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## ALUMNI MAGAZINE



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Big Red hockey's greatest hits

Alum's Vietnam-era novel

Celebrating Zinck's Night



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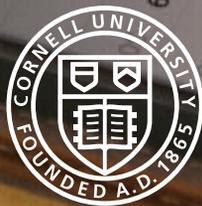




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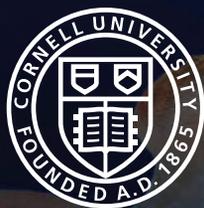
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Photography by Johannes and Volodymyr Gonyk

# From the Hill



**PUTRID PERFUME:** In what's believed to be a first for a temperate region, one of Cornell's "corpse flowers" bloomed outdoors—in CALS' Minn's Garden—in August. Native to Sumatra, the titan arum plant gets its nickname from the fetid odor it produces while flowering, attracting pollinating insects that normally feed on rotting flesh.

## Give My Regards to . . . These Cornellians in the news



**Kate Walsh, MPS '90** (left), named dean of the Hotel school. A professor of management and organizational behavior, she'd been in the position on an interim basis since July 2016.

The student food science team behind **Jack'd Jerky**—a vegan snack made from jackfruit, pea protein, tomatoes, and herbs—that won the Institute of Food Technologists' product development competition.

Economics and international studies professor **Kaushik Basu** (right), who began his three-year term as president of the International Economic Association in June.



Cornell's engineering student **RoboSub** team, whose autonomous underwater vehicle took first place at the international competition in July.

## CLOTHES CALL

The Cornell Costume and Textile Collection recently received the donation of a purple sheath dress and matching jacket worn by which prominent alumna?

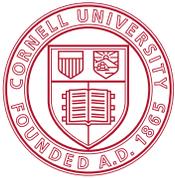


- A) **Janet Reno '60**, former attorney general
- B) **Gabrielle Giffords, MRP '97**, former congresswoman
- C) **Ruth Bader Ginsburg '54**, Supreme Court justice
- D) **Thelma Schoonmaker '61**, Oscar-winning film editor

[ANSWER: A]

PHOTOS: PUNJ WALSH; BASU: ROBERT BARKER/CORNELL MARKETING GROUP; DRESS: PROVIDED





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- Belgium: *A Feast of Flemish Art and Culture*, led by Stephanie Wiles (March)
- Tucson: *Springtime in the Desert*, led by Cole Gilbert and Linda Rayor (April)
- New York: *A Spring Theater Weekend*, led by Glenn Altschuler (April)
- Israel and the Palestinian Territory, led by Ross Brann (May)
- Austria and Hungary: *After the Habsburgs*, led by Valerie Bunce (June)

# CURRENTS

FACULTY RESEARCH • CAMPUS LIFE • ALUMNI STORIES



PHOTO: SOL GOLDBERG/UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHY DIVISION OF RARE AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

**FOR AND AGAINST:** Students who support America’s involvement in Vietnam and those who oppose the war face off on campus in 1967.

## WINDS OF WAR

**Alum pens a novel set during his senior spring, when the Vietnam conflict roiled campus**

**C**ornell senior Rick Ledbetter is an indifferent student, a shameless womanizer, and a wannabe war hero. It’s the spring of 1967, and the faraway conflict in Vietnam is increasingly dividing East Hill. Some students, like Rick, are true believers eager to battle the communist threat. Others are using every connection and pretext they can muster to avoid being drafted as graduation looms. And many, including Rick’s younger brother Tommy, are passionately involved with the antiwar movement—holding protests in front of Willard Straight Hall, organizing marches off campus, and risking criminal charges by burning their draft cards. >

Rick is the narrator and protagonist of *And the Sparrow Fell*, a new novel by former U.S. Congressman and longtime author Robert Mrazek '67. And to some extent, he's Mrazek's alter ego: Rick's experience in being disillusioned by America's involvement in Vietnam—going from gung-ho Navy enlistee to embittered antiwar protester—mirrors Mrazek's own. "I had those romantic illusions that Vietnam was worthy, and it wasn't; it was built on a lie," says Mrazek, chatting with CAM at his home in Ithaca early in the summer. "It divided our country in ways we still haven't recovered from." He says that part of his motivation in putting it out now—a half-century after the events it covers—is that the issues it raises remain urgently relevant. "We could have another Vietnam or Iraq, in which an arrogant group of people in Washington decide that we should invade another country where we have no conception of its culture or history," says Mrazek, whose son joined the military after 9/11 and served in Iraq. "Unlike during Vietnam, we no longer have the draft. I think young people should be aware of what can happen to them if they volunteer for an army directed

principally by men in Washington who are ready to send them to war, but most of whom never went to war themselves and have no conception of its cost."

