit but now cannot even be given away. Prince Edward Island has resorted to burning its plastic bags in response to the overflow, while municipalities across Alberta are refusing to take in certain plastics that now go straight to landfill.

"We know it's not working," says Cedric de Jager, spokesperson for the Recycling Council of Ontario. "I think we need to rethink policy at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government, and we need to overhaul how we treat waste."

Enter Lakhan, whose research interests and expertise are focused on evaluating the efficacy of municipal recycling initiatives and identifying the determinants of consumer recycling behaviour. When citizens talk about the three Rs – reduce, reuse, recycle – the emphasis, he says, should be on reduce, not recycle, as has recently been the case. It's an imperative that shouldn't be ignored.

A *Forbes* report estimates that, globally, humans buy a million plastic water bottles a minute, with a projected trillion plastic

bottles expected to clog our ecosystems by 2020. The bottles are recyclable. But only 91 per cent of them are recycled, because there's just too many single-use plastics to process.

"The world doesn't need to be recycling more materials. Add more plastics to the blue bin? A terrible idea," Lakhan says, the passion in his voice reverberating off the bare walls of his office at the Faculty of Environmental Studies. "We have to rewrite the narrative of what it means to be sustainable. The focus needs to be not on recycling targets but on outcomes."

This is trash talk worth listening to, mainly because Lakhan isn't spewing raw sentiment. As the founder of Canada's largest garbage research initiative, the Waste Wiki project at York University, he is an experienced garbage man, a repository of often unpleasant truths.

"Cal has been an incredible addition to our research team," says Mark Winfield, a professor in the Department of Environmental Studies and a sustainable energy expert who helps to guide Lakhan's scholarly work. "He brings a strong evidence-based approach to often highly politicized debates about recycling."

One of the points Lakhan wants to drive home is that not all recycling is created equal; it's often uneconomical, not to mention unwanted, at municipal processing plants. The cost of recycling newsprint versus the cost of recycling a plastic water bottle? Radically different.

Even the so-called small things add up. A lowly plastic grocery bag, for instance, costs \$2,500 a tonne to recycle. Polystyrene, used to make food containers, also costs a few thousands a tonne to recycle. A lot of the items we put in our blue box are just not economically viable when it comes to recycling, Lakhan says.

"Consumers might not care about the specifics. But the reason why they matter is that, in Ontario, the cost of the recycling program has doubled since 2004 – from \$150 million to \$300 million today – but the recycling rate has gone up by only four per cent, and it's been trending downward for several years, since 2015. The system, at present, isn't working."

Waste, he points out, is a \$300-million-a-year problem in Ontario alone. Some of it stems from manufacturers that use different types of materials to make the same product – a

**THE WORLD DOESN'T NEED TO BE RECYCLING MORE MATERIALS.  
ADD MORE PLASTICS TO THE BLUE BIN?  
A TERRIBLE IDEA.**

PORTRAIT BY MCKENZIE JAMES



IT GOES TO SHOW YOU HOW MUCH GARBAGE IS A CULTURAL ISSUE.  
NOT EVERYONE LOOKS AT GARBAGE THE SAME WAY.



disposable coffee cup made of paper with a plastic lining, for instance – rendering them difficult and expensive to recycle. Designing more eco-friendly packaging is key to helping solve the world’s mounting garbage problem.

A possible alternative: instead of throwing more junk into the maw of the recycling beast, think of how to reduce waste in the first place.

It’s a position Lakhan has been developing with the Waste Wiki project’s industry stakeholders, who have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to support his research into how to fix the province’s uncontested recycling problem.

They include Clorox Canada and Club Coffee, maker of plant-based, compostable single-serve coffee pods for brand partners like Melitta Canada and McCafé, the coffee brand owned by the McDonald’s fast-food chain.

Last year, Club Coffee started working with Lakhan to conduct research on disposable plastic coffee pods, an estimated 20 billion of which end up in North American landfills each year. The objective is to have a full-brand compostable ecosystem in place by 2020.

“Dr. Lakhan brings an incisive and evidence-driven approach to examining environmental issues,” says Club Coffee CEO John Pigott. “He and his team are generating the kind of credible, fact-based insights that business and government take seriously because they cut through the noise and help us all understand the best paths to the environmental results we all want.”

