

Temple Public Health

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BUILDING *for the future*

Paley Hall takes shape to transform
public health education

PG 10

Temple Public Health

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Building for the future

Paley Hall takes shape to transform public health education



Visiting scholar helps students build cultural competencies



Liam Spady '23 pushes through adversity to improve young lives

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It is my pleasure and honor to write to you as the permanent dean of the College of Public Health and School of Social Work. As we start this academic year, Temple University has welcomed new deans in the College of Education and Human Development, Fox School of Business, and College of Science and Technology, in addition to a new vice provost for research. New faces bring new opportunities for collaboration and fresh ideas.

Within the college, we have enjoyed another productive year, as you will read in this magazine. We welcomed new leadership in our Nursing Department and two members to our Board of Visitors. We received a generous gift from one of our board members to open a new autism center, and we have developed new partnerships with colleagues around the globe and in our North Philadelphia communities. We set new records for our funded research and grant proposals submitted. Our faculty were recognized for their national and international expertise as they were named to prestigious leadership and service positions at both the federal and local levels, including a faculty member who is serving on the committee shaping the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and another who is a scientific advisor for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's

DEAN'S LETTER

Public Health Committee (p. 9). And our collective excellence was recognized by our peers, as we were ranked No. 36 out of 206 schools of public health in the nation.

Amazing things aren't just happening with our faculty and staff—our students continue to amaze me and honor the #TempleMade spirit, turning grit and tenacity into polish and perseverance as they forge ahead in their academic journeys. As they cross the stage at graduation (p. 30) and head into careers in health professions or return to the world of academia for graduate or professional studies, our graduates join our alumni in showing the world the value of their degrees, addressing youth homelessness and violence (p. 24), working for social justice, combating COVID-19 and other threats, and tackling the health challenges of tomorrow.

Looking ahead to the completion of our new home in the former Paley Library (p. 10), the opportunities are endless. With a state-of-the-art simulation center, a teaching kitchen, new research spaces, an expanded Social Service Annex, and plenty of space for our students to be present, innovation is in the air.

However, we are reminded that a home is not just about a physical space—it is also about the community that resides inside that space. We are working to strengthen our community and connectedness with our students, staff, and faculty, as well as our alumni and our local community members. Our new home will create space for interdisciplinary education, practice, and research, as well as informal chances to be engaged in the mission and vision of our college.

We invite you to visit us on campus and see all that is going on. We welcome our alumni and community partners to work with our students and help us prepare the next generation of our workforce. We know that it will take all our efforts to improve the health of our population, address health inequities, and promote social justice. We look forward to the opportunities to work with you and address the challenges of our day.

Jennifer K. Ibrahim
Dean

Jennifer Ibrahim named dean of the College of Public Health

In July, **Jennifer Ibrahim** was named the new dean of the College of Public Health and School of Social Work, following a national search.

“Dr. Ibrahim has prioritized Temple’s mission of providing an excellent and accessible education for our students through her robust expertise, visionary leadership, and steadfast commitment to public health,” said Temple Provost Gregory N. Mandel. “This is an incredibly important and transformative time for the college and school. Jenn’s dedication to teaching, research, and practice will be instrumental in advancing the priorities of the university.”

Before her appointment as dean, Ibrahim served in the role in an interim capacity since the summer of 2022. Previously, she was associate dean for academic affairs, overseeing academics and advising for more than 50 academic programs across 20 areas of study, including clinical programs, population-focused programs, and research-centered programs. Ibrahim is a tenured professor in the Department of Health Services Administration and Policy with a secondary appointment at the Beasley School of Law.

Ibrahim came to Temple in 2005, drawn by its mission of providing access to quality education for first-generation and underrepresented students. Her dedication to the Temple community has earned her multiple service recognitions since becoming a faculty member, including the Great Teacher Award, the College of Health Professions Teaching Innovation Award, and an Outstanding Faculty Service Award.

“I am honored to lead the College of Public Health and School of Social Work into the next chapter as we look ahead to a new building, new collaborations, and innovations in research and education,” Ibrahim said.

Her commitment is demonstrated by service within the college, the university, and the community to advance Temple’s mission. She created the college’s Teaching Excellence Committee to promote pedagogy and teaching scholarship and create a space for teaching-focused faculty to share best practices.

“Temple provides amazing opportunities for personal and professional growth and development,” Ibrahim said. “I want to work with our faculty and staff to build a culture where each person feels valued and able to contribute to the larger mission and vision of the college with their individual talents and skills.”

As a researcher, Ibrahim has collaborated on grants totaling more than \$20 million. Before arriving at Temple, she was an American Legacy Foundation postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education at the University of California, San Francisco. Ibrahim earned her PhD in health services and policy analysis at the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley, where her dissertation focused on state Medicaid coverage for tobacco dependence treatments. At Berkeley, she also received her master of arts degree from the Department of Political Science. She received her MPH from the School of Public Health at the University of Massachusetts and a BS in biology and pre-medical studies at Boston College.

Recently, she earned an MEd in higher education and a graduate certificate in diversity leadership from the College of Education and Human Development at Temple.

“We will work diligently to empower our students, faculty, and staff, fostering an environment that encourages collaboration, critical thinking, compassion, and a strong commitment to improving the lives of people and communities,” Ibrahim said. “I am excited about the path ahead and look forward to contributing to our shared vision for a healthier, more equitable future.”



Above: Temple Provost Gregory N. Mandel, Board of Visitors Member Christopher M. Barnett, School of Social Work Director Philip McCallion, and College of Public Health Dean Jennifer Ibrahim

College of Public Health climbs in 2023 ‘U.S. News and World Report’ ranking

Temple University’s College of Public Health has jumped to No. 36 among the nation’s schools and programs of public health in the 2023–24 edition of *U.S. News and World Report’s* Best Graduate Schools. Two hundred and six public health institutions were included in this nationwide ranking.

“This ranking is a testament to our incredible faculty and the amazing work of our alumni, who are the foundation of our reputation,” says Dean **Jennifer Ibrahim**. “We are committed to providing access to high-quality education, and it is wonderful for those efforts to be recognized.”

This new ranking comes at a time of great momentum for the college, which just launched its first major capital campaign to support the creation of a permanent home in an expanded and reimagined Paley Hall, and officially broke ground on that home in April.

ABA Centers of America Autism Lab combines research and clinical practice to support autistic individuals

Temple’s School of Social Work has a new autism lab, thanks to Board of Visitors member **Christopher M. Barnett**, CEO of ABA Centers of America and an alumnus of the College of Liberal Arts.

Barnett first grew a passion for helping the autistic community and their families navigate diagnoses and care after personally witnessing how difficult this process can be. “Both of my nieces are on the autism spectrum, and they languished for years waiting to even get a diagnosis. And once they got a diagnosis, they were on another waiting list for ABA therapy. I thought there had to be

a better way, a way to disrupt this space and fundamentally change the way ABA services are made available to communities,” says Barnett. He founded ABA Centers of America in 2020 to give hope to others facing the same hardships and ensure equal access to diagnosis and applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapy from certified professionals focusing on communication, academics, social skills, and social functioning.

Today, the ABA Centers of America is the fastest-growing ABA provider with 11 metro areas served, four locations in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and plans to

open more clinics in southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey in 2023. This momentous partnership expands Barnett’s vision and offers a wealth of services to the Philadelphia population.

The School of Social Work’s Autism Lab is used to conduct autism research, offer diagnostic services, and train students to build the necessary workforces to not only meet the current needs of the autistic community but to reach out and make a difference for the general public.

“Real change becomes possible with partnerships between providers like ABA Centers of America, universities, and the autism community,” says **Philip McCallion**, who is director of both the School of Social Work and the Autism Lab.

New nursing chair brings range of experience to leadership role



Amita Avadhani, newly appointed chair of the Department of Nursing, brings more than an extensive teaching and leadership background to the College of Public Health—throughout her academic career, Avadhani has continued to work as a nurse practitioner in acute and primary care.

Avadhani comes to Temple from Rutgers University, where she earned her doctor of nursing practice (DNP) and served in leadership and teaching roles, including directing acute care nurse practitioner master's and DNP programs, as well as post-master's programs. Her work with professional organizations at the state, national, and international level includes serving on the board of directors of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

Her arrival comes at a key time for nursing education, as the nursing workforce faces critical shortages, in large part due to strains from COVID-19.

"The need has never been greater," Avadhani said. "We need to get out there and encourage our younger generations, attract great students right out of high school. We also need flexible programs so working nurses can advance their education with graduate degrees. It's our responsibility to make sure that future generations are prepared if there is another pandemic not only through physical training, but also having the mindset to deal with it."

Dominican Republic project takes Public Health Beyond Borders

Last fall, **Julia Stengel** arrived in the small town of Enriquillo on the southwestern coast of the Dominican Republic. After a long day's travel that included two flights and a six-hour bus ride through the countryside, she retired to a local hotel for some well-deserved rest. The next three days would be busy ones.

Stengel, a bachelor of science in public health student, traveled to the Dominican Republic as a member of Public Health Beyond Borders (PHBB), a student-led organization dedicated to promoting healthy behaviors and reducing health disparities across the globe. Over the course of three days, Stengel, alongside PHBB faculty advisor **Graciela Jaschek** and MPH student **Brigitte Guariglia**, assessed the town of Enriquillo's public health needs.

This wasn't Stengel's first time visiting the Dominican Republic. In high school, she traveled to a small community outside of Puerto Plata to volunteer at a local elementary school. "We talked with members of the community before we went there and asked them what they wanted us to do," she recalls. "We spent time building a basketball court for the school, and we also helped teach English." While there, Stengel had the opportunity to witness the public health disparities plaguing the local area. She credits these experiences with inspiring her decision to study public health.

Now, as PHBB's undergraduate project leader for this Dominican Republic project, Stengel returned to the place that ignited her passion for public health.

During their time in Enriquillo, Stengel and the PHBB team focused on assessing the town's water infrastructure. Their investigation

uncovered aged and inefficient equipment, and after discussing the issue with the local neighborhood committee, they determined that the town had practically no access to clean drinking water. The PHBB team also provided instruction on how to safely consume and conserve water.

Additionally, the team visited a local high school to speak with students about gender equity, bullying, and general responsibility before traveling to Enriquillo's hospital, where they made plans to develop training materials to help nurses talk about diabetes and chronic disease.

For future visits, Stengel and the team hope to further address the high school's request for gender equity and bullying education. Additionally, PHBB has partnered with Global Water Alliance and the Philadelphia Rotary Club to address a lack of water infrastructure.

"It's really exciting to get more people interested in this project," says Stengel. "It's only 10 or 11 people right now, but it's really important to find dedicated people—and these people are dedicated."



Above: The Philadelphia Aphasia Community at Temple (PACT) Choir performs for Awareness Fair attendees.

Aphasia awareness fair connects community with experts—and support

Some attendees at Temple's first Aphasia Awareness Fair, held last October, wore T-shirts that said "Aphasia: Get the Word Out." The slogan has a double meaning.