Published this month by Cornell University Press under its Three Hills imprint, *And the Sparrow Fell* was five decades in the making: Mrazek began the first draft after being partially blinded in a freak accident in Officer Candidate School. (He describes it, with a rueful laugh, as "just about the least heroic

**'In the hospital, I saw what the war had done to these young men—psychically, physically, the way it had corroded their spirit. It was only then that I realized the war was a horrendous mistake.'**

thing you can possibly imagine": he was standing in formation when a lawnmower struck a metal sign and a flyaway shard pierced his right eye.) While recuperating in a military hospital, he met injured veterans who exposed him to the realities of the Vietnam conflict—which stood in stark contrast to his long-held notions of honorable glory in combat like his hero, John F. Kennedy, who commanded a PT boat in World War II. "In the hospital, I saw what the war had done to these young men—psychically, physically, the way it had corroded their spirit," says Mrazek, who dedicated his book to his late first wife and to classmate Robert Porea '67, a helicopter pilot who died on a rescue mission in Vietnam. "It was only then that I realized the war was a horrendous mistake."

In the novel, though, Rick experiences the horrors of war first-hand. Serving on a swift boat in the Mekong Delta—the job for which Mrazek had been training—he not only suffers a devastating injury in battle, but witnesses the horrific deaths of friends and shipmates. In the hospital, like Mrazek in real life, he comes to realize not only that the war is ill-conceived, but that the burden of fighting it falls disproportionately on the less affluent. At a pivotal moment, Rick writes a letter to his brother Tommy, admitting that he'd been right to resist the war: "I wrote to him about the boys in the dirty surgery wards—kids who had never been away from home before who found themselves sent off to a war they didn't understand and never would. Iowa farm boys and Alabama rednecks, white high school dropouts from Long Island, and South Los Angeles black kids who got high school diplomas from schools without teachers, the ones who couldn't afford a college deferment or weren't able to figure out all the clever ways to avoid the draft. All the ordinary young men who, when called to serve, did so without complaint. They lined up and went."

Like his protagonist, Mrazek grew up on Long Island and was a government major on the Hill; also like Rick, he was skilled at tennis and spent more than a few undergraduate hours at the poker table. But

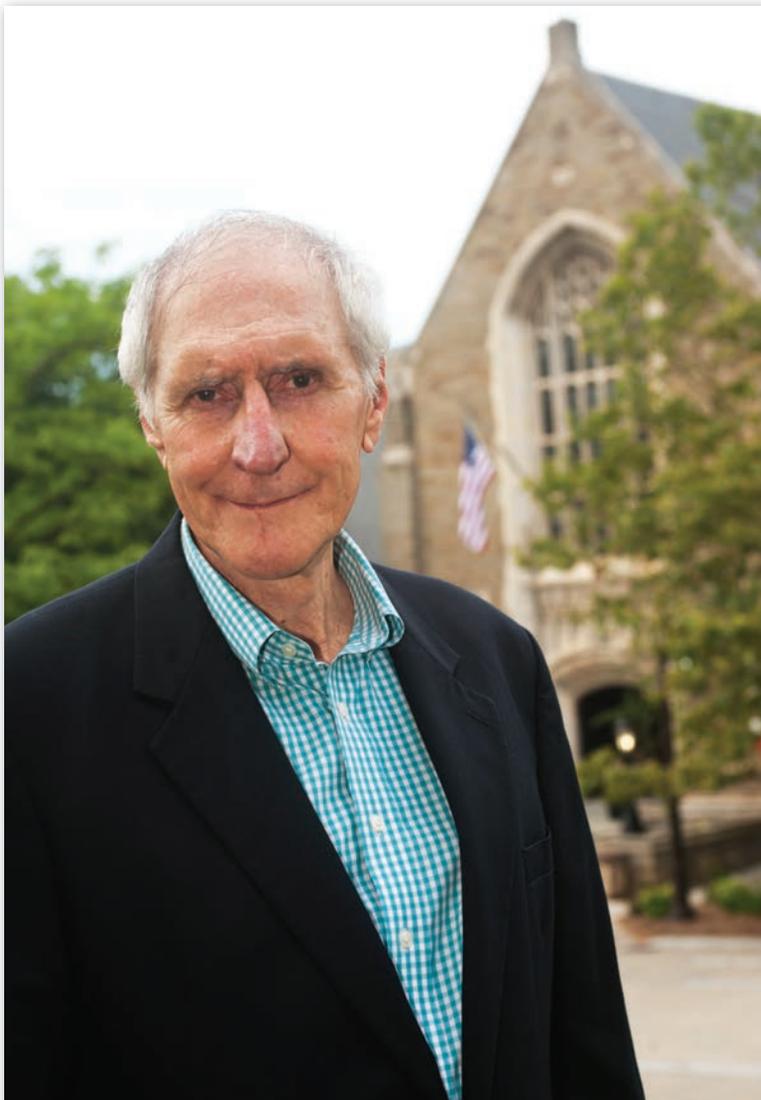
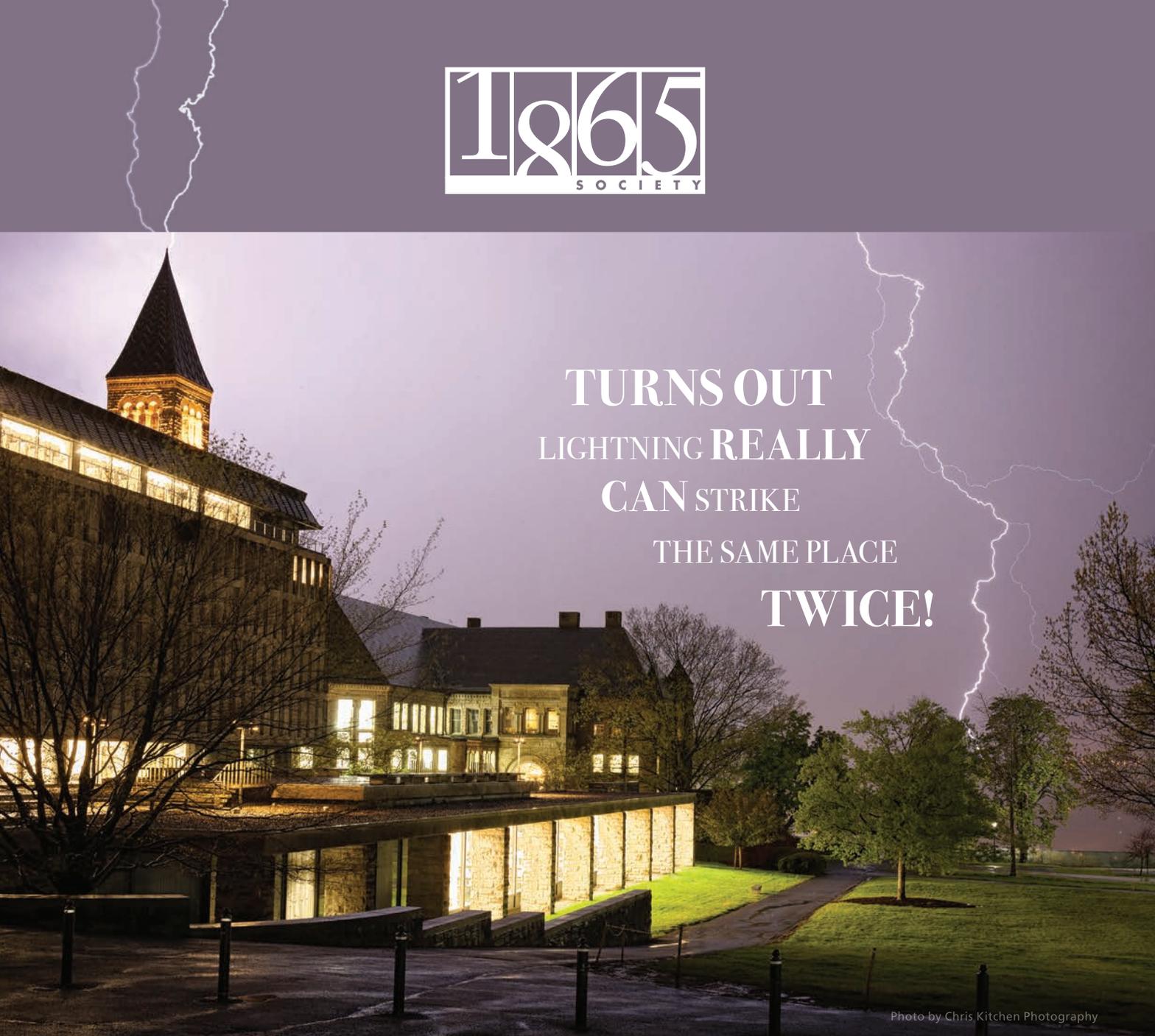