As Canada’s reigning waste wizard, Lakhan oversees the country’s ever-growing piles of garbage like a man possessed. Which he is, in a way. A competitive bodybuilder as well as a cutting-edge scholar, Lakhan has a muscled physique covered with tattoos (his parents allowed him to get one for every A he took at school), the most striking of which has to be the triangular universal recycling symbol imprinted on the inside of his meaty forearms. The symbol is cut into two parts and is visible only when Lakhan squeezes his flexor muscles. It’s an impressive feat. Not that everyone will appreciate it.

“Studies show that more than 60 per cent of first-generation Canadians don’t know what the recycling symbol means,” Lakhan says. “It goes to show you how much garbage is a cultural issue. Not everyone looks at garbage the same way.”

His strong interest in environmental issues was developed at a young age. His late father, a native of Guyana, was a professor of environmental studies at the University of Windsor, located in the Canadian border city where Lakhan was raised. But though his dad taught courses about the environment, he never dealt with his own garbage in what today might be considered an environmentally conscious way.

“He never recycled in his whole life,” says Lakhan, relishing the irony. “Back home in Guyana, we incinerate all our garbage. We didn’t practise recycling because there was no historical precedent. It’s why understanding our environmental differences is necessary before we can dispose of our garbage in a socially responsible way.”

Partly, that involves looking closely at how societies function in real time. What are their customs? Their habits? Their national narratives vis-à-vis trash? Canada proudly enjoys a reputation as a clean country. But the truth is, Canada is one of the world’s biggest polluters.

Canadians can avoid thinking of themselves that way by turning a blind eye to all the mess we make as a major consumption-driven nation. Our mountains of garbage are not readily visible because, for decades now, Canada has been shipping its recyclable garbage overseas by the container-load. But even then, not all of it has been reprocessed.

That point was driven home when the leader of the Philippines announced last spring that he would “declare war” on Canada if it did not remove dozens of shipping containers filled with Canadian household and electronic trash rotting in a port near Manila for the past six years.

President Rodrigo Duterte made the threats late April after lawyers determined that Canada had violated international law by dumping garbage erroneously labelled as recyclables on Philippine territory. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau publicly promised a quick solution. In June, 69 containers carrying some 2,500 tonnes of fetid household waste, including plastic bottles and used adult diapers, made their way back to Canada (at Canada’s expense), where they were finally incinerated.”

“Waste is not a sexy topic,” Lakhan says. “It’s something that’s largely ignored in the academic community and elsewhere. It’s an out-of-sight, out-of-mind kind of thing. You put your recyclables in the blue bin and your garbage in the waste bin and then, like most people, you don’t really think about what happens after.” ●



# THE DRAKE EFFECT

*How the Raptors use superfan Drake's celebrity to build the team's brand*

BY MICHAEL GRANGE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD

**T**HERE AREN'T MANY DAYS that total strangers don't stop Nick Nurse and ask to give him a massage. He has Drake to thank for that.

It all started last season when the music icon and Raptors superfan strolled over from his courtside seat and gently rubbed Nurse's shoulders as the team's head coach concentrated on helping his club finish up what was ultimately a comfortable win in Game 4 of the 2019 Eastern Conference Finals at Toronto's Scotiabank Arena.

That impromptu back rub became news all over the world, emerging as both a discussion point regarding proper superfan etiquette and as Nurse's new celebrity reality when out in public.

"I didn't even realize it was happening," says Nurse, adding that he only became aware of Drake's probing fingers when images showed up on social media the next day, so locked into the game was he at the time.

"When people see me in the airport these days, they'll ask for a selfie, which is fine – but then they'll say, 'Can I do the back rub one?'"

**BRANDED:**

Fan and alum James Gomez (BA '15) in his OVO Raptors championship T-shirt



THE BRAND IN THIS CASE NEEDED AN INFUSION OF ENERGY;  
IT NEEDED TO BE REVITALIZED.

“That’s a ‘no,’” he laughs.

It’s about the only thing Drake has touched that hasn’t worked out perfectly for all involved.

Not only has the Toronto-identified star enhanced the Raptors through positive reinforcement, he has, by extension, boosted the allure of the entire city, making it look hip and happening on the world stage. In the Drake era, “The Six” is a rebranded metropolis: fun, funky and victorious.

“The reason teams and leagues and other sports organizations – even athletes – associate themselves with popular culture is because they’re trying to infuse themselves with more relevance,” says Vijay Setlur. A sports marketing instructor with the Schulich School of Business, Setlur covers the overlap between marketing and pop culture in the Tourism, Sport & Leisure Marketing course he teaches at York University.