At the daylong conference, people with aphasia, caregivers, and clinicians discussed the need for better public understanding of aphasia, which sometimes is misdiagnosed and can be misunderstood in social situations. There are at least 2 million people in the U.S. with aphasia, but 84.5% of people have never heard of it, according to a national survey. Aphasia, most often caused by a stroke, can impair a person's ability to speak, write, or process language, even though their intellect and stored knowledge of language may remain intact. Individuals may struggle to access and speak the words that they know, a problem that puts the T-shirt slogan in a more emotional context.

The free event drew about 130 people from Philadelphia and beyond, including Canada and the United Kingdom. It was hosted by the College of Public Health's Saffran Center for Cognitive Neuroscience and the Philadelphia-based Aphasia Resource Collaboration Hub (ARCH), a network formed in conjunction with Temple to promote

aphasia awareness and help people discover resources.

"It's important for people to know there is an awaiting community to receive them," said ARCH co-founder Angelique Cauthorn, herself a stroke survivor recovering with aphasia. "You know, 2 million people have aphasia, but few people have heard of it. That's a disconnect in education, a disconnect in advocacy. We're trying to fill that gap. In this world, you're not judged by what you know, you're judged by what you can prove you know. Maybe you were once a finance manager, but now you can't tie your shoe or sign your name. People make assumptions about you or your intelligence. Aphasia affects my communication, my speaking, but it does not affect my intelligence."

In the morning session that functioned as a large support group, Rebecca Hunting Pompon, an assistant professor from the University of Delaware's communication sciences and disorders program, stressed the difficult process of acceptance. Part of that, she said, is remembering how much remains intact despite stroke and aphasia.

"Even though many pieces of you have changed, there are many more pieces of you that have not changed.

You are still you," she said. Temple speech-language pathologists and students facilitated conversations at each table in which people with aphasia connected and discussed their interests and strengths. They talked about feeling isolated, about missing the jobs they'd held as business managers or teachers or engineers, but also about resilience, recovery milestones, and new activities.

In a side room, care providers, support groups, and other organizations set up tables to distribute information about health, services, and opportunities to participate in research.

For the afternoon keynote, Davetrina Seles Gadson, a neuroscientist at Georgetown University, offered tips for nurturing brain plasticity—the brain's ability to rewire itself—including physical activity, art, music, writing (for those who can), puzzle solving, and staying social. "Your brain will continue to get better with exposure to the right things," she said. "I've heard people say their clinician told them 'This is as good as it's gonna get.' It may be that the clinician has run out of ideas."

"I think we took a big step toward increasing awareness of the experience of aphasia and the resources available to people. We laid the groundwork for future programs like this," said **Nadine Martin**, professor in the College of Public Health's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and director of the Saffran Center, Temple's home for research in the neural and psychological basis of language and cognition.

The event was capped by entertainment, including a performance by members of the Philadelphia Aphasia Community at Temple (PACT) Choir, people with aphasia, who sang "What a Wonderful World," "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," and "Lean on Me."



Above: Philip McCallion, director of the School of Social Work, speaks to visitors with live translation into Ukrainian.

Temple co-hosts Ukraine health officials

Fourteen senior health officials from Ukraine visited Philadelphia this summer to gather strategies for addressing a quietly emerging crisis: their country's rising need for mental healthcare amid Russia's devastating attacks. Leaders of Ukrainian national and regional agencies visited facilities across the city and heard presentations from public health officials, providers, and experts.

"The mental health system in Ukraine is not adequate to really address the challenges that will be occurring in the next years," said **William Aaronson**, associate professor in health services administration and policy at the College of Public Health and one of the organizers of the Ukrainian study tour. "It's widely recognized that mental health issues are going to increase, with PTSD among the most likely to be diagnosed."

The Philadelphia tour is part of a larger initiative, a \$45 million program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID's Ukraine Public Health System Recovery and Resilience Activity was conceived

before Russia's invasion, partly in response to COVID-19, aimed at strengthening the Ukraine government's ability to respond to public health threats. It expanded to include mental health support for veterans and conflict-affected populations.

"It's very inspirational that you are here," said **Philip McCallion**, director of the School of Social Work, who anchored a panel of academic leaders explaining how mental health professionals in the United States are trained and work with clients. With his PowerPoint slides prepared in Ukrainian and a live interpreter translating, McCallion told the visitors that he grew up in Belfast and understands the impact of violence and war on mental health.

At one point during the panel, the sound of a siren filled the lecture room. Some members of the Ukrainian delegation had not turned off the air alert apps on their mobile phones that warn residents back home to get to shelters.

"The last six, seven weeks have been really, really hard," said **Alyona Gerasymova**, Ukraine director for

Pact, the humanitarian nonprofit that is leading this program to build healthcare capacity in Ukraine. "Every night and sometimes several times during the day. It's not just the siren. They actually hit residential buildings. This is a huge collective trauma, living through the war. Everyone knows someone who was killed, someone who had to relocate. I can't really smile as much as I used to smile. I can't find joy."

The tour was focused around the idea of making behavioral healthcare an integrated part of primary medical care. Pact worked with a local coalition led by Aaronson; **Natalie Levkovich**, CEO of the Health Federation of Philadelphia; and **Jennifer Kolker**, director of the Center for Public Health Practice at Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health. CPH graduate students **Claire Lasky** and **AnneMarie Tomosky** managed logistics, securing everything from transportation to translations.

At the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the visitors heard about the continuum of care offered to U.S. military veterans. They visited the Children's Crisis Treatment Center

in Fishtown and toured exam rooms at the Maria de los Santos Health Center in North Philadelphia, the city's largest facility delivering health services to Latino residents. Providers at the health center described their multidisciplinary team approach to patient care that integrates medical, dental, and behavioral health, connecting all the factors that influence a patient's well-being, including environmental issues that can affect whole communities.

With an eye toward helping Ukraine build its behavioral health workforce, McCallion anchored a panel of academic leaders explaining how mental health professionals in the United States are trained and work with clients. Aaronson said next steps will focus on bolstering Ukraine's behavioral health system capacity.

"We're going to be working with MPH programs in Ukraine, to bring MPH education up to the point where it is effective in developing a public health workforce," he said. "The group that came over are people who can lead the change. We can't make changes in Ukraine, but we can catalyze change."



\$1 million project to help immigrant and vulnerable populations in North Philadelphia

A new initiative will deliver healthcare services to underserved immigrant populations in North Philadelphia. The three-year program, to be run jointly by Temple's College of Public Health and Temple's School of Pharmacy, will offer an integrated behavioral health model of primary care, including pharmacy services, nutrition counseling, social services, and other wellness supports to community residents.

In addition to addressing health disparities in immigrant and vulnerable populations by providing direct care, the program will support Temple's training of future healthcare professionals and promote interdisciplinary practice by teaming students across pharmacy, nursing, and other healthcare fields. The initiative will also improve the ability of the university's faculty and students to include underrepresented minorities in research efforts aimed at understanding and conquering health disparities.

"By bringing together students and faculty from pharmacy, nursing, social work, nutrition, rehabilitation sciences, public health, and many other health professions, we will be able to work in a holistic manner to promote health and well-being," said **Jennifer Ibrahim**, dean of the College of Public Health. "This is what Temple does. We are solutions-oriented and we're community-engaged. And we know that we can do things better when we work together."

Temple University and Temple University Hospital already provide vital healthcare services to the economically challenged patient population in North Philadelphia, where 45% of households are below the federal poverty level. Health disparities in this part of the city are severe; for example, the mortality rate from heart disease is 65% higher than the national average. Up to 12% of North Philadelphia residents are first-generation immigrants who may face elevated social, financial, and structural challenges in accessing healthcare, due to factors such as limited English proficiency, lack of health insurance, ineffective patient-clinician communication, and cultural differences.

The initiative expanding healthcare offerings to the immigrant community will be co-led by **Susan VonNessen-Scanlin**, associate dean for clinical affairs and interprofessional education at CPH, and **Tina Tran**, assistant professor of pharmacy practice. VonNessen-Scanlin describes the aim in serving immigrant communities as providing "culturally competent care."

"That's really providing care through the lens of cultural humility, meeting people where they are to reduce barriers and health inequities," she explained. "We're envisioning integrated behavioral health, which cares for both the physical and psychological well-being of an individual. We will offer services that go beyond just doing a health assessment and writing a prescription."

Left: Ukrainian health officials learn about the team approach to healthcare delivery at the Maria de los Santos Health Center in North Philadelphia.

CPH students earn Diamond Awards

Multiple College of Public Health undergraduate students have been named recipients of the university's 2023 Diamond Award. The Diamond Award is the highest recognition by Student Affairs given to a Temple University undergraduate student, based on a holistic evaluation of their accomplishments.

Natalie Kimmerlein graduated in May with a degree in public health and a minor in sociology of health. She served as a HEART peer educator at Temple's Wellness Resource Center, where she also worked as the Alcohol and Other Drugs Prevention Program assistant. She also interned with the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Ryan Klingensmith graduated in May with a degree in speech, language and hearing science. Her role as a peer mentor for college students with disabilities through Temple's Leadership & Career Studies program and as an attendant at the Barnett & Irvine Cherry Pantry have shaped her passions for expanding accessibility of higher education. She served as the president of Temple's chapter of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association, a two-year research assistant in the First Language Foundations Lab, and a representative on the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders Student-Faculty Committee.

Emma Lamoreaux graduated in May with a degree in health information management and a minor in public health. While at Temple, she acted as a dedicated advocate for mental health awareness through her roles as both the co-president of Temple's Active Minds chapter and the northeastern representative for Active Minds' Student Advisory Committee.

Stephanie Scoma graduated in May with a degree in nursing from the College of Public Health. She served as president of Temple's chapter of the Student Nurses' Association of Pennsylvania and a member of Temple's chapter of the international nursing honors society, Sigma Theta Tau. Last summer, she was a student at Temple University Rome and was a volunteer at Ronald McDonald Camp.

Faculty awards and appointments

Jennifer Orlet Fisher, professor of social and behavioral sciences and director of the Family Eating Lab in the Center for Obesity Research and Education, was selected to serve on the federal advisory committee that will help to develop the next set of nutritional guidelines for Americans, to be issued in 2025. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, updated every five years, shape federal food programs, consumer education, and food labeling.

Philip McCallion, director of the School of Social Work, received the 2022 Career Achievement Award from the Association for Community Organization and Social Action. This award honors the lifetime contribution of a person in the field who has made a significant impact in macro-level social work through contributions to empirical knowledge, community practice, and the development of practice methods, especially in partnership with marginalized or underrepresented populations.

Inkyu Han, associate professor of epidemiology and biostatistics, was appointed to a three-year term as a scientific advisor to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Public Health Committee, where he will contribute to policy and program recommendations.

Beth Pfeiffer, associate professor of health and rehabilitation sciences and director of the REACH Lab, received a 2023 Leadership Service Commendation from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation, which supports occupational therapy research and works to increase public understanding of the important relationship between everyday activities and health.



Above: Jennifer Orlet Fisher

Mark Salzer, professor of social and behavioral sciences, was among 20 researchers selected to serve on a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Recovery Research Technical Expert Panel.

Yaara Zisman-Ilani, assistant professor of social and behavioral sciences, was named a reviewer for the NIH/NIMH Mental Health Services Research Committee and an editorial board member of the journal *BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making*.

Huanmei Wu, chair of the Department of Health Services Administration and Policy and assistant dean for global engagement, became a fellow of the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA). The AMIA fellows program recognizes leadership in medical informatics, outstanding work in research, engagement in professional services, and high impact in student mentorship.