PHOTO: THOMAS HEEBEL PHOTO AND VIDEO





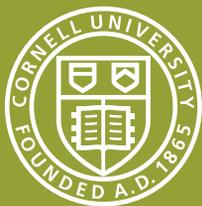


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# SITE SPECIFIC

## Young AAP grads are a successful design duo



**A**rchitecture alums Katie MacDonald '13 and Kyle Schumann '13 have only been out of undergrad a few years, but their two-person design firm has already amassed an impressively eclectic portfolio. Partners both personally and professionally, MacDonald and Schumann dubbed their Princeton, New Jersey-based practice "After Architecture" in part to signal its broad scope—comprising work that spans not only that discipline but public art, interior design, and more. Though their projects have mainly been located on the East Coast, they've gone as far afield as California (with a pair of large, marine-themed sculptures on the San Diego waterfront) and even the mountains of Slovenia, where they collaborated on an alpine shelter that was constructed in three modules and flown to the site by helicopter. "The diversity of our work comes from the fact that it's more connected via a process than an aesthetic," says MacDonald, who also holds a master's in architecture from Harvard. "I think that comes from our training at Cornell, which is so focused on site-specificity and contextuality. So we end up with a body of work where each project looks quite different."

For Lycoming College in Williamsport, Pennsylvania—a town once home to a thriving logging industry—the team designed an "outdoor classroom" consisting of boxy, sculptural wooden benches that evoke the community's history. Their winning entry for a competition to design a forestry group's cabin in New Brunswick, Canada, transformed the exterior into a strikingly geometric receptacle for firewood to fuel its stove. At the request of a doctor-in-training in Cambridge, Massachusetts, they reimagined a crowded office for medical residents—in what

used to be a patient room—as a sleek, convertible space for work, meetings, and socializing. "Being so close and working together so often, we're not afraid to be honest with each other, which is a huge part of architecture and design," says Schumann, who stayed on the Hill to teach for a year after graduation. "Being critical and constructive is really the only way to iterate and develop meaningful projects."