“Instead of marketing only to the fans of that particular sport, leveraging various forms of popular culture allows you to become more relevant to a broader market.”

Hard to remember now – what with the Raptors flying high on Toronto’s first NBA championship and Toronto itself increasingly recognized as one of the world’s newly anointed “it” cities for music, food, film, sport and fashion – but it wasn’t all that long ago that Canada’s only NBA team struggled to stay relevant locally and within the league, let alone to serve as a tent under which the city’s diverse population could gather and celebrate.

While the Raptors have enjoyed some high points since coming onto the scene in 1995 – the Vince Carter years and some hopeful moments when Chris Bosh led them to the playoffs – by the 2010s, attendance was falling off, the team was losing and any meaningful attention from south of the border was in danger of drying up. The club seemed to lack direction.

As a consumer product, it had gone stale.

“The brand in this case needed an infusion of energy; it needed to be revitalized,” Setlur observes. “It was kind of lumbering along. It didn’t really capture people’s imaginations; it was just there.”

The question was: how to fix it? How to change the trajectory?

Masai Ujiri was new in his role as Raptors president during the 2013-14 season when he recognized that the Raptors had a branding problem, a concern he shared with Tim Leiweke, then chief executive officer of Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment, owners of the Raptors as well as the Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto FC.

Toronto had landed the 2016 NBA All-Star Game – an annual festival of music, fashion, hoops and cool – and the organization wanted to use the moment as a catalyst to help reimagine its franchise.

But how?

The NBA has had a long tradition of teams aligning themselves with celebrities – think Jack Nicholson and the Lakers’ “Showtime Era” in the 1980s or Spike Lee and the Knicks during the 1990s. But it takes the right celebrity – someone whose inherent qualities make the connection obvious – to make it work.

Fortunately, a certain emerging Toronto-based hip hop superstar was a Raptors fan and a product of the so-called “Carter Effect,” where a generation of Toronto kids was drawn to the team thanks to the 2000 Slam Dunk champion’s high-flying ways.

Ujiri and Leiweke asked Drake to meet in the summer of 2013.

“We had dinner – well, it wasn’t dinner; it was at five, so maybe it was lunch for him,” says Ujiri. “And we talked about the idea of him as one of our biggest fans and supporters, and what could he bring to the program, what ideas he had.”

In September of 2013, Drake was named the franchise’s “global ambassador” – a vaguely defined role with no specific duty – but the allegiance was clear: over the past six years, he has worked to make the Raptors, Toronto and his OVO fashion and music brand synonymous.

Today, the club continues to host annual “Drake Nights” where fans in attendance get co-branded merchandise and watch the team take the floor in gear displaying the OVO owl-logo while playing on a dedicated court painted in



**VIJAY SETLUR:**  
Observing the overlap between sports marketing and pop culture





**CAP-TIVATING:**

This owl does fly (off the shelves)

IT'S ALMOST A SYNERGISTIC EFFECT ...  
ALL TOGETHER, IT CREATES THIS CONCOCTION  
WHERE EVERYONE BENEFITS IN EVERY WAY.

OVO's trademark black and gold. Drake's exclusive members-only restaurant – Sher Club – opened at Scotiabank Arena in 2015, and the relationship only grew deeper when OVO became the title sponsor of the Raptors practice facility.

At the heart of it lies Drake's organic Raptors passion. Naturally, when the Raptors clinched the title, they were whisked to Las Vegas for a 36-hour after-party hosted by Drake, and millions of Raptors fans clamoured to get their OVO-branded championship merchandise.

Toronto actor James Gomez (BA '15), a former York University athlete of the year, is one of those fans. He doesn't just wear OVO/Raptors sports apparel. He collects it out of a deep appreciation for the rapper and his galvanizing effect on the team.

"Drake is such an icon in the music industry, and when he became the global ambassador for the Raptors it just opened the doors for Toronto and the Raptors themselves," Gomez says. "He brought a certain type of swagger to the team that I thought was missing before he got involved. During the playoffs last year he repped the team really hard, and though the NBA sometimes pushed back, saying he was being too much of a hype man, all in all he was just being the number one Raptors fan that he is. He really embraced the culture of the fans, and for a celebrity to act that way really made it more entertaining to watch and made us who love the game want to watch even more."

Adds Setlur, "It's almost a synergistic effect. It's the timing, it's Drake's authenticity, it's his music being aligned perfectly with the NBA, the Raptors improving and the emergence of Toronto as a great global city. All together, it creates this concoction where everyone benefits in every way."

