SHADES OF GREEN

Class Projects Make a Difference!
Spotlight on Dartmouth Center for Professional Development Internships

Through Class Projects, the Class of 1985 is also a sponsor of DCPD internships in a variety of professions. Read what one of our grateful interns has to say:

Dear Class of 1985 Donor,

Thank you so much for your contribution that funded my unpaid internship this winter! I interned as a software developer at a tech start-up called Parent Co. in Burlington, VT, and I really enjoyed my experience there!

Parent Co. is the creator of Notabli, a social media app that allows parents to more securely share digital keepsakes (photos, videos, etc.) with friends and family. I worked on the Android and web versions of Notabli for the duration of my internship. I had never worked with Android before, so I learned a great deal under the mentorship of a very experienced Android developer who works for the company. I also honed my web development skills and enhanced my problem-solving and trouble-shooting abilities.

While I knew I would gain technical experience —which has already helped me immensely in interviews for future positions—I additionally learned about business strategy. As a start-up founded in the summer of 2014, Parent Co. has only about 15 employees. Due to the small size, the president of the business held weekly companywide meetings to talk about business strategy and trajectory. Having taken an undergraduate business class in Marketing the term before my internship, I was excited to see the real-life applications of what I had learned.

Your generous funding helped me pay for transportation to and from my internship, allowing me to gain valuable experience and knowledge, making my off-term truly memorable. You have helped to launch the beginning of my career. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Marissa Le Coz '17

Are we officially middle aged? If 40 was the new 20 (recall our hopeful 20th reunion theme), is it time to begin our midlife crisis now? (Might be a great topic for our next issue...!) But whether due to crisis, or to sheer confidence, conviction, and courage, some of us have stepped off the career path first chosen. For a few it's been a completely new direction, and their stories are as compelling as their talents run wide and deep.

Erma Bombeck once said that "it takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else." We are grateful that the classmates featured here were willing to show their dreams to us. Perhaps their beautifully written accounts will be the inspiration for your own next steps. Read on....

Margaret and Lisa

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Mike Viccora '85

Writing the Next Chapter

After almost 25 years of practicing labor and employment law, I decided to pull the trigger on a long-contemplated career switch and return to the teaching profession. I saw becoming a high school social studies teacher (again) as a way to bring me full circle back to where I started my work life, allow me to use skills developed practicing law, and provide me with an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students.

The genesis of this career switch began at Dartmouth. While I was a Government major with a clear life plan that called for me to go to law school, I took several education courses, connected with a fabulous professor of education (Faith Dunne), and had the opportunity to student teach for a week at Hanover High School. These experiences, and a separated shoulder during the 1984 football season, led me to postpone my enrollment to law school for a couple of years. Thus, I began my work life as a private high school teacher at the Trinity Pawling School in New York. For two years I immersed myself in teaching history to sophomores and juniors, coaching three sports, serving as a dorm master, mentoring students, and participating in all aspects of the school community. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience; however, I chose to follow my life plan, attend The George Washington University Law School, and begin my legal career.

Unlike many of my contemporaries, I found a law firm -- Seyfarth Shaw -- that was perfect for me and I stayed with that firm my entire legal career from summer associate to partner. For more than two decades I worked as an attorney, where I represented employers in virtually every aspect of labor and employment law, from handling collective bargaining negotiations to advocating on behalf of employers against claims of discrimination, harassment and retaliation. My continuing enthusiasm for teaching led me to develop and conduct interactive management training programs on a wide array of topics, including avoiding workplace harassment, maintaining a positive working environment, and complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. I loved practicing labor and employment law. Yet something was missing.