The two first teamed up as undergrads, winning a \$1,000 Cornell Council of the Arts grant to produce "Lightwave," an undulating bench made of colorfully painted wooden posts that's dramatically illuminated from within at night. Their

**'Being so close and working together so often, we're not afraid to be honest with each other, which is a huge part of architecture and design,' says Kyle Schumann '13.**

former professor Aleksandr Mergold '00 calls MacDonald and Schumann among the architecture program's brightest stars—standouts, even as students in his first-year design studio, for their "precision and inventiveness." He also notes with a laugh that when his then-toddler daughter encountered "Lightwave"—which was on display near the Foundry before moving to its permanent home in the Cornell Botanic Gardens—she was utterly entranced. "She was really excited about climbing up and down on it," says Mergold, an assistant professor of architecture. "We couldn't leave; we were probably there for two hours. So there was definitely appreciation of Kyle and Katie's work by the younger generation." ■

— L. P. Drew



**PROLIFIC PAIR:** Designers Kyle Schumann '13 and Katie MacDonald '13 (bottom right), whose projects include (clockwise from bottom left) "Lightwave," a bench on the Cornell campus; "Tide," in San Diego; a flexible office for medical residents in Cambridge; "Logjam," an "outdoor classroom" at a Pennsylvania college; and "Kelp," also in San Diego. Opposite page: An alpine shelter in Slovenia.



PHOTOS: PROVIDED

# SCREEN SHOTS

**Journalist Debra Birnbaum '92 is *Variety*'s TV maven**



**STAR TURNS:** Debra Birnbaum '92 with (from top) Jennifer Lopez; Kerry Washington (during her previous gig at *TV Guide*); Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor; James Corden; and Oprah Winfrey

**T**oward the end of the 2014 Emmy Awards ceremony, Debra Birnbaum '92 was in crisis mode. As executive editor for TV at *Variety*—the trade publication long considered the showbiz industry's bible—she's responsible for the magazine's traditional "morning after" coverage, where a winner is interviewed and photographed in the early hours after the ceremony. The problem? None of the nominees she and her team had bet on as likely winners—and arranged next-day interviews with—ended up with a trophy.

So Birnbaum came up with a last-minute solution to feature actress Allison Janney, the "West Wing" veteran who'd scored a rare double win that night for her roles on the CBS comedy "Mom" and the Showtime drama "Masters of Sex." There was just one hiccup: Birnbaum needed to find her. "So I'm running around backstage like a crazy person, holding my heels in one hand, with my phone signal going in and out and the battery dying, saying, 'Anyone seen Allison Janney? Anyone seen Allison Janney?'" In the end, she managed to track down the













# STRANGE BREW

**Justin Peters '03 is a veteran Chicago Cubs beer slinger —and a serious journalist, an improv comic, and more**



The denizens of Wrigley Field's grandstands know a few things about their regular beer vendor—that thirty-something fellow with the thick-framed glasses and the unruly mop of black hair. Like, if a game starts to drag, he'll often add a goofy voice or Italian accent to his usual, "Hey, beer man! Cold beer!" And if a customer praises his dexterity in pouring two cups simultaneously without spilling a drop, regulars can expect him to reply, "Hey—this is the major leagues!"

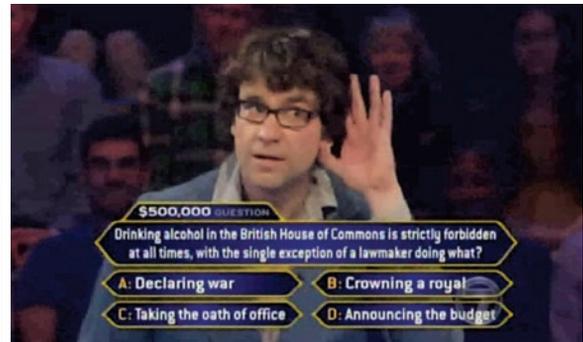
But few realize that this longtime Wrigley character—a familiar sight for the past eighteen seasons, peddling his product just a few steps from the iconic, ivy-draped outfield wall—has a whole other life. Or, rather, he has several of them: as a double-Ivy grad, a journalist, an improv actor, a playwright, even a game-show contestant. "To the vast majority, I'm just the tall, weird-looking guy blocking their view," says the suds-slinger in question, Justin Peters '03. "I'm the friendly, anonymous beer vendor."

A lifelong Cubs fan from the Chicago suburb of Lake Bluff who grew up attending games with his dad, Peters has been vending since the summer after freshman year, when he

realized the job would get him into Wrigley for free. "It seemed like more fun than an internship," recalls the former American history major, "and I always had better stories when I got back to school." And though he no longer lives in Chicago, he continues to work about two dozen games each summer. Outside of baseball season, Peters divides his time between New York and Washington, D.C., where his wife, Alexa Mills '03, is managing editor of the alternative weekly *City Paper*. When working

**'It's reductive to think you have to do just one thing and be satisfied with it. A lot of stuff makes me excited. There's always something new. I'm never bored.'**

at Wrigley, he often stays with his parents and commutes thirty miles to Chicago's North Side. "I've never wanted to give it up," says Peters, who averages 300-plus cups of brew sold on a good day. "It ties me to home, to something I've loved all my life." Peters even got to witness baseball history last November, when he peddled libations during the Cubs' first World Series appearance in seventy-one years. "It's something no one ever thought



they'd see," he says. "And I got paid to be there." And to top it all off: he served one of the team's most famous superfans, comedy star Bill Murray.