The city certainly has. Gordon Hendren of Charlton Insights, a Toronto-based marketing research consultancy, recently set out to quantify how much Drake's celebrity, Raptors connection

and civic boosterism have meant to the city's tourism economy.

"When the Finals were being shown across the U.S. [with a never-ending stream of cutaways to Drake roaming the sidelines from his courtside seat], globally, it put Toronto in a fantastic light: a multicultural city, Jurassic Park across the country, and a positive fan base embracing the team," says Hendren.

"There is about \$8.8 billion generated by people who are visitors to Toronto, and we originally estimated that out of 100 people visiting, five would say 'Hey, Toronto's a great place, let's go there, Drake's from there, Drake's cool, it must be cool.'

"We've upped that from five per cent to seven per cent, so that ends up a \$600 million economic impact."

The softer effects could be even more significant and long-lasting.

The transformation of the Raptors from an NBA outpost less than a decade ago to one of the league's cooler brands is due to multiple factors – winning on the floor being perhaps the primary one.

But it's evident the Raptors have become something different since Drake came on board.

"Winning a championship obviously helps, but even before that, having Drake involved, hosting OVO Fest in the summer – a lot of NBA guys, Kevin Durant, LeBron and those guys come to the city and see what it's about," says Mike George (BA '02; BEd '03), who played basketball for York University and now runs his own agency representing NBA players, One Legacy Sports.

"And when Drake is doing what he's doing on his scale – anything he touches pretty much becomes gold – those guys see it and they pay attention ... It's made Toronto cool and the Raptors cool, too," George continues. "Winning comes first, but Drake adds the final 'oomph' to everything."

Drake's touch, after all, is a powerful thing. ●



# Alumni



## Last Dance

Christopher House bows out as head of Canada's pre-eminent modern dance company

BY DEIRDRE KELLY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MCKENZIE JAMES

**I**N 1981, as a recent graduate from York University's dance program and still wet behind the ears, company member Christopher House (BFA '79) became the first resident choreographer of Toronto Dance Theatre. It was a startling appointment. Then just 26, the wiry Newfoundland native had discovered a love of dance only a few years earlier when, as a political science student in Ottawa, he took a movement class as an elective.

Shifting academic gears, House came to York to study under influential dance pedagogue Grant Strate, who introduced him to choreography, pushing his hand. House's first work, a solo entitled *Timpan Reel*, debuted at a student choreographic workshop on the Keele Campus in 1979. Remarkably, and showing just how quickly he could learn, House's next two pieces were for TDT, one of Canada's leading modern dance companies.

Founded in 1968 as a repertory company, TDT had hit a rough patch by the time House joined. Beset by financial difficulties and charmless homegrown creations, its future looked uncertain. House's hire, endorsed by TDT founders David Earle, Patricia Beatty and Peter Randazzo, was meant to see the company through a difficult period, to give it a reason to live.

The son of a prominent physician, House did not disappoint. His first works for the company included *Toss Quintet*, set to the music of Steve Reich. The *Globe and Mail*, in a one-sentence review, called it "an oasis," adding that House's "subtle momentum, ... filled with movements that swung, soared and allowed the dancers to let loose," would nourish the financially and artistically withered company, helping it grow. Those words now read prophetic.

Nearly 40 years later, TDT is not only still alive, it is blooming. That's all thanks to House, who advanced through the ranks to become artistic director in 1994, a position he still

holds today. Over the past 25 years, under his guidance, TDT has become an internationally recognized company, touring Europe and Central and South America, in addition to major cities in the U.S.

As principal choreographer, he has added over 60 works to a repertoire that keeps on expanding and attracting critical acclaim. Collaborations with international dance artists, including those from Germany, Belgium, India, France and the U.S., have consistently given TDT a global presence and edge. For his achievements in dance, in 2017 House became a Member of the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest honours. Not bad for someone who found dance comparatively late in life.

"He's always thinking about his creative process," says Rosemary James (BA '04; MA '06), TDT's rehearsal director, who studied under House in the 1980s. "Usually that starts with a question about something he's been thinking about at the time, and it's developed through his research and his curiosity. He's always challenging himself, be it working with visual artists or young choreographers. He's a phenom."