I still had the yearning to return to my first love of teaching. George Eldridge and Mark and Anne Engel can tell you that I frequently talked about some day going back to teach high school. Some day always sounded so good but also far off in the distance. This back of my mind possibility, however, moved to the front when I lost my dad to a stroke and my mom to cancer within a painful nine months in 2009/2010. As you might imagine, this caused me to think long and hard about what I was doing with my limited time in this world and what kind of impact I was having. I felt that I wanted to make a difference and leave a different legacy. I have always believed the

teaching profession is critically important for our collective future and is greatly undervalued. I knew I wanted to return to this vital profession, teaching and coaching students, participating in a school community, and contributing to our society in a significant way. After losing my parents, I decided to take concrete steps toward making my previously vague dream a reality.

I had several long discussions with my wife Elaine about what the move would mean to our family and the factors that were pulling me to return to the classroom. Elaine could not have been more supportive. Likewise, both of my college-age children cheered me on. Perhaps the most important suggestion I have for anyone considering a career switch (Tip #1) is to involve your spouse and family in the decision making process. What will it mean to you on a daily basis? What changes will be necessary as you plan for and execute the transition? What will life be like for everyone when you are in your new career? For me, I could not have made this career switch without total buy in from my entire family.

Next, Elaine and I made plans about how we would deal with the significant financial consequences of leaving my legal practice to return to graduate school full-time for a couple of years, and then to work (and be paid) as a public school teacher. We made financial decisions over the next four years to ensure that we positioned ourselves to meet our goals relating to funding the college education of our kids and our retirement. During this time, I began taking one on-line class a semester at the community college to satisfy the prerequisites (e.g., nine credits of geography) necessary to qualify for a license to teach social studies in Virginia. Tip #2 for folks considering a career switch: Put a plan in place that provides sufficient time to deal with the financial and professional implications of your transition. The four years of planning and making decisions with my career switch in mind made my transition extremely smooth.

Mike at his goodbye party from Seyfarth Shaw

In the spring and early summer of 2014, I told my firm, clients, and colleagues about my plan to leave my legal practice and return to teaching and coaching high school students. The response was almost universally supportive. In fact, several people talked about career switches they had thought about but just never made happen. Ideas that still lurked in the corners of their mind. I urged them to explore those thoughts and consider acting on them. As I had explained to many when informing them of my career switch, I had determined that, if I wanted to have a new chapter, I needed to get going before I ran out of book.

I spent the final ninety days of my time at the law firm trying to ensure a seamless transition. While this was not the most lucrative timing or approach for leaving my law firm partnership, it allowed me to make sure my clients would continue to receive top-notch legal services, active matters would be transitioned effectively, and my colleagues would be well prepared. Just as important, this time allowed me to leave my law firm home of almost a quarter of a century the right way. I was able to close the book on my legal career fully and start my new teaching career with a clean slate. Indeed, I have not really missed practicing law, although I have certainly missed my daily interactions with my friends, colleagues and clients. Since leaving the firm, I have devoted my focus fully to preparing myself to teach. This leads to Tip #3: Leave your job the right way. Take steps to tie up loose ends, formulate a succession plan, and incorporate adequate time to say proper farewells to your clients/customers and colleagues. This permits you to wrap up your old career and fully embrace your new one without looking back.

To prepare for my career switch, I entered George Mason University's secondary education and master's program. When I first looked at this program in 2010, it featured a career switcher path for teaching candidates that consisted of 12 months of graduate school classes followed by an on-the-job internship program that met the Virginia-mandated student teaching requirement during the first year of teaching. In 2012, I learned that the GMU program had changed because high schools were reluctant to hire career switchers who had not completed the student teaching piece. Thus, I learned the program would take 18 months (including student teaching) before a teacher candidate would be qualified for a Virginia teaching license. As a result, I decided to commit to two years of full-time graduate school that would culminate in me earning my 5-year teaching license and a master's degree in education (curriculum and instruction). Tip #4: Make sure you identify all procedural requirements and prerequisites for entering your second career and adjust your plan accordingly. I stayed an extra year at the firm to accommodate the additional time I needed to be in graduate school.