But to label Peters a beer vendor is akin to shrugging off Murray as a guy who used to be on "Saturday Night Live." With a master's from Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism, Peters is a longtime correspondent for *Slate*; his notable recent work includes an essay (headlined "Journalists Should be Terrified") about Donald Trump's attempts to demonize the mainstream press and an obituary on conservative media mogul Roger Ailes, whom he dubbed "the banished goblin king of Fox News." Peters penned the 2016 nonfiction book *The Idealist: Aaron Swartz and the Rise of Free Culture on the Internet*, about a computer prodigy and advocate for open information access who hanged >



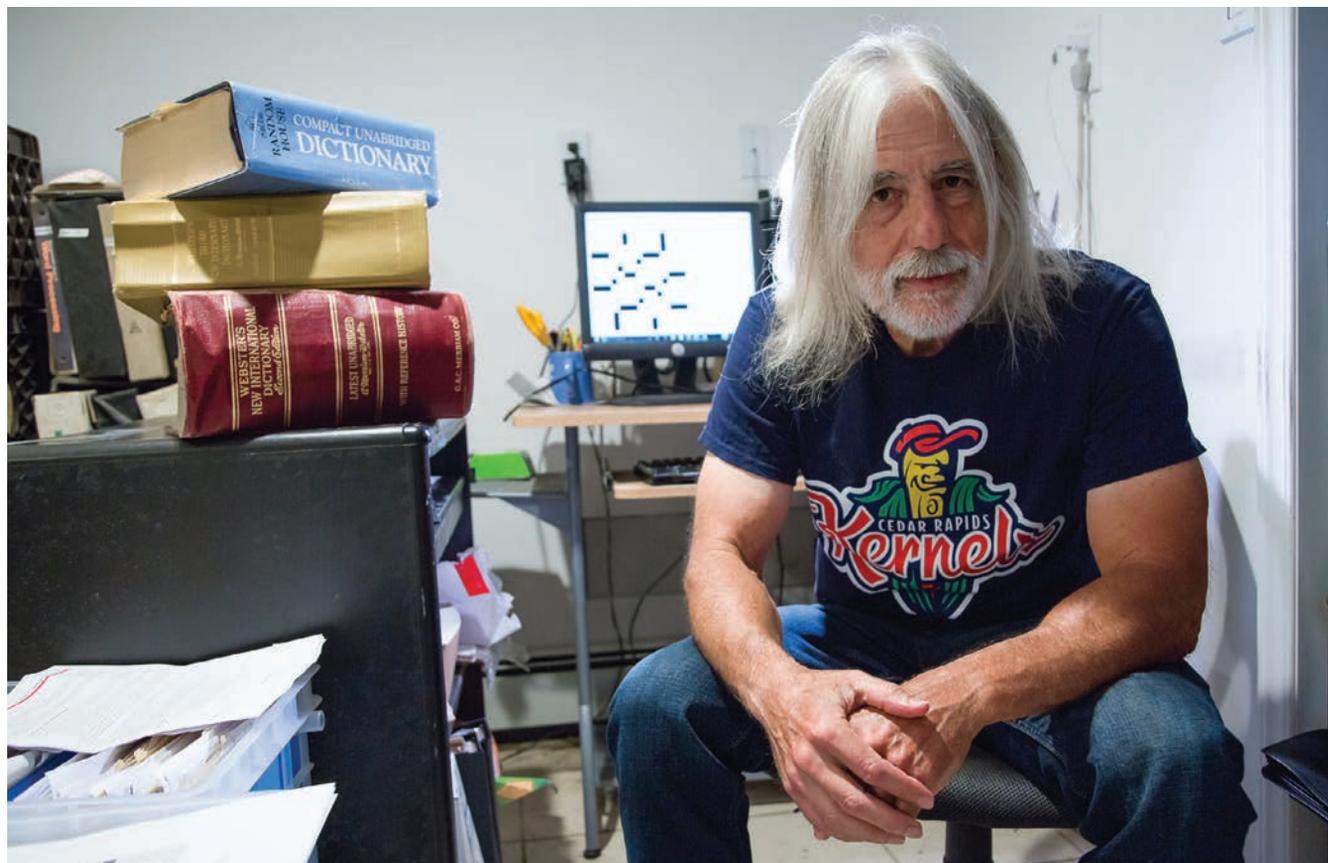
**MANY HATS:** Peters (clockwise from opposite page) selling beer at Wrigley Field; doing tongue-in-cheek reportage at the 2016 Republican National Convention (in an accidentally misspelled T-shirt); in an illustration for his *Slate* essay about sporting a "man bun"; competing on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire"; performing as part of an improv comedy duo; acting in a comic musical he wrote; and discussing his book *The Idealist* on C-Span.