By anyone's estimate, it's been a brilliant career. Come June, it will come to an end when House, turning 65 this year, takes his final bow. He's going out with a bang. Still dancing and going strong, he danced in November's world premiere of *RING*, experimental choreographer Ame Henderson's latest work for TDT. In May, he will perform *I'll Crane for You*, a solo created for him by longtime artistic associate Deborah Hay – his swan song. In between are revivals of past works including *Vena Cava*, *Madrigal* and *Echo Dark*, opening at Toronto's Winchester Street Theatre in February. "It's something of a last chance; people will never see these works again," says House. "I have accomplished what I set out to do. And now it's time. I am leaving satisfied." ●



# Philosophy in Action

Bioethicist Eric Meslin ponders the big questions for the benefit of the public good

BY DEIRDRE KELLY ● PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOFIE KIRK

**DOLLY THE SHEEP.** The Human Genome Project. Stem cell research. Assisted dying. The one thing all these have in common is Eric Meslin (BA '83), a bioethicist who studied philosophy at York before going on to influence public policy debates worldwide.

Raised in North York, Meslin rose to prominence in the mid-1990s in Washington, D.C., first as the director of the Ethical, Legal and Social Implications (ELSI) program of the Human Genome Project, then as executive director of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) established by American President Bill Clinton in 1995.

These influential positions put Meslin at the centre of some of the world's most important policy discussions. The ELSI program, for instance, funded cutting-edge research into the human genome. The NBAC, meanwhile, weighed in on ethical issues that arose from the birth of the first cloned sheep, Dolly, and again when scientists went on to grow embryonic stem cells in the lab. "It was exciting to be around when history was being made," Meslin says.

He came to sit on Clinton's bioethics commission in 1998, recruited from the Ethics Centre at Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital, where he was director. At the White House, he worked with NBAC Chair Harold Shapiro, then president of Princeton University, and the commission's 18 members. While still in his thirties, Meslin led a 20-person staff of lawyers, social scientists and fellow ethicists undertaking research and public consultation to help the White House and U.S. Congress answer questions about the ethical acceptability of federal policies on everything from mental health studies to HIV clinical trials in Africa. "Our job was to advise, which included arguing strongly for good decisions but not telling people what to do," Meslin says.

He credits York for teaching him to look at world problems from a fresh perspective. While taking political science courses in preparation for a possible law career, Meslin took an elective on moral problems in medicine taught by the late Don MacNiven. It changed Meslin's life. A philosopher of practical ethics at McLaughlin College, MacNiven created a directed-reading course brimming with the subjects that

Meslin would come to address as a full-time bioethicist. That course included the writings of John Stuart Mill, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Rawls, philosophers whose thinking on the common good greatly influenced Meslin's.

York enriched Meslin in other ways. As an undergraduate, he played on the York Yeoman volleyball team and worked part-time as a bartender at the Vanier pub, extracurricular activities he claims made him a better academic. "York was a place with a real willingness to explore the applications of ethical issues in society," he says, "and for me, it was a great starting point."

After York, Meslin pursued graduate studies in bioethics at Georgetown University's Kennedy Institute of Ethics in Washington, D.C., where he took an MA in 1985, followed by a PhD in 1989. Since then, the now-married father of two grown daughters has travelled as a researcher, teacher and policy advisor to such far-flung destinations as Australia, Hong Kong and Kenya. From 2001 to 2016, he served as founding director of the Indiana University Center for Bioethics and as Indiana's first endowed professor of bioethics. Over the past 30 years, he has also held a variety of academic positions at University of Toronto, Oxford, Cambridge, the University of Western Australia and the University of Toulouse while serving as an advisor to organizations including the World Health Organization, UNESCO, Genome Canada and the UK Biobank.

His work has brought him recognition. In 2007, Meslin was appointed a Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite for his services to French bioethics policy; in 2015, he was elected a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

Meslin, 58, returned to Canada in 2016 as president and CEO of the Ottawa-based Council of Canadian Academies (CCA), an NGO providing evidence-based analysis for use in policy decisions by the federal government and other groups. In this role, he leads a team of researchers who convene expert panels, working on challenges like antimicrobial resistance, medically assisted dying and the threat of climate change. "It's always rewarding to contribute to big questions," he says. "I'd like to think I'm having a modest impact." ●