Mike's 1st day of graduate school

Life as a full-time graduate student has been terrific. Being able to focus on classes that provide the grounding in education theory as well as effective approaches to planning, implementing, managing and assessing social studies learning experiences for students has fully prepared me for my return to the classroom. While I was often one of the oldest students in my Mason classes – yes, I was asked if I was the professor before one of my first classes – my fellow graduate students accepted me quickly. For all of us who have thought, in the midst of a stressful workweek, how we did not really appreciate how great it was back at Dartmouth when we only had to worry about a few classes, I can say. . . it is true. Taking classes, reading books and articles, and writing papers are seriously way, way, way better than working full-time. Except for that whole not earning any money thing, it is awesome.

In the fall of 2015, I put into action all that I had learned in the Mason program in my internship at a local high school. For three months, I was the primary teacher of three sections of sophomores in honors comparative government and one section of seniors in American government - about 120 students. I loved being back in the classroom and working with young people. I was also able to rely on my legal background and real world experiences to make my lessons interesting and engaging for my students.

I have now officially earned my Virginia teaching license and will receive my master's in May. In addition to finishing up my coursework at Mason and working with high school students in connection with the research project required for the master's degree, I am spending this spring looking for a job for the first time in almost 30 years. Flooding local high schools with my resume, navigating the on-line applications and hiring procedures of different school systems, developing and tapping into contacts at various schools to position myself for possible openings, exploring school websites, and attending local job fairs have been some of the stranger parts of this adventure. I simply forgot the roller coaster of emotions that job searching can entail -- especially for a career switcher. I scrutinize the most innocuous e-mails for a clue about how my resume has been received and repeatedly replay the conversations from my interviews. Hopefully, this ride will end very soon.

Mike student teaching

I anticipate that I will know by June where I will be teaching the next school year and can embark on a summer of preparing for my official return to the classroom as a new (old) high school social studies teacher. It is truly an exciting time when you get to live your dream.

Lisa Zaslow '85
Entrepreneur/Gotham Organizers

It was a napkin that set my career pivot into full swing.

A few years earlier I had stepped off the 10-year career track I'd been on since Dartmouth. I had been working in the field of human resources, an area I fell into when I got my first job (through the college's career services center). I knew nothing about HR but felt lucky to land a job that met my meager career goals of the time: make enough money to live in Manhattan and shop at Ann Taylor and get free dinner and a car home if I worked late.

I developed programs related to employee compensation and performance management. One job led to another. I moved into larger and larger apartments and bought a country house. The work was interesting and challenging, but not particularly satisfying. I said that if I won Lotto, I'd quit in a second. At American Express, I felt like I was handed that winning ticket. The company announced a massive re-organization, and when I found out that you could leave voluntarily and still get the severance package, an image of Robert Frost's fork in the road came to mind.

I could continue on the road towards becoming a high-level corporate HR executive in corporate America (something I'd never consciously chosen) or I could step into the unknown where there was no clear path and try to figure out what my true calling might be.

At outplacement counseling I took Edgar Schein's Career Anchor assessment and learned "lifestyle" was the most important factor for me in finding satisfying work -- being able to balance my personal needs with the demands of a job. The scale had been tipped way too far in the work direction for too long. I began pursuing every interest that seemed remotely appealing: I took classes in flower arranging, watercolor painting, photography; went to museums and lectures; practiced Iyengar yoga ...

But as my severance started running out, I realized I was going to have to make money even if I hadn't yet discovered a professional passion. I began working as a consultant on HR projects as an interim step. I explored careers while I set my own schedule. I dabbled as a children's photographer. I read an article in *The New York Times* about a professional organizer and thought, "I could do that." I studied executive coaching. I didn't work in the summer for years and took month-long road trips. Inspiration struck while I was at a friend's house in Cape May, New Jersey. I was up early, before everyone else. I made coffee, then looked for a napkin. I opened a cabinet and was struck by the chaotic mess inside. I felt compelled to organize it. I put all the candles together, grouped the holiday decorations, put the napkins with the placemats, found a box for the batteries. Order! Systems! It was extremely satisfying. And it felt like an ah-ha moment: if I was enjoying doing this at 7:00 in the morning while on vacation steps from the beach, this was probably a career worth seriously pursuing.