Beth Heuer, associate professor of clinical instruction in nursing, was inducted as a fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners at the AANP National Conference in New Orleans. The program is dedicated to the advancement of nurse practitioners.

Jingwei Wu, associate professor and primary research faculty of the Biostatistics Core in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, was named 2023 recipient of the SAS Institute's Emerging Educator Award. The award recognizes educators who have shown exemplary progress in advancing analytics education and preparing students for careers in analytics and data science for five or fewer years.



Below: Yaara Zisman-Ilani

Experts in child welfare, DEI join Board of Visitors



Paul DiLorenzo '78



Sandra L. Davis '91

Paul DiLorenzo '78 and **Sandra L. Davis '91** have joined the College of Public Health's Board of Visitors (BOV), an appointed advisory board comprised of a distinguished group of alumni and partners who bring a wealth of experience from the fields of public health, healthcare and health services, and social work. Together with the CPH executive team, the BOV helps the college fulfill its mission to prepare future researchers, practitioners, and educators; address community needs; create evidence-based solutions; and deliver effective, compassionate care.

DiLorenzo received a master's degree in social work from Temple and has served as a part-time faculty member in the School of Social Work.

He is the executive director of the Salem Health and Wellness Foundation, an independent consultant and child welfare subject matter expert with over 40 years of experience, and holds a certification with the Academy of Certified Social Workers. He is also a senior fellow at the Child Welfare League of America.

Sandra Davis earned two degrees from Temple: a BS in nursing and a DPM from the School of Podiatric Medicine. She also earned a PhD from Drexel University, an MS in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania, and a BA from Wellesley College.

Davis is a leading expert in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in both academia and public health. She is an associate professor and assistant dean for DEI at the George Washington University School of Nursing. Previously, she was the director of the adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner program.

Davis also serves as a director at-large for the College of Public Health Alumni Association and chair of the inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

BUILDING *for the future*

Paley Hall takes shape
to transform public
health education

The jackhammers and cranes went to work this spring on the former Paley Library at the heart of Temple's Main Campus, beginning the process of transforming the iconic building into Paley Hall, the first unified home for the College of Public Health. After years of planning, the project's pace picked up over the summer, as if responding to an urgency.

Public health education in these post-pandemic days has never been more vital. The disciplines under the CPH umbrella—including nursing, epidemiology, rehabilitation sciences, social work, behavioral health, and policy—have never been more in demand. They need graduates to enter the workforce, after many health professionals have retired or left their fields due to stresses of recent years. There is growing demand for well-trained researchers who are ready to find evidence-based solutions to rising public health challenges.

The library's partial teardown will evolve quickly into a resurrection of Paley as a state-of-the-art teaching and research facility, including inviting spaces for students.

"We will see the building's exterior done, right there in the center of campus, in 2024," said **Jennifer Ibrahim**, dean of the College of Public Health. Paley Hall is scheduled to open in the fall of 2025, its central location beside the Bell Tower on

Polett Walk reflecting the importance of public health education at the university, in Philadelphia, and globally.

Paley will feature classrooms, training and simulation centers, meeting and study rooms, an expanded Social Service Annex for students, faculty and administration offices, café areas, and a Temple bookstore with a separate entrance. It will unite departments that have been spread across a dozen buildings on two campuses. Administrative and college leadership offices will relocate across 12th Street from the Bell Building. The nursing department will move its base to Paley from the Health Sciences Center. Every aspect of Paley's design, by PZS Architects and S/L/A/M, is intended to support the college's hallmark approach to interprofessional education, the belief that public health response is strengthened when multiple disciplines come together.

"Public health transcends single academic departments. Violence, trauma, nutrition, obesity, addiction, social determinants, community inclusion, shared patient decision-making, social justice...there will be so many opportunities for faculty, students, and the community to collaborate around these issues in our new home," Ibrahim said.



Above: Temple University and College of Public Health Leadership, along with Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and members of the Board of Trustees and Board of Visitors, break ground on the new Paley Hall in April.



Above: The renovated Paley Hall will sit at the heart of Temple's Main Campus.

Design for collaboration

On the ground floor, subdividable teaching space with modern instructional technology will allow for 230-person lectures or up to four separate classrooms. The first level will have a fully equipped teaching kitchen for nutrition and food preparation classes and community programs. Concrete panels around the façade of the old building, initially designed to keep sunlight away from library materials, have been removed to allow natural light to flow into learning and meeting spaces, including a 4,000-square-foot lobby atrium, which can be used for impromptu meetings and as an amphitheater.

"We created an atrium space that steps up through the building," said Michael Skolnik, a partner and architect at PZS, which also worked on Temple's Morgan Hall. "We have a large stair to encourage movement from the lobby up through each level, circulating through this light well." The building will be LEED certified, for sustainable design and operation, and will be the first on Temple's campus to request

WELL certification, for features that improve occupants' wellness such as ventilation, light, fitness, and comfort. "Views and nature are important with WELL design, so there are great views to the outside, and we bring nature in with a biophilic wall, a planted wall that's a focal point of the atrium," Skolnik said.

On the second floor, training centers will include a simulated community and urban home, where students pursuing disciplines such as physical, occupational, and recreational therapy can practice

helping clients move in and across varied environments. The simulated community will include a café and a small park environment with benches, green turf, and curbs. A partial row home will include a bedroom, bathroom, laundry room, kitchen, and dining area. A bedside care skills lab will have inpatient rooms, beds, and equipment to simulate a hospital environment. The Emergency Medical Services Skill Lab, for the college's new EMT program, will include a partial ambulance for practice with patient transfers.

Below: Subdividable teaching space will allow for 230-person lectures or up to four simultaneous classrooms.



Above: Paley Hall's spacious atrium will feature natural light and gathering places. **Below:** Study and reading areas in Paley Library, 1966.



"I think the college is about to knock it out of the park with the sim labs for clinical instruction," said **Cynthia Abbott-Gaffney**, associate professor in the occupational therapy program. "Clinical students work in the field as a part of their training—that's a big part of what Temple does. But the sim center will allow predictably scheduled, practical learning experiences, where they can hone their decision-making and problem solving, increasing their readiness for those real-world experiences. I wish this were around when I was a student."

A fifth floor, as well as tiers of green roofs, will be added to the four-story structure. The upper levels of the building will be home to the seven departments in the college and include a wide range of collaborative spaces to advance interdisciplinary education and research. Given recent renovations, some CPH labs and classes will remain outside Paley for now, including anatomy and physiology and athletic training labs in Pearson-McGonigle Hall and the Aramark STAR Complex, which opened in 2017.

Paley-ontology 101: Who was Samuel L. Paley?



Samuel L. Paley, whose family name will remain on Paley Hall when it opens as home of the College of Public Health, was a Ukrainian immigrant to the United States in the late 1880s. Arriving first in Chicago, Paley worked as a "lector" in a cigar factory, reading newspapers aloud to the workers. He learned cigar production there, well enough to launch his own company, Congress Cigar, in 1896. Its signature cigar was La Palina, an adaptation of the family name, with a portrait of his wife Goldie Drell Paley on the box.

Paley moved the company to Philadelphia, and it became one of America's largest cigar producers. Samuel's son William S. Paley promoted the family business by sponsoring a Philadelphia radio show called "The La Palina Hour." The radio industry was booming, and the company's success advertising on the air led the family to purchase five radio stations. That small radio network grew into the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and an even larger fortune than the cigar business.

When Samuel died in 1963, the family arranged its donation to Temple to help finance the new Paley Library. Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. delivered a talk at a dedicatory dinner before the library's October 1966 opening, and William S. Paley, then chairman of CBS, spoke at the dedication ceremony, along with Temple President Millard E. Gladfelter. Oil paintings by Goldie Paley hung in the library when it opened.



“There will be so many opportunities for faculty, students, and the community to collaborate.”

JENNIFER IBRAHIM

The \$162 million project is being financed by the College of Public Health with support from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In April, the college launched Public Health to Change the World, a capital campaign for the College of Public Health, to support the construction and fund student scholarships and faculty research.

The original Paley Library was part of an approximately \$6 million project, with \$5 million coming from the state and around \$1 million from the Samuel L. Paley Foundation. Designed by Temple’s campus master planners Nolen & Swinburne, it opened as the university’s main library in October 1966 and became a home base and study center for decades of students. It had a midcentury-modern design and held more than a million books.

The same project included construction of the Bell Tower, or campanile, establishing a central landmark on Main Campus. The campanile’s five bells were imported from Holland, and stones at its base came from the farm of Ali Hafed in Pakistan, whose story inspired Temple University founder Russell H. Conwell’s “Acres of Diamonds” lectures and his advice to “look in your own backyard for the riches you seek.”

In 2019, Temple transferred 1.8 million books and other items to the new Charles Library. The College of Public Health had been eyeing a unified home for its dispersed departments since its founding in 2014, and the vacated Paley building became a prime candidate.

“Once we made the decision to

form the College of Public Health, it was obvious that being spread across 12 to 14 buildings, depending on the year, was not conducive to creating an atmosphere in which we could have this interprofessional education and research,” said **Laura A. Siminoff**, who served as dean of the College of Public Health from 2014 to 2022.

Public health’s rise

The college has grown in prestige and scope over those years, most recently jumping to No. 36 among the nation’s schools and programs of public health in the 2023–24 edition of *U.S. News and World Report’s* Best Graduate Schools. More than 4,000 CPH students are pursuing undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degrees, and graduate enrollment has grown 15% over the past four years. The college

has 60 research centers and labs, approximately 165 full-time faculty members, and nearly \$70 million in active research grants.

Temple’s 2014 master plan, *Visualize Temple*, called for both a unified home for the College of Public Health and a repurposing of the Paley Library.

“It suggested that because Paley is so prominently located at the Bell Tower, whoever occupies that building should be prominent within the university,” said James Templeton, Temple University architect and assistant vice president for the Project Delivery Group. “At some point, leadership decided that the College of Public Health is incredibly important on our campus, and we have this building we can renovate.”

The cranes and jackhammers took a short pause on a brisk morning this April for the official groundbreaking, attended by public officials, university leaders, and supporters.

“Temple is one of the most important institutions in our city,” Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney said at the event. “The development of a new, innovative space to advance public health within the college and across the campus and North Philadelphia is very, very exciting.”

Ala Stanford, founder of the Black Doctors Consortium and former director of the Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities at Temple’s Lewis Katz School of Medicine, agreed. “To have Temple University invest further in the North Philadelphia community, specifically in this area of public health, is both

needed and appreciated,” she said. “I say that as someone who was born and raised in North Philadelphia. I am grateful that the College of Public Health is not just doing the research and the study, but they are acting. This community will greatly benefit.”

“Being together, having debates and discussions, inviting our community partners into this amazing space, it will be a giant step forward,” Ibrahim says. “Whether it’s in the teaching kitchen, showing ways to have nutritious meals in the context of food deserts, or bringing community partners into the sim center to innovate on how to provide health and social services in the community (not just a clinical setting), it’s going to be a game-changer in how we train our students, research the complex health questions before us, and advance health for the community.”