Noteworthy



# Road Show

*Come From Away* migrates to the screen

**THE YORK GRADS BEHIND THE BROADWAY HIT** *Come From Away* have joined forces with Ellen DeGeneres, the reigning queen of daytime television, for their next project. Irene Sankoff (BA '99) and David Hein (BFA '97), who created the book, lyrics and music for the internationally acclaimed Newfoundland-based musical about true events that followed the September 11 terrorist attacks, will write and executive produce a new television series. DeGeneres will also executive produce the one-hour drama, *How to Get Run Over by a Truck*, which is based on Katie McKenna's 2016 memoir about being hit by a massive semi while out riding her bike one sunny morning in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Sankoff and Hein, a married couple, met in 1994 at York University, where she did an undergraduate degree in psychology and he did his in set and lighting design. In addition to the DeGeneres project, they are presently working on a film version of their musical, which debuted in 2013 and is still going strong with performances in Toronto, New York and, as of this May, Shanghai. "Write something you love that you're ready to live with for a long time," said the couple in a recent interview. "It's like a marriage: you're in it for good and you're going to spend years with it, so you'd better love your material and your characters." ●

**TALENTED SOCCER PLAYERS** usually get their start in training academies at a young age, try their luck with professional clubs in Europe or find their way south of the border through the U.S. college system.

But not former York Lions player Mark-Anthony Kaye. The six-foot-two-inch midfielder got his start at York University, where he played Ontario University Athletics (OUA) soccer for two seasons, scoring 18 goals over 29 games and helping the team to a fourth-place finish at the national university championships in 2013.

"I liked the fact that he wanted to be involved. I also liked the fact that, technically, he had a lot of potential," says Lions head coach Carmine Isacco, who recruited Kaye straight out of high school. "I saw a whole lot of raw potential."

In 2013, Kaye joined Toronto Football Club Academy, the training arm of Major League Soccer's Toronto FC. In 2014, he played in League1 Ontario with the senior academy team, appearing in nine matches and scoring one goal.

"I'm grateful for the path I went on," says Kaye from California, where today he plays with Major League Soccer's Los Angeles FC. "I learned a lot. There were a lot of ups and downs. It took longer than I would have hoped or expected to get to where I am today, but I think that's what helps me appreciate my success even more."

Los Angeles FC had the best regular season record in Major League Soccer this past season. Kaye contributed to that success, scoring four goals and contributing eight assists in 31 games.

Impressed with his play, LAFC has signed Kaye to a contract until at least 2021, regarding him as an invaluable player.

Back in Canada, Kaye continues to gain increased recognition as a regular call-up to Canada's national team.

"I love working with Mark. I remember the first conversation I had with him. It was an hour and a half on the phone where he told us his whole journey," says Canadian national team head coach John Herdman. "You got a sense of just how hungry he is."

"He wants to get to the top of the game." ●

THIS PAGE: PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF LOS ANGELES FC



# Kicking It

Pro soccer's Mark-Anthony Kaye plays it forward

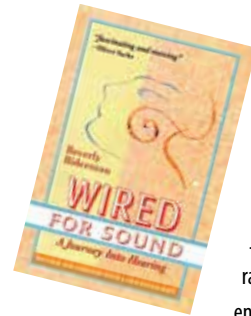
BY GAVIN DAY



# Classes

## 1968

**BIDERMAN, BEVERLY**  
(BA Sociology - Glendon)  
Deaf since childhood due to hereditary hearing loss, Beverly (née Cloth) was a scholarship student at York who struggled to hear the classes she took at Glendon. She never told her professors of her disability, thinking there was no point. But she worked hard, becoming a computer analyst following graduation. At age 46, she received a cochlear implant and learned how to hear again with a



bionic ear, the subject of her 1998 book *Wired for Sound: A Journey into Hearing*. Revised in 2016, *Wired for Sound* was the inspiration behind an opera entitled *On the Threshold of the Outside World*, which debuted in Lisbon, Portugal, the same year. A past chair of the Board of the Canadian Hearing Society, Bev remains a strong advocate for people with disabilities, through articles and lectures.



**KILMER, SCOTTY** (BA Anthropology '75)

At age 65, car expert Scotty runs an eponymous YouTube channel that, to date, has garnered close to 700 million views and amassed a following of nearly three million subscribers. "This is the people's automotive channel," he says. "The most honest and funniest car channel on YouTube." Check it out.

**ARNOLD WARD**  
(BA Schulich '72)



## 1970

**BULGER, JOHN**  
(PhD Chemistry)

After graduation, John returned to Montreal to work for DuPont of Canada, followed by local natural gas distribution utility Gaz Métropolitain as director of gas supply, among other positions. In 1998, after working for Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline in Halifax, he was appointed by the federal government to the National Energy Board in Calgary, where he served two terms, until 2008. As a retirement project, he attended the University of Calgary, graduating with a BA in music in 2018. "It was a great experience," he

says. "I had the chance to study music theory and history, perform in the University Chorus and even do a little composing."