A friend's sister became my first practice client. This busy working mom was overwhelmed by piles of clutter and her sons' toys and clothes. In a few hours, I was able to help her create logical places to put things and encourage her to let go of items that were never used. Any doubts I had about whether I would be able to provide value to someone else and whether I would like working with a client quickly vanished. She was extremely grateful for the help. I was thrilled to discover that something that came naturally to me, that I thought was fun, that I would do even if I didn't get paid for it, provided a service that people truly needed.

But I didn't see myself as an entrepreneur and wasn't sure if I'd be able to make enough money. I continued to do HR consulting projects while working with the occasional organizing client. Feelings of insecurity held me back. Then, 9/11 gave me the courage to really pursue my dream. Life was short. I figured if I'd been able to support myself doing work that I didn't love, I would be able to make it doing work that I was passionate about. I came up with a business name that was a tribute to my wounded city: Gotham Organizers.

15 years later I still love what I do, although it's not always easy dealing with fluctuating income levels -- 2008 and 2009 were particularly tough -- and I miss getting paid vacation. But I've been able to create my own ideal job, with the variety and flexibility that feeds my soul. Current clients include a school that needs to maximize its space while it undergoes a renovation; a woman whose apartment has become cluttered and disorganized while she's been caring for her ailing mother; a man with a home office that wasn't working; a woman who's finally ready to see what's been lurking in the mini storage unit she hasn't visited in years. It's extraordinarily satisfying to know that I am helping people change their lives.

Developing the business was a process of developing myself, and it still is. I discovered a level of confidence and a willingness to take on challenges that I didn't know I had. I have found myself saying "yes" to opportunities I could never have imagined. Leading workshops. Being on television. Working as a corporate spokesperson. Taking on ridiculously complex projects (one client move involved 65 beds). Writing a column for *Real Simple* magazine.

If I won Lotto, I'd continue to do what I do. But my upcoming trip to Rome would be a lot longer!

When people who feel stuck in their jobs wistfully tell me that they wish they could do what I have done, I emphatically say, "You can! If I could do it, you can too!" Two of my favorite sayings are: "Leap, and the net will appear" and, paraphrasing Martin Luther King: You don't need to see the whole staircase to take the first step.

Look for Lisa's column in *Real Simple* magazine and check out her company online at gothamorganizers.com. A little organizing might just clear the way for you to see your next steps!

Laura Abrahamsen '85
Fiber Arts Professional

From Penelope, Odysseus' faithful wife, who postponed her decision to remarry by stalling her suitors as she wove (and unraveled) a burial shroud for her father-in-law, to the countless Roman matronae whose tombstones record their virtue with the phrase LANAM FECI: "I made wool", the Greco-Roman world uses fiber work to describe the lives of women. The mythological Moirae, the Fates, spin, measure and cut the thread of every person's life. It is no accident that textile and text are related words; we spin tales and weave together stories. The threads that make up the warp of one's life stretch from beginning to end; the weft is where we leave off broken ends and weave in new colors and textures; in the end, it is whole cloth. I never expected this metaphor would become reality in my own life.

I am a fiber-arts professional. When I say "fiber," I'm talking about wool, mohair, silk, angora and anything else that comes from an animal, as well as plant materials like cotton, linen and nettle. I make part of my living now by teaching people how to work with them as a creative medium, whether through carding or combing them, spinning them, knitting, felting or weaving them. The other part of what I do is research and analysis of trends in the fiber and craft industry, writing reports, whitepapers and blog posts for a marketing firm that works with craft-oriented businesses, as well as specific content for clients of the firm.