Visiting scholar helps kinesiology students build cultural competencies



Only a very small portion of **Lucy Wachira's** kinesiology class on nutrition trends is about alternative proteins. But the subject of edible insects as a valuable food source, and a delicacy in some communities, perks up the undergraduate students one afternoon in her African Perspectives on Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Health class, especially when she showed them a photo from an African food market of trays filled with pre-cooked edible insects for sale.

Some students ask for more details. Some squirm a little. "Let me move on from this picture, because I still want you to come back to class next week," she jokes.

One afternoon's class focuses on dietary habits across selected communities in sub-Saharan Africa and, more broadly, the need to understand the cultural, geographical, economic, and other factors that influence what people eat.

"I'm sure you have good information about what's healthy and what's not healthy," she tells the class, but that information is just the starting point to designing an effective health intervention. "As people in public health, we need to make sure that as we go out to different communities with our health messages, we are aware of and respect the reasons why people make the choices they make."

"It's all about gaining appropriate cultural competencies," Wachira explains after the class. "Trying to understand why people do what they do, before you tell them what to do."

When Wachira arrived at Temple last fall, it was her first time setting foot in the United States. At Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, she is a tenured professor in the Department of Physical Education, Exercise, and Sports Science. "We have more than 70,000 students. Our classes are huge. I'm having a good time teaching a class of 25 students here, as compared to 100," she says.

In Kenya, her teaching and research explore physical activity and pediatric obesity. She is a champion of physical activity promotion in sub-Saharan Africa through the African Physical Activity Network and represented the continent in the development of the global recommendations, "International School-related Sedentary Behavior Recommendations for Children and Youth."

At Temple, she is a Fulbright Visiting Scholar-in-Residence, a program aimed at helping U.S. colleges boost internationalization on their campuses. In the fall, Wachira taught two anatomy and physiology lab classes at the College of Public Health while sharing her global experience with community and university groups and working to design the African Perspectives course as an elective for this spring semester.

"It's a very interesting course, to a point that we couldn't even get a main

textbook that describes the content," Wachira says. "It has to be a little bit from here and there."

"We try to offer a couple of unique elective courses each semester, and this one was a no-brainer," says **Mark Stoutenberg**, associate professor of health and rehabilitation sciences, who himself was a Fulbright specialist in South Africa.

The African Perspectives course provides an overview of physical activity, nutrition, and health across Africa, covering historical, geographical, and other factors. Part of Wachira's aim is to shatter misconceptions people may have about the diverse continent. "What they know is what the media portrays," she says. "Even I cannot teach about all 54 countries, or the cultural diversity in one single country."

Among the topics discussed in this class is the dual health challenge of undernutrition and obesity in some parts of Africa. Wachira talks about the importance of understanding cultural influences, effects of urbanization, food sources, choices, availability, affordability, and traditions in various settings. She shows photos of popular foods in selected regions—fish, grains, leafy greens, and fufu, a starchy dumpling made from cassava—and discusses how these reflect local food environments.

She asks students to talk about the food choices they make for themselves and consider what has influenced them, like convenience, cost, advertising, or social factors. Then she asks how students might approach communities to start a program or spread health messages on healthy eating habits. The best answers revolve around first trying to understand local traditions, food environments, economics, and social structures.

Right: Wachira's class helped students understand nutrition and fitness issues beyond Philadelphia.

"We'll talk about a program, but the current norm tends to rely on downloading an app or following an online program. How can we design and execute a successful program in a rural area that has limited internet connection?" Wachira asks. "We were looking at an example of the refugee camps—how do we come up with a physical activity program in a place that has limited space and no permanent structures? So, this is all to help Temple students visualize different scenarios to be able to diversify the application of their knowledge." That's an approach that will work not only in Africa, but wherever students may travel and find job opportunities.

Students enrolled in this class note that while other parts of their studies have taught them the textbook science and nuts-and-bolts of their disciplines, this course has enabled them to see those things in a new cultural context.

"For people like us whose future careers are in promoting physical activity and wellness, it's interesting to see how we would apply skills that we've learned in the classroom," **Andy Pielli**, a student studying kinesiology, says.

"It makes us think outside the box, which I think will really help us in the future," says **Emma Singley**, an exercise and sports science student.

Wachira also gives the students a useful tip for visiting homes in many African cultures: It's always wise to acknowledge the head of the household and politely accept food people offer when you visit their homes—even if it might be something you never considered eating before.

"It's important to stay open-minded," says **Chris Luff**, a student majoring in exercise and sports science, after the class. "It's important to have empathy with people from other places who have different experiences from yourself."





Temple University is known for many things, particularly the role we play in educating students from the region, nation, and, increasingly, the world. One thing that is often overlooked is the university's reputation with respect to research. In 2015, Temple University was designated an R1 institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutes of Higher Education. This designation, re-awarded in 2020, indicates that we are among the top 4% of colleges and universities in the United States. In terms of research spending, Temple also is the seventh fastest-growing research university in the past decade.

This success has been evident within the College of Public Health. Grants from government agencies—including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense, and National Institutes of Health — as well as other organizations at the national, state, or regional level, are necessary to support the research and scholarship of our accomplished faculty. This past year, we set records with respect to the number extramural grants we submitted to funders and the dollars requested in those awards. Both of these amounts have more than doubled during my time serving as the associate dean for research, a point of great personal and collective pride.

Our college received 52 new awards (the second-most in the past five years) and set a record for the average size of those awards. Sixty-nine faculty members and graduate students had extramural funding to support 163 distinct research projects, and both of these figures, as well, represent new records for the college. These statistics not only reflect tremendous research productivity but also point to a maturation of our research enterprise more generally.

Those of you who read this magazine each year know that one of our approaches to growing our research has been to attract early-career faculty and position them for success. Since 2018, 11 members of our faculty across six of our seven academic departments have received prestigious early-career development awards from the National Institutes of Health. Prior to 2018, we had no history of these awards; it has been a great personal joy to watch these individuals successfully launch their programs of research and significantly contribute to our collective success.

In the pages that follow, you will read about some of this work. What is always striking to me is the diversity of areas in which we work. Not only do our faculty work in traditional areas such as epidemiology, environmental health, and health policy, but we also focus on discrete conditions, such as HIV/AIDS, mental health, substance misuse, and obesity. At the same time, we have faculty and students engaged in impactful scholarship in specific disciplines, such as nursing, physical therapy, rehabilitation sciences, and social work.

I hope you enjoy reading about the breadth and depth of the life-enhancing, and often lifesaving, research as much as I enjoy sharing our success with you.

David B. Sarwer

Associate Dean for Research
Director, Center for Obesity Research and Education

Study will help schools maximize student meal programs



ABSTRACT

Federally funded school meals are a public health benefit. But implementation of the meals program varies across schools, and not all children access food they're entitled to. A CPH-led study in Philadelphia schools will identify approaches that are working best for schools and their students.

Federal nutrition policies that provide free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch to low-income students can reduce child hunger and food insecurity. The nutrition-rich meals can help counter risks for childhood overweight and obesity. School meals are a truly front-line public health program, and they're well-funded at a national level. But some schoolchildren aren't accessing food they're entitled to. Some schools face key barriers to successful implementation, and public schools often don't have resources to get a big-picture view of what's working and what isn't.

"There are implementation gaps to the program being as successful as it can be," says **Gabriella McLoughlin**, an assistant professor in the College of Public Health.

McLoughlin has been awarded a grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to bring scientific rigor to the world of subsidized meal programs. In a five-year study, she will apply a method called implementation mapping to study existing meal programs in Philadelphia public schools, aiming to identify approaches that are working best for the schools and their students.

Implementation mapping is a systematic process for developing strategies to improve the way interventions in real-world settings

are put into practice. In this case, the intervention being implemented is school meals. All students in the School District of Philadelphia automatically qualify for free breakfast and lunch under the National School Lunch Act, thanks to a rule called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The CEP allows schools or whole districts with at least 40% of students qualifying as disadvantaged, based on certain criteria, to provide free meals to all students. This eliminates the need for families to apply individually for the benefit, reduces stigma, and removes out-of-pocket costs for households.

However, not all schools and students take full advantage of the program. Amy Virus, manager of administrative and support service in the Division of Food Services for the School District of Philadelphia, says about 70% of students take free lunches and 40% to 45% take breakfasts. One issue influencing participation is perceived stigma in accepting free food.

"What we hear anecdotally is that the students don't want the quote-unquote freebie. There is stigma associated with it. It's more with older students than younger students," Virus says.

Working with Virus in Philadelphia public schools, McLoughlin's research team will identify middle and high schools that have varying

levels of participation in school meals. The study will include assessments of existing school implementation, their successes and challenges, and reasons why students may forgo the meals.

Ultimately the project will create and test interventions based on the research, designed to improve school meal participation rates. "We're interested in hearing what students and others have to say about what could make more students want to participate in our meals program. Maybe it's a campaign that would help reduce the stigma, help us modernize, help us to look at it with fresh eyes, maybe see an obvious thing that we don't see," Virus says.

The study will provide pilot data for a larger trial. McLoughlin also is working with the Urban School Food Alliance, a national network of urban school districts, so findings in Philadelphia could potentially inform other school systems in their efforts.

"The goal is to provide evaluation support to schools," McLoughlin says. "How can we improve feasibility of the program? How can we improve acceptability? How can we evaluate the cost of implementation? It's about increasing uptake at the student level, increasing health outcomes at the student level, and decreasing food and nutrition insecurity for families."

Han to study microplastics in Philadelphia's air



ABSTRACT

A new study will begin measuring air in Philadelphia neighborhoods for presence of microplastics, particles small enough to enter lungs and cause health problems. Findings could lead to revised public health policies, increased awareness among residents, or guidance aimed at manufacturers.

Cars and trucks have a health impact that greener electric vehicles will not eliminate. Tire wear produces plastic dust that gets into air and water. Plastic particles small enough to enter our lungs can contain toxic chemicals and heavy metals, potentially causing heart, lung, developmental, reproductive, and cancer outcomes.

Inkyu Han, an environmental health scientist at the College of Public Health, is about to launch a federally funded study to measure microplastics in the air across Philadelphia neighborhoods. His Characterizing Airborne Microplastics in Philadelphia (CAMP) study is a first step toward identifying the nature and the geography of the issue in the city. Findings could lead to revised public health policies, increased awareness among residents, or guidance aimed at manufacturers.

"Most microplastics research has focused on marine pollution, plastic getting into water and streams," Han says. "There hasn't been much research on airborne plastic pollution. My central hypothesis is that the primary source in urban air is tires."

Production of plastics globally jumped to 584 million tons in 2020,

in part from unprecedented demand for single-use plastics during the COVID-19 pandemic. This can get into our bodies. One shocking (but disputed) report in 2019 suggested that humans consume one credit card's worth of plastic every week. Ingestion of microplastics and smaller nanoplastics (together known as MANs) was once considered the primary route of human exposure, but recent reviews suggest inhalation may be two to three times greater than ingestion via eating and drinking. Researchers in the U.K. recently wrote that six million tons of tire wear particles are released globally every year, and that tire wear in cities could pose up to four times the risk to the environment of other microplastics.