## 1972

**WARD, ARNOLD**  
(BA Schulich)

Following graduation, Arnold completed the Certified General Accountant program, and has since worked with many corporations in the role of finance manager. A self-published author, he is the recipient of several honours for his poetry and plays, including silver and bronze

**NEIL ORFORD**  
(BA History - Glendon '86)



medals from the Barbados National Cultural Foundation and an award from the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. Arnold currently lives in Barbados where he says he enjoys life immensely.

## 1974

**LECLERC, SERGE**  
(BA Political Science - Glendon)

Serge is currently retired from owning a GM dealership. A resident of Saint-Bruno, Que., he enjoys golf and reconnecting with fellow Glendon graduates.

## 1975

**ROUSSEAU, ANDRÉ**  
(BA Political Science - Glendon)

André is a lawyer practising banking litigation with the firm Lapointe Rosenstein Marchand Melançon in Montreal.

## 1977

**TREMBLAY, ANDRÉE**  
(BA Psychology - Glendon)

Since graduation, Andrée has lived in Montreal, where she now works with Héma-Québec, a non-profit organization supplying blood to hospitals in

Quebec. Her hobbies include travelling and skiing in the nearby winter resorts of Saint-Sauveur and Mont-Tremblant.

## 1979

**PERIARD, RICHARD**  
(BA Philosophy)

After serving as artistic director of the PrettyFeet Theatre Company in Toronto, Richard now writes for film and TV. One of his current projects is a sitcom entitled *In My Life*, based on the places he remembers from his time at York University and Stong College.

## 1986

**ORFORD, NEIL**  
(BA History - Glendon)

In 2017, after a 31-year teaching career in Dufferin County, Ont., Neil launched *Defining Moments Canada*, a digital heritage education platform providing Canadian students, teachers and communities with the tools they need to tell the stories of major Canadian historical events. A winner of both the Governor General's and Ontario Premier's awards for history teaching, Neil has, for the past 30 years, been married to Laurie Henderson (BEd - Glendon, '85), with whom he has two grown daughters. He resides in Orangeville, Ont.

## 1988

**RIZI, FABIO**  
(BA Hons. History)

Born in Italy, Fabio served as president of the Dante Alighieri Society of



**CYNTHIA SHARP**  
(BA Hons. English '92)

Cynthia is the newly appointed Richmond Public Library 2019 Writer in Residence in Richmond, B.C. Her poetry books *Rainforest in Russet*, *Poetic Portions* and *How to Write Poetry*, along with her children's story, *The Light Bearers in the Sand Dollar Graviton*, are available in Canadian bookstores and on Amazon. She is forever grateful for the support of her York friendships through the years.



# Classes



**CHARIS-MOLLING, ERICA** (BFA Specialized Hons. Music '04)  
In 2008, Erica received her master's in library and information science from Simmons University in Boston, Mass. After working as a librarian at Berklee College of Music for nearly a decade, she recently completed her second master's, an MFA in creative writing from Antioch University. She now works part-time for the Boston Public Library while completing the manuscript of her first book of poetry.

Toronto for several years and worked for the Toronto Public Library until his retirement in 1995. He then returned to York University, receiving his PhD in 2000. His dissertation became a book, *Benedetto Croce and Italian Fascism*, published by University of Toronto Press in 2003. His second book, *Benedetto Croce and the Birth of the Italian Republic, 1943-1952*, came out in hardcover in January.

## 1992

**PICARD, FRANK**  
(BA Political Science - Glendon)  
Frank is vice-president of real estate and store development at Save-On-Foods in Chilliwack, B.C., where he lives with his wife Christine McCay (BA Psychology - Glendon, '92) and their two teenage children. In 1997, Frank and Christine were among the first to get married on campus at Glendon Hall.

## 1999

**BRUCE, KAREN**  
(BSc Hons. Applied Math, BEd Mathematics)  
After graduation, Karen worked as a high school math and science teacher at Huron Heights Secondary School in Newmarket, Ont. In 2000, she moved to Ottawa to work for Statistics Canada as a methodologist. Presently, she works as the collection manager of a high-impact survey for the Census of Population.

## 2001

**CHAU, JEANNETTE**  
(MBA - Schulich)  
Jeannette is an engineer who manages key province-wide outreach programs for Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO). Prior to her work with PEO, she worked in the telecom industry for over 20 years. Recently, she was re-elected to her second term as president of the Mississauga Arts Council.