How did I get here from a Ph.D. in Classical Languages? I'm going to share my path with you. Over the last year, I've begun to realize that, as tangled as it seems, I can follow some of the threads from beginning to end. In some ways I think I am closer to being the person I intended to be when I arrived at Dartmouth in the fall of 1981 than I was during my years in academia. It took a few earth-shattering blows to get back to being my authentic self, but I'm pretty confident that I'm moving in the right direction.

Dartmouth for me was both far from home and as familiar as my backyard. My dad, Nelson Abrahamsen '49, had brought us back to campus every August from 1971 to 1980 for Dartmouth Alumni College, our family vacation. I lived for those 10 days each summer. The kids in the junior program pretty much had the run of the campus, led by undergraduate counselors. It was classic summer camp stuff: arts and crafts in the Hopkins Center workshops in the morning, outdoor activities in the afternoons, group games in the evening. The adults had a theme, a reading list, lectures and discussions. And cocktail hour. By the time I was 13 or so, my parents would pass me some of their required reading for the adult program, and made sure that they occasionally sprung me from the junior program to hear certain lectures, readings or concerts. That's what I thought college would be like. So when I arrived on campus as an actual undergraduate, I had a plan to major in English and become a writer based on those summer experiences. That's not at all what happened.

I ended up majoring in Classical Languages through a series of accidents rather than a deliberate decision. First step: remember those language placement tests during Orientation Week? After six years of French and two years of Latin (the first of which I taught myself over the summer before senior year), I placed higher in Latin, so that's what I took, starting in 82W. That same term, I also took Humanities I with Professor Edward Bradley as my section leader. Between the two classes, I felt competent and engaged. By sophomore fall, I had added Ancient Greek, the classical archaeology and history courses, and Edward had invited me to go on the Roman Foreign Study program for Fall '83. I found that the Classics wove together my disparate interests into a cohesive whole. The FSP cemented my decision: if I got the Ph. D. and got the tenure-track job at a liberal-arts college, I, too, could live in an antique farmhouse on a mountain and spend my days guiding bright young people through the Great Books and every other year or so take a select few of them to Italy to walk in the footsteps of the ancients. Getting a Ph.D. in Classics seemed like the key to getting that life. So after Dartmouth, I went on to Bryn Mawr and received my Ph. D. in 1993, landing a tenure-track job at Cleveland State University for that fall.

Laura & Sterg Lazos '84 in Gullfoss, Iceland

Cleveland. My hometown, which I had been trying to leave since I was a teenager. My new job was in the Modern Languages Department, the English Department, and the History Department. If it happened in or was written in the Mediterranean world before 600 CE, I was teaching it, probably in translation. My actual field of expertise, Roman literature, was barely a part of my job description; I had to pursue my own research in the early days of the Internet at an institution that didn't have the bibliographic resources to support it. By the time I left CSU, I had been asked to teach Spanish 101 because there was more demand for it than there was for Latin 101. Um, no. It was time to break that thread.

By then, Sterg Lazos '84 (whom I had met on the Roman FSP in Fall '83) and I had been married for 10 years and had a house and a daughter. My parents were heading into the fragile years of their old age and, although I desperately wanted to get the dream liberal-arts college job ANYWHERE else, I knew I wouldn't be leaving Ohio anytime soon. Out of the blue, my old high-school Latin teacher called me and asked me to lunch. He told me his successor was retiring, and it was up to me to save the Latin program. It wasn't the farmhouse on a mountain that I had dreamed of, but it was close enough. Same pattern, different gauge. I made it work. Life was good.

Until it wasn't. This is where the story gets unpleasant; I am posting a trigger warning for what follows. Survivors of sexual assault may want to stop reading here. You can pick it back up after where the shaded area ends.

If you're still with me, no, not me. I am only collateral damage. But the situation changed my life in ways with which I still contend.

One of the best parts about teaching high school Latin was the amazing kids that showed up in my classroom. Among my former students I can count a Rhodes Scholar, Olympic-qualifying athletes and numerous now-Ph.Ds themselves. It was clear to me early that I was the smartest person in the room only because I had years of life experience, not native ability. My job was to facilitate their learning, to teach them how to bring order to the jumbled mass of ideas and impulses that is adolescence.