# PUZZLING IT OUT

Fred Piscop '70 is one of America's leading crossword gurus



Gym rats have their morning workout; crossword maven Fred Piscop '70 has his “daily solve.” Every day, the venerable cruciverbalist tackles the daunting puzzle in the *Guardian*—a notoriously tough, British-style cryptic that even he doesn’t always finish. “I’m stuck on the upper left—8 down,” Piscop says, proffering the mostly completed puzzle in a café on his native Long Island one afternoon last spring. The clue, nonsensical to those untutored in the genre’s peculiar idiom: “Labour’s beast trashed May: ‘An abhorrent leader of idiots’ (11,4).” “I don’t know this term,” says Piscop. “But I know it’s an anagram of ‘May’ and ‘an abhorrent’ and the first letter of ‘idiots.’” (The intimidatingly erudite answer: “ERYMANTHIAN BOAR.”)

Yes, Piscop is an *éminence grise* of American crosswords—literally, given the long white hair and beard that give him the air of an aging rock star. (And indeed, he was once a professional keyboardist and still attends local jam sessions twice a week.) But as a solver, Piscop cheerfully admits, his heart belongs in the U.K. “British crosswords are more interesting and challenging,” he says. “You really have to tear a clue apart to figure out what’s going on. That’s the fun of it for me.”

An industrial engineering major on the Hill, Piscop has been a full-time crossword constructor since 1995, when he was laid off and decided he was done with corporate America. (Of his time

working in engineering, he says, “I hated every second of it.”) He has published numerous crossword books as well as a guide to solving cryptics. In addition to creating custom puzzles for private clients, he has long crafted crosswords for Long Island’s *Newsday*, which ran a profile of him in August 2016 to mark his 1,000th contribution; he also creates a weekly, celebrity-themed puzzle for *In Touch* magazine. Piscop is currently the crossword editor at *USA Today*; he has held similar roles at the *Washington*

**Piscop favors colorful vocabulary and pop culture references, but eschews ‘crosswordese’—words that appear far more often in puzzles than in real life.**

*Post Magazine* and Universal Uclick (previously Universal Press Syndicate). He recently inked a deal to contribute puzzles to *Crosswords With Friends*, an app from the creators of the popular Scrabble-style game *Words With Friends*.

Piscop is a regular at the *New York Times*, where he pens “bonus” crosswords—relatively easy ones, pegged to a theme. His July entry, for instance, was a nod to International Tiger Day. (19 Across: “Home of baseball’s Hanshin Tigers”; 32 Down: “Put a tiger in your tank’ gas brand.”) Since 2013, Piscop has also made the *Times*’s Split Decisions puzzles, in which the >

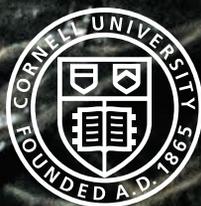
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# THINGS

that make you go

# Hmm

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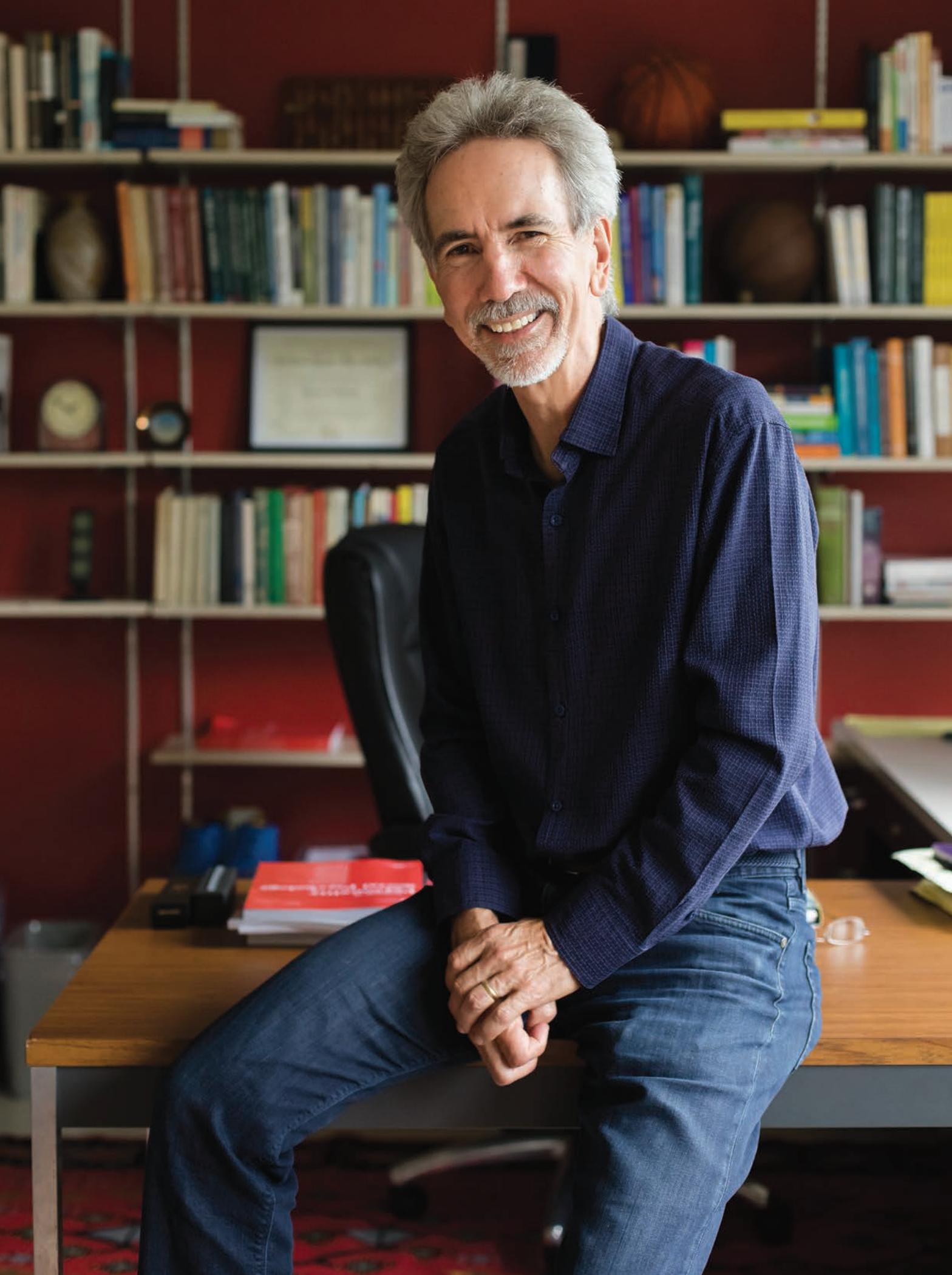
**Lauded for mentoring up-and-coming social scientists, Tom Gilovich does revelatory research on the psychology of our everyday world**