Han, an associate professor of epidemiology and biostatistics, came to Temple in 2021 with a zeal to study environmental health. He says it began when, as a student in South Korea, he read the book *Our Stolen Future*, by Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanoski, and John Peterson Myers, which explores how endocrine-disrupting human-made chemicals interfere with fertility and fetal development. After earning bachelor's and master's degrees in environmental science in Korea, Han

trained as an exposure scientist at Rutgers University, earning a PhD in environmental and occupational health. Recently he was appointed as a scientific advisor to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Public Health Committee, where he will contribute to policy and program recommendations.

One focus of his research has been occupational chemical exposure among immigrant populations.

"I am an immigrant, and I'm fortunate to be a university faculty member, but many immigrants work in jobs where chemicals can create respiratory, reproductive, or other health problems," he says. Han studied exposure to toxic volatile organic compounds among nail salon technicians in New York (primarily Asian women) and female domestic workers (primarily Hispanic) in San Antonio, with findings aimed at helping improve those work conditions.

In Houston and in Philadelphia, he has investigated urban areas where residents are exposed to health risks from extreme heat, contributing not just research but community-based action. Through the College of Public Health's community partnerships, Han has taken part in

forums in Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood, advising residents about staying safe during heat waves.

Now, his new CAMP study, funded for two years by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, will examine airborne plastics in Philadelphia. People living in densely populated, high-traffic urban areas are at risk for significant exposure to airborne MANs, Han knows. Many low-income Philadelphians may have no air conditioning, or limited budgets to keep it running, so they may spend more time with windows open in warmer months, increasing exposure to outdoor air MANs. The Philadelphia study will pinpoint what's in the air around the city using intake equipment that captures and filters plastic particles. Advanced spectroscopy techniques will enable the research team to classify plastic particles by type and size and measure the density of their presence in different locations.

The study could lead to further research that connects the presence of airborne plastics to health outcomes or leads to policy recommendations.

There are no easy answers. Battery-powered vehicles that reduce carbon emissions can be heavier than gasoline models, which may increase tire wear. Manufacturers seeking to meet mileage standards with lighter cars sometimes employ more plastic parts.

But it's still to be determined whether Philadelphia has a big problem with plastic in the air.

"The levels may not be too high and toxic to human health. Maybe we don't have to worry about it," Han says. "We really need to know if there are airborne microplastics in the air we breathe and, if so, the extent of their presence. It's essential for our environmental and public health awareness."

'Legal epidemiology' to measure impact of laws on infectious diseases



How do laws affect the spread or prevention of disease? The emerging field of legal epidemiology is quantifying answers.

Researchers from the College of Public Health have joined with the Center for Public Health Law Research (CPHLR) at Temple's Beasley School of Law for an ambitious study that will measure the impact that laws across the nation have on health outcomes related to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, viral hepatitis, and tuberculosis. The five-year project, funded by a \$3.89 million grant from the CDC's National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, is designed to help policymakers understand the consequences of different types of regulation.

"Ultimately the goal is to produce evidence that demonstrates the impact of key laws and policies on the burden of disease at the population level," says **Pricila Mullachery**, assistant professor of health services administration and policy. She is joined by biostatistics professor **Recai Yucel** and **Lindsay Cloud**, a PhD candidate at CPH who directs the Policy Surveillance Program at CPHLR.

Working with experts from law, public health, and infectious diseases as well as advocacy groups, the researchers will identify state and local laws that can affect these health conditions, then rank them to narrow the number of laws examined. Laws included may address diverse issues such as poverty reduction, telehealth, gender-affirming care, and distribution of drug paraphernalia. For example, some states have laws reducing access to clean needles by people who inject drugs. Clean needles can be key to preventing the spread of HIV and other bloodborne diseases. "So that's an example of a law we're aiming to include," Mullachery says.

Because laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, specific provisions of each law will be codified in a database. The legal data will be matched with health outcomes among populations affected by the laws, in a dataset to be built by research partners at Drexel University.

"By understanding what different states do, we might find it's okay to have this law if it's less harsh, or if they have specific exclusions," Mullachery says. "The idea is to identify policies and laws that ultimately lead to improvements in health."

ABSTRACT

A collaborative study by the College of Public Health and Temple's Beasley School of Law will examine how state and local laws impact health outcomes related to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, viral hepatitis, and tuberculosis. The five-year project, funded by a \$3.89 million grant from the CDC, is designed to help policymakers understand the consequences of different types of regulation.

What Three Mile Island can teach public health researchers



ABSTRACT

Public health researchers can learn from the successes and flaws of research done in the aftermath of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident in 1979 in Harrisburg, Pa. An overview of past studies, reports, and meeting transcripts shows that imperfect data gathering and follow-up made it difficult to assess the health impact of the worst nuclear accident in U.S. history.

The partial meltdown of the Three Mile Island (TMI) nuclear reactor in March 1979 near Harrisburg, Pa., was the worst nuclear accident in U.S. history, exposing around 2 million people to radioactive fallout. Pennsylvania Gov. Richard Thornburgh advised pregnant women and preschool children within a five-mile radius of the nuclear plant to evacuate, resulting in approximately 144,000 people leaving their homes.

Concerns about the accident's public health impact have lingered, but firm conclusions have remained elusive. A recently published five-year study helps to explain why.

Investigators from Temple, Penn State, and the University of Pittsburgh explored decades of public health studies conducted in the TMI accident's wake, as well as unpublished reports and transcripts from the expert advisory panel assembled by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health after the accident. Their paper, published in the journal *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, highlights shortcomings in information gathering and analysis that have obscured a clear picture of the accident's health effects.

"We want to bring this information to the forefront, especially for

governments and researchers, so that we can have plans in place and do not repeat mistakes of the past," says **Robin Taylor Wilson**, associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. "We need to establish mechanisms to ensure long-term follow-up, and we need pre-accident protocols designed to address major health issues, with inclusion of vulnerable populations and perceived risks. We can't wait for accidents to occur."

Most studies examining possible cancer effects of accident radiation on residents did not gather data about potential confounding factors such as whether residents smoked, or about their normal workplace exposure to radiation. Studies also failed to use a TMI-unexposed control group for comparison.

Despite multiple public statements by the Pennsylvania Department of Health that careful evaluation of immediate and long-term follow-up of children should be conducted, the longest follow-up for childhood cancer was limited to the years 1985 to 1995 and did not include children outside of the five-mile radius. Similar problems with discontinuity of health research follow-up were observed in the wake of the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear accidents, the paper says. The team

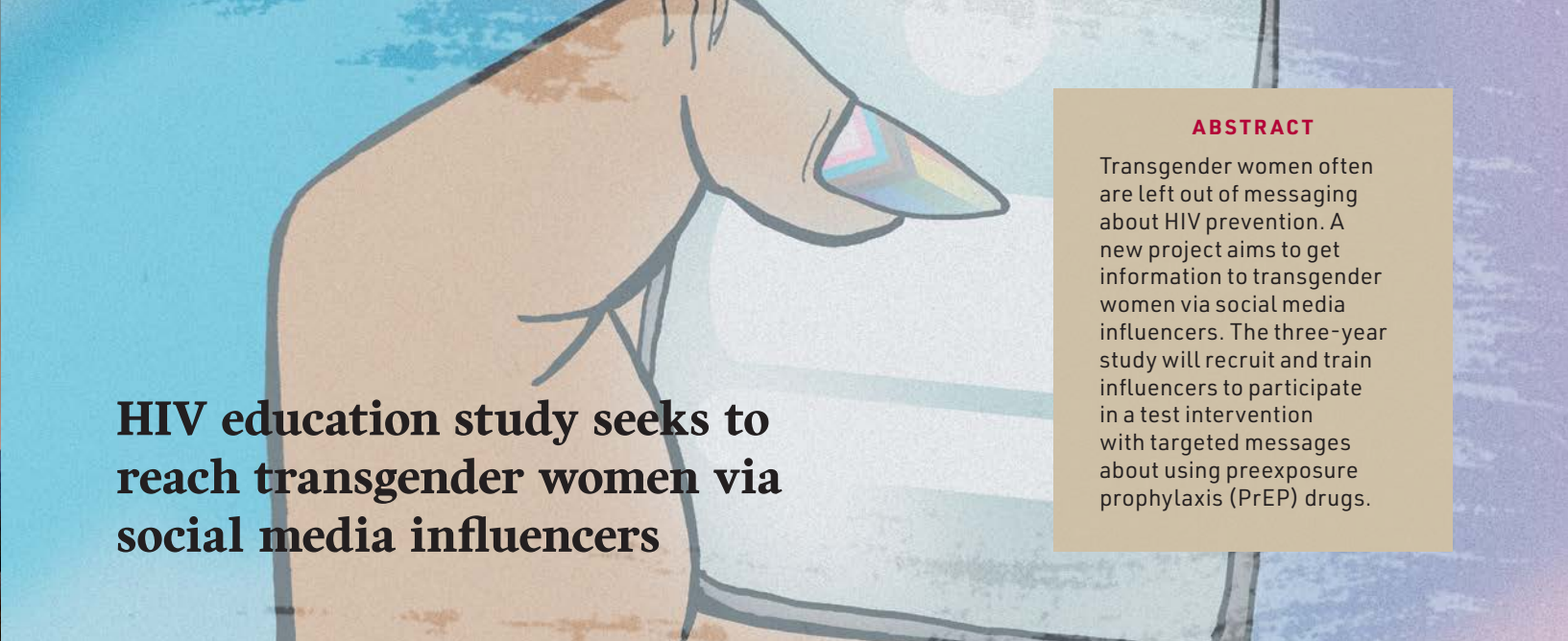
compared meeting transcripts to the record of published and unpublished research and found that only a small portion of the planned analyses were ever conducted.

"The nuclear energy industry has used TMI as a case study in training nuclear engineers, but there are lessons for public health researchers as well," says Wilson. The paper suggests ways that follow-up of future incidents might be more effective, including more community engagement in the research and built-in mechanisms to ensure long-term follow-up will continue—especially for outcomes like cancer which may take decades to develop.

Wilson believes that understanding the successes and flaws of past research on cancer effects can help guide her current epidemiological studies of cancer links with polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), hazardous chemicals contaminating water in communities north of Philadelphia.

"From what I and my colleagues have observed, we are still in a reactionary state—both for nuclear incidents as well as other slow-moving technological disasters, like PFAS. What we want to do is learn from the past and orient ourselves moving forward," she says.

HIV education study seeks to reach transgender women via social media influencers



ABSTRACT

Transgender women often are left out of messaging about HIV prevention. A new project aims to get information to transgender women via social media influencers. The three-year study will recruit and train influencers to participate in a test intervention with targeted messages about using preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) drugs.

Transgender women are significantly more likely to have HIV than the general population, while studies show they are less likely to engage in HIV prevention strategies. The disconnect may exist because they receive insufficient information about prevention medicine, possibly due to systemic bias. Transgender women have reported challenges receiving support from healthcare providers. And pharmaceutical companies, though they devote large budgets to advertising preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) drugs that can help prevent HIV, tend to leave transgender women out of their campaigns.

"They just don't see themselves in any of the marketing. Their specific issues—like 'How is this going to affect the hormones that I take?'—aren't being addressed by the marketing at all," says **Sarah Bauerle Bass**, professor of social and behavioral sciences and director of Temple's Risk Communication Laboratory. As a result, she says, "They are a highly at-risk group because they have not had a lot of really targeted interventions."