One particular girl was, by far, the smartest student I had ever encountered. M's ability to comprehend a problem, evaluate several alternative solutions, and arrive at an answer while the rest of the class was still wrapping their heads around the question took my breath away; there was nothing she couldn't do. Her family were neighbors; her youngest sister was a friend of our daughter. She became our go-to babysitter, dog-sitter, and house-sitter when we traveled.

M was sailing through high school, racking up prizes, AP 5s starting her sophomore year, at the top of the class. But by her senior year, she had changed. She had all kinds of medical problems; her track coach reported seeing signs of cutting (self-harm) to the school nurse; eventually she was hospitalized right before AP exams. Exhaustion, her parents said; the college application process, the race for valedictorian and the stress of AP exams had taken their toll. She came back to school in time to finish well, if not perfectly. Her full ride to a very selective liberal-arts college softened the blow.

But college didn't work out so well for her. In October of 2008, I got a phone call from her. She asked me if a specific teacher still taught at the high school. Yes, I answered. Why? We were undergoing a construction project and she asked what part of the building he was in. Not mine, I answered. I never see him. Does he teach advanced 9th graders? No idea. I need to tell you something, M said to me. She came over on a brilliant, sunlit October afternoon and told me a horrific story as we sat on my front porch. She told me that the teacher in question had raped her after school in January of her sophomore year, when she came in for a conference before she wrote a paper. She finally broke her silence because she wanted to protect her youngest sister, who was now in 9th grade.

I never doubted her story; the school nurse and I had spent her senior year agreeing that she had suffered some kind of sexual trauma; it was the missing piece that made everything else make sense. But it didn't matter anyway whether or not I believed her. As a mandated reporter, it was not my job to determine the truth or falsehood of her story. I had to report it to my principal and to Child Protective Services, although she was over 18 when she told me. Once I reported, it was out of my hands and in the hands of the legal system. So I did my job.

I had been warned by the school administrators not to discuss the situation with anyone. Theoretically, no one knew I was the reporting teacher, but it doesn't really work that way, does it? My best work friends had been a group of witty and warm teachers; now they were rallying around their colleague and taking up collections for his legal defense. The construction project gave me a little breathing room as there were no longer staff lounges, but people fell silent whenever I entered a shared workspace. The school nurse, one guidance counselor and the gifted education coordinator were the only people who approached me to offer support because M's family had informed them about the impending trial and its impact on their entire family, including the youngest sister, still a student at the school. The teacher was acquitted on M's 22nd birthday, almost 18 months after I first made my report.

Through this ordeal, I learned that I never wanted to enter a classroom again. Being a mandated reporter and living up to that mandate came at too high a price. Doing my job the way the law required cost me my career, many relationships, and my own health. What I found most devastating was the number of colleagues whom I had respected and considered friends who berated me for my initial reporting, who told me that I had betrayed a fellow teacher. One woman in particular, whose friendship had been very dear to me, attacked me for not confiding in her all along about my role in the situation. My daughter babysat her kids the way M had babysat her years earlier. I looked at her and said, "If my daughter came to you and told you the story that M told me, I need to know that you would do exactly what I did."

"Well, I'd have to evaluate whether I thought it was credible."

"No, that's not our job. Our job is to report. And now I know that my child is unsafe in your home, and every child is unsafe in your classroom. That's not good enough."

It just wasn't a situation in which good people could agree to disagree. The disconnect between what I knew the job required and what my colleagues thought was their responsibility dramatically altered my ability to trust my peers and anyone else in the profession. By May 2011, the State Board of Education had ruled that, without a criminal conviction, the local board could not keep the teacher from the classroom. If I stayed in my job, I would see him every day. I chose to go.

Okay, now we're at the major career change part. It's safe to come back.