BY BETH SAULNIER

A few years back, when current Cornell grad student Jesse Walker was trying to figure out which PhD program to attend, he visited the schools to which he'd been admitted—a process that included meeting with a prominent professor at a certain Ivy outside Boston. When the distinguished academic asked what other institutions he was considering, Walker replied that Cornell's social psychology program was high on his list. And then, Walker recalls, "He sort of sank back in his chair and said, 'There's no doubt in my mind that we've lost you.'" Walker asked him why. "He said, 'Because Tom Gilovich is the best graduate social psychology adviser in the world.'"

It would prove to be a recurring theme. "I'd go from place to place," Walker says, "and when I'd tell them I was thinking of going to Cornell, they'd say, 'Oh, well—Tom is the best. Tom is the best.'"

Amit Kumar, PhD '15, had a related experience, though it came when he was already studying under Gilovich, the Irene Blecker Rosenfeld Professor of Psychology at Cornell. Like many early career researchers, he went through a rough patch of insecurity and self-doubt. "I felt like I wasn't being creative or original enough," he explains, "like I was becoming too much like Tom instead of becoming my own person." For advice, he turned to a respected psychology professor—also, as it happens, at Harvard. >















# Ice Time

New book revisits



**TEAM WORK:** Players and coaches celebrate winning the 2010 Whitelaw Cup

PHOTO: GEORGE MAY

# Big Red hockey's most memorable games



**J**im Roberts '71 saw his first Big Red hockey game as a freshman in the fall of 1967, the semester after the men's team captured the national championship. Legendary coach Ned Harkness was at the helm in Lynah Rink; future NHL star Ken Dryden '69 tended goal. "I thought, these guys are good," Roberts, who served as CAM's editor and publisher from 2000 to 2014, recalls with a laugh. "I had no idea how good they were."

Flash forward a half-century. Roberts remains a devoted fan—and in October, Cornell University Press will publish his chronicle of the two dozen most memorable games in Big Red hockey history. Entitled *Forever Faithful*, the hardcover offers a brief history of Cornell's hockey program, which traces its roots back to a frozen Beebe Lake in 1907. Roberts devotes chapters to the fan phenomenon that is the Lynah Faithful and to the rivalries with Boston University and Harvard. But the book's centerpiece is its rundown of twenty-four remarkable games, stretching from that 1967 men's championship final to a 2013 women's victory over Harvard that clinched the ECAC title. >















This special section, a bonus issue of the university's Ezra magazine, highlights ways Cornell initiatives intersect with philanthropy and engagement of Cornell alumni, parents and friends.

## VIJAY PENDAKUR SEEKS TO TRANSFORM THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

*Vijay Pendakur became Cornell's Robert W. and Elizabeth C. Staley Dean of Students in January. He came to Cornell from California State University, Fullerton, where he served as associate vice president for the Division of Student Affairs. Pendakur is a practitioner and scholar of diversity and inclusion. The Office of the Dean of Students, a unit of Student and Campus Life, serves as an umbrella of resource centers, affinity groups and crisis management operations; its mission is to enrich student life by supporting personal, social and intellectual growth and providing students opportunities through service, teamwork, stewardship, leadership and wellness. The full conversation is available at [news.cornell.edu/PendakurQA](http://news.cornell.edu/PendakurQA).*

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### Research grants for women – now and in the future



After meeting in an organic chemistry lab, Cornell classmates Joan Poyner Schwartz '65 and Ronald H. Schwartz '65 both worked as biomedical researchers at the National Institutes of Health for years and both have supported women in the sciences for decades. Now, the couple has created the Schwartz Research Grants for Women in the Life Sciences to provide competitive research grants to Cornell's female life scientists at the assistant and associate professor levels.