Bass is leading a new project aimed at getting HIV prevention information to transgender women in a different way: via social media influencers.

The three-year study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, will recruit and train popular online influencers to participate in a test intervention that will include targeted messages about using PrEP. The specific messaging was honed in a prior study that surveyed transgender women about their experiences and concerns. Both the prior and current project are in partnership with Sophia Zamudio-Haas and Jae Sevelius of the Center of Excellence for Transgender Health at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF).

Bass's Risk Communication Lab at Temple adapts consumer marketing techniques and information diffusion theory for use in public health communications. Her prior study with UCSF, and a current investigation in collaboration with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, have employed a method called perceptual mapping to build visual representations of how transgender women conceptualize their concerns around HIV and its prevention. A technique called message vector modeling then was used to design messaging likely to make an impact by addressing specific barriers transgender women may have to using PrEP. The early studies identified, among other things, that messaging should be

varied for different age groups.

"We developed materials like posters and palm cards, and a trans female artist created a comic book. UCSF has also developed interventions using peer-education components, where transgender women would talk others through the process of getting on PrEP. So we started to think about meshing these things together," Bass explains.

A community advisory board is helping to identify influencers for the new project. Influencers will use prepared information in their videos, memes, and other postings, but also be allowed to present information in a way that is organic to them.

"We can take the information we have developed and make it Instagrammable, and pair it with an influencer who's going to be very positive about PrEP, providing information about where people can get it, answer questions, have events, do Q&A sessions, all sorts of things," Bass explains. "The idea is that they'll get information in a way that makes sense to them, from somebody they trust."

A portrait of Liam Spady '23, a young Black man with a mustache, wearing a light blue dress shirt, a patterned tie, and blue suspenders. He is looking upwards and to the left with a thoughtful expression.

PORTRAIT OF *perseverance*

**Liam Spady '23
pushes through
adversity to improve
young lives**

Some College of Public Health graduates spent the sunny hours before this year's Commencement in May welcoming family on campus or planning parties. **Liam Spady '23**, who was just about to graduate with a bachelor's degree in public health, had other business to take care of before the late afternoon ceremony. For most of the day, he was at a WeWork office in downtown Philadelphia, co-leading a four-hour meeting of the National Network for Youth.

Participants from across Pennsylvania had gathered, in person and via teleconference, to discuss ideas to improve the lives of young people who experience housing insecurity. Spady would help translate ideas from the brainstorming meeting into policy proposals to take to state lawmakers in Harrisburg.

The issue is personal to Spady. He entered foster care at age 16, surviving a series of imperfect and sometimes unsafe placements, including a group home. After aging out of the foster care system at 18, he didn't always have a reliable place to stay. He couch-surfed and drifted, even while a student at Temple. He knows firsthand what many young adults go through when they live through housing insecurity and all the anxieties, frustrations, and dangers that accompany it. The experience turned him into a soft-spoken but hard-driving advocate for young people who don't have a place to stay, particularly those between 18 and 24 who lose access to programs for children. He is a crusader for including their input in decisions about housing-related policies and programs.

"When you have folks with lived expertise, they can call out things that we might miss if we don't have that expertise," Spady said over the speakerphone to program administrators in Pittsburgh. The

Philadelphia group discussed the real-life needs of young people who are struggling with housing issues. They reviewed examples of legislation from other states, looking for approaches that might work. They began filling a whiteboard on the wall with ideas based on their experience. Spady took notes with an eye on the clock. He had his cap and gown stuffed inside a paper Temple bookstore bag in a corner of the room.

"I've got my things. I'm ready to go," he said.

Impact beyond campus

Spady lived a sort of double life through his tenure as a Temple student. He worked for city agencies and community organizations in parallel to his studies, while also dealing with a unique set of health and personal trauma issues. Near the start of his senior year last fall, the City of Philadelphia won an \$8.78 million federal grant to develop programs to mitigate young adult homelessness. Spady had co-authored early versions of the winning grant proposal six years earlier, as a 19-year-old working part-time with the city's Office of Homeless Services.

At 25, he is still in the process of overcoming a daunting set of challenges. He grew up in West Philadelphia, the sixth of seven children, a self-described nerd who found refuge from neighborhood bullies in the kitchen. He liked to cook—and also saw disparities in food availability when he looked at his neighborhood and more prosperous areas of the city. To study food, he enrolled in the city's W. B. Saul High School of Agricultural Sciences. When he found the school's academics falling short of his aspirations, he applied to switch to Philadelphia's Central High. He will never forget the day he got the acceptance letter from Central.

"I was so excited," he recalls. "I went to the basketball court down the street. I was out there for hours. The streetlights turned on. And that kind of altered how everything turned out later."

Some classmates from his middle school saw him shooting hoops and, as he puts it, "decided it would be good to argue and fight." What actually happened was they assaulted him, smashed his head on the pavement. Spady ended up with "a fractured skull and all that kind of stuff," he says. After that followed cycles of doctor's appointments for traumatic brain injury; a diagnosis of complex PTSD, whose symptoms can include difficulty controlling emotions; a diagnosis of epilepsy; and the discovery of a tumor on his left temporal lobe. He had seizures and was put on medications that altered his moods in ways he didn't like. His health issues created family issues. By his sophomore year at Central, Spady was sent into foster care, and the high school was suggesting it might not be the place for him.

"I didn't want to walk down the street. I didn't want to go to school. Just the fear, the anxiety," he says.

At the same time, he was absorbing how the support system worked, or didn't. "There were just so many different systems involved. The medical system, school system, the court system, and none of them worked together," he says.

One day, a social worker knocked on his door. Laura Vega, who now co-directs the Violence Intervention Program at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, had just started working with a peer-led program called BRAVE for kids who experienced violent assault.

"He did a lot of hard work to get to where he is today," Vega recalls. "During difficult times, he would push himself to try to understand why he was feeling the way he was feeling."



Above: At Philadelphia's Stoneleigh Foundation, Spady describes his work with the National Network for Youth.

He started helping other youth, which is so remarkable, and he would share his story, and give them hope about their own journey and their own healing."

"It started me kind of returning to some normalcy," Spady says.

Emerging as a leader

He transformed himself from a client into a provider of support services. In 2016, Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services (OHS) brought together social services agencies for an effort called the 100-Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness, and OHS hired Spady as a part-time staffer. The challenge got hundreds of people off the city's streets and out of shelters into more stable housing. It led Spady to co-found the Young Adult Leadership

Committee, young adults who had experienced homelessness or unstable housing, meeting regularly to share experiences and serve as an advisory group to city administrators. Spady pushed to give voice to some of the city's most powerless people. He had a hand in authoring early versions of that grant proposal for youth programs that, years later, would win Philadelphia millions from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Spady met leaders like David Fair, a longtime labor, AIDS, and LGBT activist who is deputy chief executive officer at Turning Points for Children.

"We connected immediately," Fair recalls. "He was able to represent the mass of young, homeless people who can be intimidated by the bureaucrats. I didn't need to explain

to him how to see through all that. He knew it instinctively from his prior experience. But he also trusted in his own competence, which a lot of 19-year-olds don't."

His own housing situation remained unstable.

"Young people are supposed to be about self-exploration," Spady says. "You're thinking about the prom or whatever. You shouldn't have to worry about housing. It was like a healthy and unhealthy fuel that kept me going."

Spady eventually left OHS, frustrated by what he perceived to be the system's slowness in embracing more direct input from young people. Last fall, when Philadelphia's big grant from HUD came through, he did take just a moment to celebrate.

"This feels all too surreal, it's such a huge step forward," Spady wrote in an email to spread the news. "The money will positively impact the future of many young people in the Philadelphia area for years to come."

But he had seen enough to know that money and good intentions don't automatically add up to solutions. When he was invited to join the initial Zoom video session about the winning grant, where city officials and leaders from social services organizations met to politely introduce themselves, Spady challenged them with the very first thing he said.

"I've got a few questions for folks here," he said to the gathering of older adults. "I don't see a lot of young people here."

His abruptness caught some of the organization leaders off guard, but not David Fair.

"Liam manages to come across as calm and collected when he's throwing darts at you for not doing what needs to happen," Fair says.

As an undergraduate in public health, he studied mental health and trauma. He recognized a familiar theme running through many of his classes: the concept of social determinants of health, the idea that health isn't just a result of genetics or lifestyle but impacted by structural and societal issues, cycles of poverty, under-resourced neighborhoods, systemic racism, and discrimination. It mirrored what he'd experienced, and it strengthened his resolve to seek answers.

He never stopped working, even while taking on a full course load. After leaving OHS he was a youth housing justice training and capacity-building associate at Youth Collaboratory, a national nonprofit. He became a co-chair of Philly Homes 4 Youth. In 2022 he won an Emerging Leader Fellowship from the Stoneleigh Foundation, with a salary to work for the National Network for Youth (NN4Y), which collaborates with regional organizations.

It was NN4Y that convened the Pennsylvania legislative planning meeting that kept Spady busy for much of his graduation day. The group would end up writing in support of three bills that are under consideration in the Pennsylvania House, two intended to assist students experiencing homelessness and another to waive fees for driver's licenses and state IDs.

When the meeting broke up, Spady rode his electric scooter up Broad Street to the Liacouras Center, parked it, and put on his graduation regalia to wait with fellow graduates. More than 1,000 students walked up to receive diplomas, almost all before Spady; the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences was the last in a long queue. Finally, his name was called. Up on the stage he waved and smiled. Dean **Jennifer Ibrahim** gave him a little hug. It took Spady a while to get here. Now he really is ready to go.

Below: Spady at graduation in May.



Helping others *move forward*



In the Behavioral Neurophysiology Lab in the College of Liberal Arts, researchers work to understand the effects of cocaine and opiate use on the human body, researching topics ranging from the roles of specific scaffolding proteins in drug relapses to examining how adolescent stress alters the brain's response to cocaine. As the lab's resident research technician, **Lizzie Birmingham**, a master of social work student in the College of Public Health, is responsible for ensuring the lab has everything it needs to function.

In addition to organizing the lab's scheduling, ordering supplies, and managing the general upkeep of the facility, Birmingham also conducts research into the differences in substance use disorders between sexes.

"A project that we're working on right now is focused on how female ovarian circulating hormones can impact drug taking, drug seeking, and relapse," she explains. "One of the things that I've been able to do is manipulate the circulation of those hormones to see what effect they have on making people relapse to substances, specifically cocaine."

As an MSW student, Birmingham's understanding of substance use disorders extends beyond laboratory research. She studied psychology as an undergraduate at Temple, a decision she credits to her father's experiences with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

MSW student **Lizzie Birmingham** addresses impacts of substance use disorder

"My dad has been in AA my whole life," she says, "so I grew up learning about substance abuse, the 12-step program, and the role of mental health. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, but I knew that I wanted to go into the mental health realm in some capacity."

During her undergraduate studies, Birmingham found herself working in the area of substance use disorders. In addition to being an undergraduate research assistant in the Behavioral Neurophysiology Lab, she spent a year working for Gaudenzia, a provider of addiction treatment and recovery services.

"My unit was a mental health support unit for individuals with drug and alcohol problems coming out of state prison on parole," she says. "I was responsible for doing my rounds every hour to check in on the patients, and I also ran mental health groups for people to talk. I loved the work I did there."