In the years before this mess began, I had picked up knitting again as a social hobby. I used to go up to the corner pub on Thursdays to have a beer and knit with my friends--just like we used to do in Stacey Sell's room in North Mass on Thursdays during senior year. (Less beer back in 1985. None, actually.) I had gotten far enough into it that Sterg surprised me one Christmas with a spinning wheel. Spinning--because knitting isn't weird enough. I had also taken a course centered on Julia Cameron's The Artist's Way, thinking I needed to get back to my creative writing. What emerged, however, was that I craved color and texture. Working with fiber in various ways let me indulge those cravings in a way I never would have considered trying with paint or clay, stuff "real" artists used. I had found my medium. It was also improvisational for me. I was not the knitter who bought the yarn and knit the pattern exactly the way it was in the picture. For someone who had always been a big rule-follower, this willingness to experiment, to follow the desire to find out what would happen IF, fed a part of my soul that had been undernourished for a long time.

Sometimes when you knit, you make mistakes. Some are easy to fix. Some, you decide that if it doesn't affect the structural integrity of the piece, and it can only be noticed under closest scrutiny, you can live with it and carry on knitting to the end, finishing your project and wearing it proudly when you're done. But there are other times when you keep knitting, knowing that the stitch pattern that should form a beautiful arrangement of lace instead is hopelessly marred by the place where the wrong count shifted the whole piece into an ugly and chaotic mess. If you go on, it's a waste of your time and energy, because you will never be happy with your final product. The only choice is to rip back and start again.

Soon after I had left the classroom, the fantastic local yarn store in town, River Colors Studio, put up a notice on Ravelry that they were hiring. I stopped in with my resume--which was now an interesting amalgam of fiber skills and academic teaching experience. Erika, the owner, made me fill out her paper application as well, but it was pretty clear from the beginning that I was going to get the job. I told her the story I related here. She looked at me and said, "This is a healing place. You're supposed to be here."

A whale-watching voyage with our "not-quite-daughter" Erin, Sterg, our daughter Grace, and Laura

That was almost five years ago. I suppose you could say I'm way over-educated to be working in a yarn store, but Erika has a Master's degree in Health Care Administration, as well as one in Information Science. My colleague Beth is a former genetics counselor. What we know is that it's barely about the yarn. What we do here is create a safe and supportive space for people to feed their souls, to take risks and stretch their abilities. We also create community. It's not an easy thing to reinvent yourself completely in middle age while staying geographically in place, but I've managed to do it. I have friends like 8 year old Mallory, already finishing her

first pair of socks, and 83 year old Jewelann, who doesn't plan to die until her yarn stash runs out.

Erika has been the best boss I've ever had. Our collaboration has taken the store from a local business to a growing reputation as a destination for instruction and author events and a solid place on the second tier of online yarn stores. (btw, we're rivercolors.com.) I do a lot of writing for the store, including the weekly newsletter and occasional blog entries. In the last few months, I've added a new gig, working freelance for a marketing firm specializing in craft-related businesses. All of the research and analytical skills I honed in graduate school are now being focused on the yarn and fiber industry. Analyzing the Top 25 Patterns with the Most Projects on Ravelry and what they reveal about trendiness vs. longevity in knitting patterns is far more compelling to me than Lucius Annaeus Seneca's lurid tragedies ever were and, believe it or not, it has a lot more commercial utility. For those of you still reading who think that yarn is just a cute little hobby, I find that the golf industry offers a useful analogy. You always need more and better equipment, accessories, and lessons. You travel locally to play different courses, spend money to go to clinics run by professionals and plan vacations around playing courses at heritage sites like St. Andrew's. The same is true in the fiber industry, and it's all disposable income there, too. Don't underestimate it.

I remember my time in Classics with my Ravelry name, lanamfeci, a nod to that quintessential Roman feminine virtue. What I can do with my own hands has been done by women to clothe their families since sheep were domesticated. Between the Ph. D. in Classical Languages and my sheep-to-shawl skills, I am ready. At least for the 18th century. Seriously, though, the balance between knowledge and skill, my head and my hands, finally feels right.