**JEANNETTE CHAU**  
(MBA - Schulich)

## 2011

**SILVER, JESS**  
(BA Specialized Hons. - Glendon)  
After graduating from York, Jess attended the Humber School for Writers, where she pursued graduate studies in creative writing. Presently, she works in healthcare as a research assistant for a prominent Toronto hospital. Jess is also an entrepreneur and the executive director of a registered non-profit organization, Flex for Access, whose advocacy for adaptive fitness and sport promotion garners global reach. Jess is passionate about helping to change the lives of those with physical challenges and injuries.

## 2016

**NAGATU, ERMIAS**  
(BSc Specialized Hons. Kinesiology and Health Science)  
Ermias is the co-founder of Wishplay, a virtual reality platform dedicated to providing patients with the resources



**JESS SILVER**  
(BA Specialized Hons. - Glendon)

they need to live beyond their illness or disability. He has also built an app that aims to educate patients and health professionals about chronic pain. An accessibility and diversity advocate, he sits on the boards of the Regent Park Community Health Centre and the Black Health Alliance.

## 2017

**SILVER, MATTHEW**  
(LLM Osgoode)  
Since graduation, Matthew has started his own immigration law firm based in Ottawa, providing U.S. immigration services. He recently wrote the book



**SVETLANA MAMAeva** (BBA - Schulich)

*Navigating US Immigration in Modern Times: A Review and Analysis of Work Visas*, which is available on Amazon.

## 2018

**MAMAeva, SVETLANA**  
(BBA - Schulich)  
Svetlana is serving as a national delegate for Miss Universe Canada 2019 while completing a graduate certificate program in business communications at Harvard University. Svetlana balances her studies with her work in the energy sector as an associate technical account manager. A native of Moldova, she has been involved with the Canadian Cancer Society for three years, holding various leadership roles for the largest volunteer-led breast cancer event in Canada.

## 2019

**DANIEL, CHERIE**  
(LLM Osgoode)  
Cherie has been a practising lawyer since 2005. After years of practice, she started teaching paralegals at colleges across the GTA and surrounding areas. Last year, she obtained her LLM from York University and her master's in education from the University of Toronto. In the fall, she started a PhD program in social justice education at OISE. Recently, Cherie was named one of 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women. She will receive her award at a gala event in Toronto in September.

## IN MEMORIAM

**BUCHBINDER, AMNON**  
(Professor)  
A Genie Award-winning filmmaker, Amnon started teaching at York University in 1995, receiving a tenure-stream appointment in 1996. A former Chair of the Department of Cinema and Media Arts (CMA), he played an instrumental role in developing the curriculum in the University's production and screenwriting programs. A gifted screenwriter and director, he died in Toronto from cancer on November 30, 2019. He was 61 years old.

**VERNEY, DOUGLAS V.**  
(Professor)  
The first Chair of York's Political Science Department, Professor Verney was a past director of the Social Science Research Council of Canada and president of the Canadian Political Science Association. The Verney Room at the Ross Building is named in his honour. He died in Philadelphia on July 24, 2019. He was 95.

**WINANDY, GEORGE J.**  
(MBA Schulich '71)  
A native of Chicago, George took his MBA at York University before launching his successful printing ink business in the U.S. Committed to higher education, he funded many scholarships in math and science studies during his lifetime. He passed away in Arlington Heights, Ill., on September 23, 2019. He was 82.

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## Flashback

Have a great photo from your days at York?

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**WINTERS COLLEGE IS NAMED** for Canadian industrialist Robert Winters, a prominent Liberal politician who became chair of York's board in 1959. Steering the University through the early years, Winters jump-started the building of the Glendon and Keele campuses and spearheaded the University's now-sizeable art collection – so he deserved the recognition. But after he ran for the head of the Liberal Party in 1968, losing by a wide margin to Pierre Trudeau, students didn't think so highly of him. Winters lacked Trudeau's charisma, for one thing. But then again, who could compete with that? Regardless, in a year when student riots were erupting in Paris and campuses were burning across the U.S., students at York staged their own act of insurrection when they hung homemade banners in the windows and on the walls of the University's buildings, proposing that Winters be renamed Trudeau College. It did not happen. Winters died of a heart attack the following year – a completely unrelated matter – and Trudeau went on to become prime minister, sparking riots all his own. Today, both men are fondly remembered, but only Winters got a York building named after him. You win some, you lose some. ●

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