Initial grant awards have already begun – funded with a charitable remainder trust – and a future estate gift will significantly expand the endowment.

“As a woman scientist, I personally saw how we struggled to keep up in an ‘old boys’ network,” Joan said. “Funding and career advancement opportunities went to men.”

Added Ron, “I saw this happening – to my wife and to other women. We have spent the last 20 years working on supporting women in the sciences.”

“We approached several institutions about the research grants, and Cornell's staff had the enthusiasm and curiosity to make our passion a reality,” they said. “Cornell made us feel loved.”

Learn how your planned gifts can support Cornell now and in the future.

Contact the Office of Trusts, Estates and Gift Planning, [gift\\_planning@cornell.edu](mailto:gift_planning@cornell.edu) or 800-481-1865.



Stella Meigs

**Above:** Ronald H. '65 and Joyce Poyner Schwartz '65

**Left:** Three faculty members each received an award of \$15,000 from the Schwartz Research Fund for Women in Life Sciences in 2017: Carolyn Sevier (top), assistant professor of molecular medicine in the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM); Olena Vatamaniuk (middle), associate professor of crop and soil sciences in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; and Margaret Bynoe (bottom), associate professor of immunology, also in CVM.

**“Cornell’s staff had the enthusiasm and curiosity to make our passion a reality.”**

– Ronald H. '65 and Joyce Poyner Schwartz '65

# EZRA



































































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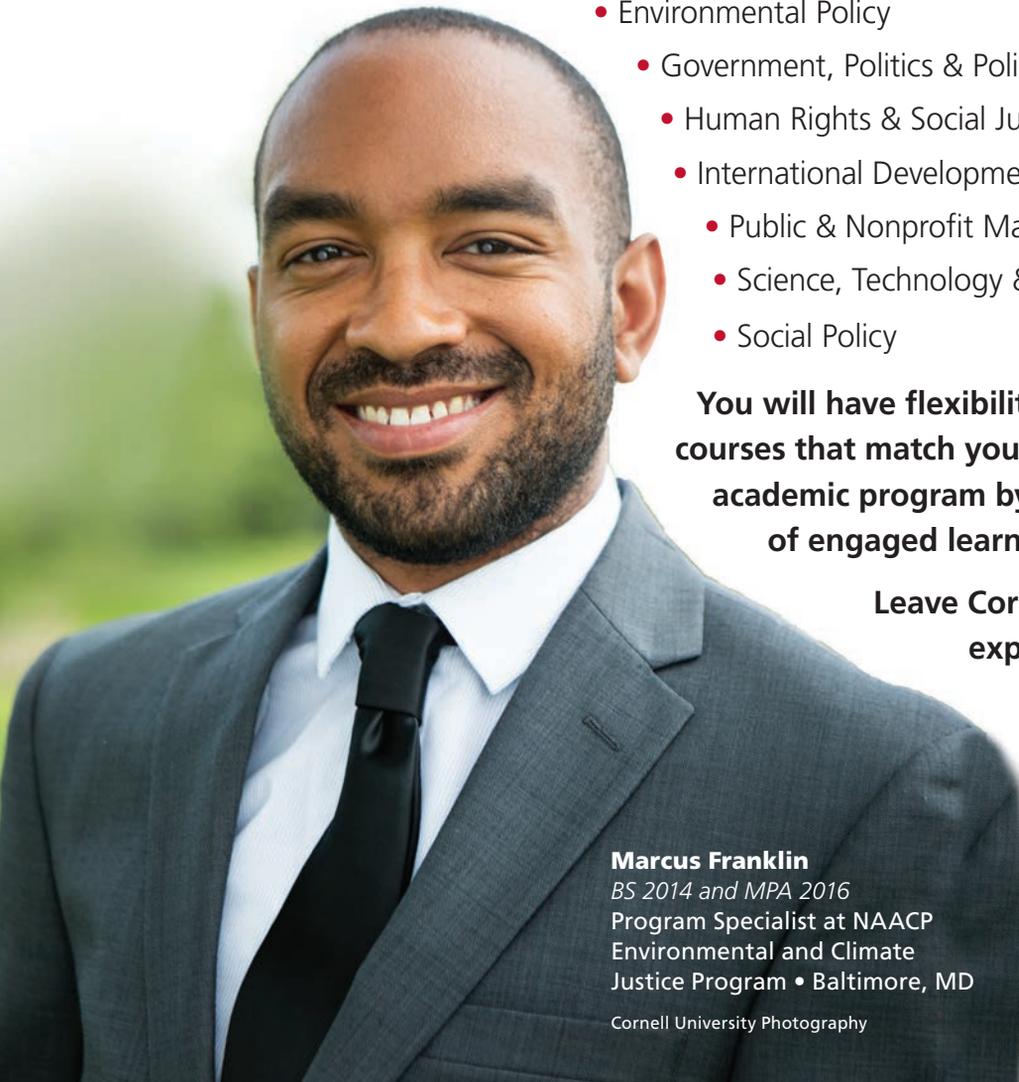
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