Birmingham's willingness to help others extends to her fellow social worker students at Temple, where she is the student leader of the Social Work Student Collective, an organization that offers social work students a place to share their experiences in the program and do outreach, such as organizing a fundraiser for the Student Emergency Aid Fund.

Looking ahead, Birmingham hopes to continue helping people in need as a social work intern at Temple Hospital's Episcopal Campus, where she assists in discharge planning across multiple units, ensuring that patients have access to the resources they need—such as housing, outpatient therapy, and job preparation—once they leave the hospital.

Uplifting voices, *lowering barriers*



When **Abby Hong '23** started working with Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services (OHS) before her junior year, she only expected it to be a summer internship. It was such a good fit for her interests and talents that it turned into two years of part-time work with OHS, lasting through her graduation this spring.

Hong worked with the city agency on lowering barriers to employment for homeless individuals and recruiting young people with lived experience of housing insecurity to help inform policies. And, as her classmate **Liam Spady '23** had done (p. 24), Hong helped shape the grant proposal aimed at developing innovative approaches to youth housing issues.

"I'm really interested in working with vulnerable populations within public health," Hong says. "I have a family member who is homeless, and I know other people who have experienced homelessness. So I kind of have a soft spot. I'm interested in trying to tackle infrastructure issues we're having around the country and showing people how to get the things that they need."

Hong, a Pittsburgh native, made a quick impression at OHS that first summer as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. She worked on "Help for the Hurdles," an initiative to help homeless individuals succeed in jobs by assisting them with critical issues like childcare and transportation. She worked

Abigail Hong '23 centers young adults in efforts to end housing insecurity

both in the office—coordinating with multiple agencies—and on the front lines.

"We had a partnership with First Step Staffing. I would go into shelters to promote it, and we would get people connected to transportation and childcare and jobs across the city," she says.

Hong was given an opportunity to stay on, assisting with the city's Young Adult Leadership Committee, which helps ensure that voices of young adults (ages 18-24) are heard in conversations about housing and related programs. She recruited participants into the committee and facilitated meetings, where community members discussed their experiences and reviewed policies, helping to make sure they were youth-friendly.

"What I liked most about what Abby brought to the table was her community engagement experience," says Beth Gonzalez, deputy director of policy, planning, and performance management at OHS. "Prior to OHS, she had worked with students on campus, and those skills translated to assisting our youth and young adult participants when it came to recruitment efforts, engagement in activities, and facilitating meetings. She cared about the mission and was able to problem-solve."

On campus, Hong maintained a 4.0 GPA and in 2022 won the university's prestigious Diamond Award, Temple's highest recognition for undergraduate students, "reserved for those who have demonstrated superior leadership, academic achievement, service to the university, and impact on a community."

Hong left a lasting contribution at OHS working on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project proposal, which last year won the City of Philadelphia its \$8.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"As a young person, I think it's so valuable to have spaces where we're uplifting youth voices, because sometimes they can be overlooked," she says. "Adults don't think we know what we're talking about. But especially when people have lived experience with an issue, it's so incredibly important to make sure that they're being heard—that we're listening."

ALUMNI

In May, more than 1,400 students in the College of Public Health and the School of Social Work, representing more than 25 degree programs, received their bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at the 57th College of Public Health graduation ceremony, following the university Commencement earlier that day, which officially conferred degrees on the nearly 10,000 students in Temple's Class of 2023.



Class of 2023 commended on
their passion for serving others



Above: Dean Jennifer Ibrahim. Below: Graduation speaker Kendra McDow.

In her opening remarks, College of Public Health Dean **Jennifer Ibrahim** reminded students of their resilience and perseverance as they met the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"You joined our staff and faculty to help vaccinate our Temple and North Philadelphia community or to be contact tracers to minimize the spread of disease," said Ibrahim. "You engaged in service to the community through pro bono clinical work, community homes, food and clothing drives, and health education initiatives. You advocated for change to address discrimination and social injustice. You did this because that is what the world needed you to do."

"As we leave here today, let's lean fully into the one force that binds us, connects us, and unites us: our passion to help, to uplift, and ultimately to serve humanity."

KENDRA MCDOW



Above: Student speaker Theresa Tellez '23

Graduation speaker Kendra McDow, school system medical officer for the School District of Philadelphia, commended graduates on their passion for serving others.

"I charge you to go out and S.E.R.V.E.: Seek out purpose, explore your options, reflect on your impact, value your origin story, and embrace change along your life's journey," she said. "As we leave here today, let's lean fully into the one force that binds us, connects us, and unites us: our passion to help, to uplift, and ultimately to serve humanity."

In the student address, **Theresa Tellez '23**, a bachelor of science in public health student also pursuing a master of public health in epidemiology, looked to the future as she reminded graduates of their path ahead.

"We recognize that disparities that exist in our society and our personal experiences as well as the knowledge we've earned from Temple have given us a wildfire-like passion to make a better tomorrow," she said. "It is now up to us to give back to our communities, both locally and globally, with our passion."



Temple launched Mike McGurn '91 to the big leagues

Before he was a renowned strength and conditioning coach, before he trained Premier League soccer teams in England and the Irish national rugby squad or prepared Irish boxer Bernard Dunne to win a world championship, **Mike McGurn '91** was a quiet teenager who came to Temple as a physical education major. He arrived in 1987 from his home in County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland with a scholarship to run on Temple's cross-country team. He showed potential to be a world-class distance runner until injuries sidetracked his dream of running in the Olympics. But he says his experience at Temple, in a program that has evolved to become the exercise and sport science degree at the College of Public Health, put him on a path that changed his life.

"Every bit of success I've had in sports, it started at Temple," McGurn said recently from Belfast, where he is lead strength and conditioning coach for Queen's University.

Through Temple, McGurn met some of Philadelphia's sports luminaries, whose guidance helped him think big. Temple basketball coach John Chaney became a mentor. Given the chance to observe fitness work by the Flyers, Eagles, and 76ers, McGurn met sports entrepreneur Pat Croce. He connected with Charles Barkley while plastering the 76ers star's house during a summer construction job.

"Chaney taught me the importance of discipline and the humane side of coaching. Treat your athletes like they are your own kids," McGurn says. "Croce was more of an old-school mentor. Give your all, there is no tomorrow, kill or be killed, all that



kind of stuff. Barkley was so down-to-earth for such a massive sporting figure. He demystified the concept that NBA superstars were some type of diva personalities."

By the time he got his Temple degree, McGurn says he was changed. "I left Ireland at 17, a shy introvert, a nerd. I left Philly a different person. I knew how to speak to people and engage. The information that I learned about sports at Temple was cutting-edge, years ahead of the U.K.," he says.

When he returned home from college, he started teaching, then put his education to work revolutionizing the conditioning regimen for players on the hurling team in Fermanagh.

"Traditionally, it was 20 laps on the pitch, play a match, and go home. I stopped all that," he says. "I said 'we do a proper warm up, we do speed, we do agility. We do skill development under pressure, we play a short,

20-minute game and go home.' The team ended up becoming national champions for the first time ever. We won all the games in the last 10 or 15 minutes because we were the fastest and the strongest."

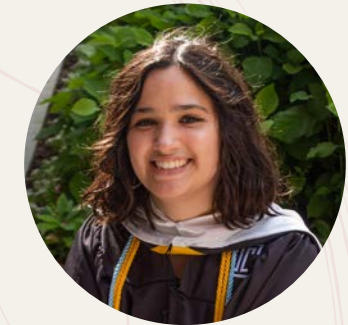
One success led to another. McGurn began lecturing in sports science at a college in England and developed innovative ways to train the local rugby team there—innovating in part because he'd never held a rugby ball. "I'm a Catholic from Northern Ireland. Rugby and cricket were banned in our schools because they're considered British," he explains.

He was recruited to condition and train rugby and soccer players. McGurn went on to train Premier League teams, including Manchester United as well as the Irish national rugby team. He also worked with New Zealand's national rugby union team, the All Blacks, which has been called "the most successful sports team in human history."

In 2009, McGurn was approached by Dunne, a boxing contender from Dublin, about getting the fighter in shape to challenge super-bantamweight champion Ricardo Cordoba. McGurn created an intense training camp that focused on explosive power and stamina. His plan for Dunne, he told *The Irish Times*, was to "make training so hard that fighting seems almost easy." Dunne was knocked down twice in the fifth round of the fierce fight, but he got up to win by technical knockout in the 11th.

McGurn continues to lecture, develop academic courses, and write articles about strength, conditioning, and sports nutrition. "Temple showed me a side of sports and a way of life that I can't thank them enough for," he says. "I have had a fantastic life. I've seen the whole world. And when I reflect back, it was all down to coming to Temple."

Breaking the silence: Protecting deaf individuals from sexual assault



For recent College of Public Health graduate **Samantha Padilla '23**, what began as her curiosity about American Sign Language (ASL) led to an award-winning research paper that focuses on the prevalence of sexual assault perpetrated on deaf people in the Philippines.

The paper, titled "Creating Positive Change for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals in the Philippines," won Temple's Livingstone Undergraduate Research Award in General Education. It was written as part of an assignment—to create a Wikipedia page about a global Deaf issue—in *The World of Sign Languages and the Sign Languages of the World*, a class taught by **Matt Hall**, assistant professor of communication sciences and disorders.

Padilla, who graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in health professions, had studied Spanish in high school and took an ASL class to try something new.

"I assumed it would be like any language class, learning vocabulary," she says. "But the professors made it about the culture, and about how hearing people can be allies for the Deaf community." She took multiple ASL classes, a Deaf culture course, and *The World of Sign Languages*, in which Hall focuses on social rather than medical issues for deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) people.

Padilla has Filipino heritage and, pulling together research from multiple studies, chose to highlight this disturbing trend affecting DHH people in the Philippines. Rates of sexual assault, rape, molestation, and other forms of abuse are significantly higher against deaf Filipinos than hearing Filipinos. The Philippine Deaf Resource Center, she reports, found that rape is the most widespread crime against deaf women. Another study found that 65% to 70% of deaf children have been molested. Survivors may be unaware that what they've experienced is abnormal.

"The disparity of sexual assault rates between hearing and DHH Filipinos is astronomical, and it consists of a complex web of cultural and systemic issues," Padilla writes. Among the issues are a sexually repressive culture, low sexual health literacy, and language barriers for DHH people. While hearing people certainly face obstacles in reporting abuses, "there are extra obstacles for deaf Filipinos," Padilla says. "There's a cultural stigma against deaf people as well as a cultural stigma against sexual assault, sort of a double whammy."

Her paper offers two potential interventions to create positive change, based on past research. She proposes educating deaf and hearing Filipinos through workplace training videos and informational posters hung in public places such as doctor's offices and university campuses. Sample posters she created in English and Filipino have the bold headline, "I think I was sexually abused. What do I do now?," followed by explanations and advice. She also suggests training for employees in workplaces and educational institutions to increase understanding of the issue among hearing people.

Gao Ly Vang '23 works for social justice in Philadelphia

Working as an intern in the City of Philadelphia's Office of Immigrant Affairs, **Gao Ly Vang '23**, a master of social work graduate, had special insight into her clients' needs. Born and raised in Canada, Vang is the child of Hmong refugees from Laos. Whether she worked on policy issues, assisted people without immigration status in communities across the city, or helped Philadelphia welcome migrants who have arrived by bus, Vang combined her education and work skills with understanding that comes from lived experience.

"I have a strong sense of empathy for those who have arrived in Philadelphia seeking new opportunities," Vang says. "I deeply respect all parents who make the difficult decision to migrate. It's not an easy decision or an easy journey."

Vang received her bachelor's degree in criminal justice at Conestoga College in Ontario, Canada, and wanted to continue her education by exploring restorative

justice, an approach that focuses on rehabilitation of offenders via reconciliation with victims and communities. Vang says she chose Philadelphia for its restorative justice initiatives, such as the city's Mural Arts program. "Mural Arts works with previously incarcerated folks in the community, who paint the murals with communities, victims, and those who have been a part of the circle of harm," she says.

The murals themselves—her favorite is "The Healing Walls" in North Philadelphia—tackle social justice issues. "The story that these murals tell you, it makes you feel represented and included, especially as a person of color," she says. Those powerful images provided a backdrop to Vang's studies at Temple and her work in the city's Office of Immigrant Affairs, where she worked on immigrant fraud protection policies.

"One thing to recognize is that immigrant populations are vulnerable," she says. "They come

across many kinds of scams. These folks are coming with limited resources, and they have underlying fears of deportation if they make the wrong move. So we have to ensure that those who are coming into Philadelphia are protected by policies and regulation. We're developing an immigrant services fraud program to prevent the exploitation of immigrants."

She also improved constituent services, connecting residents with community organizations that assist with matters including healthcare, housing, legal services, and employment.

"When we think about who really helped Philly come up, it's immigrants," Vang says. "You've got the Italian Market, the African community in West Philly, Chinatown, these pockets of communities built by immigrants. It's apparent how diverse Philadelphia is."



Desarae Bradham '15, Temple 30 Under 30 recipient, is a public health herald

For **Desarae Bradham '15**, opportunity does not just mean being in the right place at the right time, but also meeting the moment with new ideas. She made a name for herself by creating viral posts for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health during the first COVID-19 outbreak, and today, the social media supervisor continues to redefine digital public health messaging.

When the first outbreak of COVID-19 hit in 2020, Bradham was unofficially tapped for the city's COVID-19 response team, and the communications director asked her to handle social media outreach.

"I was definitely nervous because at that point, I really didn't have much experience. But I just went for it and he ended up offering me a full-time position, which is where I have been ever since," she said.

She now manages all of the Health Department's main social media accounts and oversees other programs within the department.

Bradham decided to major in public health during her first year at Temple. There, she interned at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, working to educate high school students about STD prevention.

Bradham fell in love with Philadelphia and decided to make it her home after graduation. In her first role out of college, she returned to the Department of Public Health and conducted fieldwork, which only cemented her conviction that she was in the right place.

An avid social media user, Bradham found it intuitive and fun to speak to a broad audience and make critical public health messages relevant to readers' interests. Some of her tweets and posts have gone viral, with celebrities taking notice and local news outlets covering her work. More importantly, she was able to help direct Philadelphia residents to resources they needed in real time.

"If we want to get an important

message out, such as telling people to wear masks or to get vaccinated, the way that we do it has to resonate with our audience so they know they're being heard," she said. "We were a trendsetter in showing that messaging, even during a pandemic or crisis, doesn't have to be plain language. It can be fun, it can be engaging and still be informative."

Since 2020, Bradham has become a sought-after public speaker, and she talks to audiences at social media and government gatherings about bringing personality to professional accounts and reaching the public through messages that can't be ignored. She's not entirely sure what she will do next, but she would like to continue building a career in public health communications.

"In 2015, I had no idea about social media's role in public health and just how powerful of a tool it is," she said. "I truly love what I do: using social media to make an impact by educating and empowering others. And yet, it never really feels like work."



Wilbanks '08 and Pfeiffer '97 recognized in Gallery of Success

The Temple University Gallery of Success, which honors esteemed alumni, has named College of Public Health and School of Social Work graduates **Beth A. Pfeiffer '97** and **Alyse D. Wilbanks '08** to its 2023 list of honorees. Now in its 25th year, the Gallery of Success celebrates outstanding professional achievement by graduates of Temple's 17 schools and colleges.



Alyse D. Wilbanks, who earned her BSW from the School of Social Work in 2008, is a child advocate at the Defender Association of Philadelphia, which represents dependent youth in Philadelphia Family Court.

Wilbanks had begun her studies in elementary education and interned as a preschool teacher while at Temple, then switched to social work in hopes of making a broader impact on children's lives.

As a child advocate social worker, Wilbanks works alongside attorneys who are assigned as child advocates for youth in the dependency system. Her goal is to help ensure that young clients are viewed as people rather than case files. Her team works with community organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that youth are in safe environments and their voices are heard.

"It's my job to go out to see the kids, see what their living situation is like, talk to the school, talk to the therapist," she explains. "Do they need glasses? Do they need braces? Is there enough food at home? We don't want them missing out on any services that they should be getting."

During her time in the Child Advocacy Unit, Wilbanks created the Philadelphia Parent-Child Coalition to strengthen the collaboration between professionals working with families. She hopes the coalition can share resources and bridge gaps in communities so families can remain together.



Beth Pfeiffer has gained international prominence for her work in occupational therapy for people with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). An associate professor of health and rehabilitation sciences at the College of Public Health, Pfeiffer earned her master's degree in occupational therapy at CPH in 1997.

In 2008, she co-founded an outpatient pediatric clinic in the Lehigh Valley area that continues to serve families. As a professor she has conducted research fueled by more than \$15 million in funding, with approximately \$5 million channeled directly to her Research, Engagement, and Advocacy for Community and Health Lab. In 2022, she presented her research at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in Paris and was awarded the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health Intellectual Disability Services Community Leadership Award of Excellence.

Pfeiffer's clinical and research work focuses on helping individuals with IDD, including adolescents and young adults, engage more fully in their communities, feel productive, and become participating stakeholders in research and practice that concerns them.

"Working with kids in the school system and seeing them transition into adult roles and life has always been really rewarding," she says. "I just love what I do. It means so much to me, the opportunity to make changes that are meaningful in people's lives."

Scholarship honors recreational therapy pioneer Martha Grace Armonio-Tan



Above: Peter Tan with wife Martha Grace Armonio-Tan. After Grace passed away in 2022, Peter endowed scholarships in her name.

When she was 8 years old, Martha Grace Armonio came to the United States from the Philippines with her mother, later joined by her siblings and father. During a visit to Washington, D.C., they visited friends of the family—including a boy named Peter, whom she would begin dating 10 years later when they were in college.

Grace, as she was known to family and friends, graduated from Philadelphia's Northeast High School before enrolling at Temple. Her mother was a clinical social worker; her father worked in communications for Temple's medical school.

Grace was a student in the therapeutic recreation program at Temple's College of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (now the recreational therapy major in the College of Public Health). Pete was a student at the University of Notre Dame. They would have a long-distance relationship throughout their college careers—leading to expensive phone bills for their nightly calls.

"I proposed to her at 18, 19, 20, and 21," Pete said. "She finally said yes, and we were engaged for three years as I finished dental school. We were married in Philadelphia in 1983 with a Catholic chaplain from Temple University as a co-celebrant."

Through internships at Temple, Grace worked with children with cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. As newlyweds, they traveled the country and started a family. Grace continued to work as a recreational therapist in several states, rising to department head for a nursing home and rehabilitation centers in northern New Jersey before shifting to be a full-time mother to care for her two children as Pete completed his surgical residency.

Recreational therapy at the time was an emerging discipline. "Grace really was one of the first Asian females to get out there and work in such a new field," Pete says.

"She was the epitome of social grace, laughter, and love. She just embodied what it was to be a mother, a spouse, an educated professional. I wanted to establish a perpetual legacy in Grace's memory, so her accomplishments, academically, professionally, and in her life, can continue to inspire students to pursue their goals and make an impact," Pete says. "And she loved Temple."

When Grace passed away in January 2022, Pete endowed recurring scholarships in her name at the College of Public Health. The Martha Grace Armonio-Tan Endowment and Memorial Scholarship is given to

an outstanding College of Public Health undergraduate student who is majoring in recreational therapy.

Pete says these scholarships will permit many future generations of the Tan family to witness the amazing life Grace had and her pride in being a Temple Owl.



Zebulon Kendrick '76 retires after 44 years of service



Zebulon Kendrick '76, who served as professor of kinesiology at CPH and vice provost for graduate education at Temple University's Graduate School, is retiring from the university after 44 years of service. In these roles, he served as a champion for diversity among faculty and graduate students. His work also inspired him to engage in selfless philanthropy, which has benefited Temple students for decades.

Kendrick's area of research expertise has been in both applied exercise physiology and in metabolic models using animal models. He published over 70 research papers and book chapters—with many of his papers in high-impact journals in the biomedical fields. He has mentored more than 30 doctoral student dissertations and 50 master's theses, and he served as a member of the Temple University Institutional Review Board for 40 years.

"I tried to champion as many doctoral students as I could," says Kendrick. "And I tried to help create a more diverse doctoral graduate student population and provide students with opportunities so they could be competitive for faculty positions across the nation and worldwide."

One way in which he did this was through Temple's KCP (Kendrick, Clemmer, Phillips) Fund, which helps graduate students with financial need.

"In mid-1980s, when I was director of the Biokinetics Research Lab, I was evaluating body composition and performing resting metabolic studies. This work was covered by a write-up in *Prevention Magazine*—which resulted in high demand for these evaluations," especially among professional athletes and sports teams. He explains: "The funds raised for these services were used to help to support graduate student expenses for their research presentation at conferences and other research needs."

"I started making personal donations to this fund. Former graduate students and friends have also made contributions," Kendrick says. "Ultimately, the fund became the KCP Endowed Scholarship Fund awarded to graduate students in kinesiology."

Kendrick says his parents, who were very involved in the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, served as important role models for him. "My mother was a social worker, and my father was a dentist—they both were civil rights activists and often extended themselves to help people in need. Although they both passed when I was a teenager, they had instilled in me that you always give back to help those not as fortunate as I was. I have tried to do a lot of giving back in my career."


He says that his most rewarding experiences at Temple have been working with graduate and undergraduate students on their research. "I was able to place all of my doctoral students who wanted postdoctoral research positions in highly respectable labs," he says.

Kendrick says he looks back at his career and feels lucky. "To have a job that you love is truly a privilege, and I feel that you must give something back. The KCP Fund is one small way in which I gave back."

Jennifer Ibrahim, dean of the College of Public Health, says, "Zeb Kendrick is part of the foundation of the College of Public Health. He graduated with his PhD in kinesiology from Temple, and he has taught in the classroom and supported the research careers for so many of our alumni, including many of our current faculty. Zeb has also been a generous scholarship donor who helped to make research careers accessible to more students. We are thankful for all he has done to shape the history of the college, and we look forward to welcoming him back to see our next chapter when we open Paley Hall in 2025."



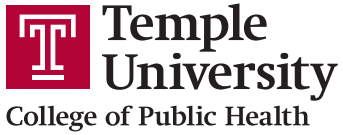
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