Both my parents are gone now, so there's no longer any need to stay in Ohio. Sterg might actually want to get back to New England, where most of his family and friends are. In a marriage of long duration, you take turns. It's definitely his turn, which will mean more transition for me, but I'm up for it. I've even done a little pro-active planning. I was one of the lucky 50 who attended the Women of Dartmouth Workshop last November in Hanover. It was great to connect with women from the classes of 1974-2004; in the dark period I had gone through, I had really withdrawn from my Dartmouth connections because I felt like such a failure. Attending that workshop felt like being welcomed back into the family.

The program included lots of reflection, lots of telling our stories and attempting to discern what we wanted next. It was through the process of sharing my narrative that I realized my role in M's story no longer felt relevant. Instead, I was reaching back further, remembering the girl I had been during those golden Augusts when Dartmouth was my playground. What I had loved best about the summers as an Alumni College kid was the handmade fun of everything we did. When I was 14 and 15, I spent my mornings in the jewelry workshop; the summer I was 16, it was the ceramics studio across the river; and it was the D's photography darkroom the summer I turned 17. The afternoons were sailing on Lake Mascoma, climbing in Norwich, or rappelling down the outside of Bartlett Tower, and the evenings were full of music and laughter with friends. It was a time and a place when I was first consciously aware of what happiness felt like to me: being a maker, to use today's hipster term, has been a consistent element in happiness throughout my life. I left the workshop that weekend with the recognition that there were three threads that have remained straight and strong in my life: making things, telling stories and facilitating both processes for other people.

Should the future hold a move, it's at the place where those threads cross that I envision my ideal next job. I think the Hopkins Center Student Workshops are missing a Fiber, Textile and Dye Studio. And I think I'm the perfect person to run it. I can see a collaboration with the organic farm to establish a dye-garden; foraging expeditions to the College Grant for other natural dyestuffs; cross-disciplinary work with academic departments like Chemistry, History and Studio Art; field trips to local resources like Harrisville Designs just downriver as well as the local yarn shops in the Upper Valley; an alternative social space that is open to all segments of the College community; and educational events and workshops open to the public. I first voiced this vision at the WoD Workshop, and everyone who heard me talk about it could see exactly what I have in mind. So now I've brought it to a larger audience. Maybe that's where you'll find me at our 35th Reunion.

Laura & Grace at Medomak Family Camp/Retreat Center in Washington, ME August 2014

What are you reading?

Whether our careers (up to this point) have taken us in more than one direction or not, there's nothing like a good book to open us up to something new — or to help us see even the familiar with fresh eyes and a new perspective...

Have you read something that's led you down a new path? Something that has drawn you in and shown you life anew? Please share your recommendations with us!

Where in the World Is...?

Are you getting your Class of 1985 emails? If not, then we don't have your email address. Please send us your contact info and we will update your record. We miss you!

Please help us find the following classmates:

1. Erica B. Berl
2. Tyrone E. Eaton, Jr.
3. Marci L. Dabbs, MD
4. Andrew H. Daniels
5. Lisa M. Carson (McCullough)

We've shamelessly stolen these selections from *Dartmouth Alumni* **Good Reads**, which publishes book recommendations from Dartmouth faculty and staff each winter and summer.

Paul Argenti: Professor of Corporate Communication Tuck School of Business, recommends:

The Circle by Dave Eggers
I have enjoyed several books since reading *The Circle* when it came out last year, but no other book has stayed on my mind and continued to intrigue me for its foresight. The book chronicles the entrance of a young woman, named Mae Holland, into an Apple/Amazon/Google-type work environment. The fictional company, called the Circle, wants to control just about everything through its portal. As she gets sucked into this all-encompassing environment, we start to realize the dangers of today's social media environment. Eggers wrote about things that were not a reality then but have since come to fruition.... Like *Brave New World*, or *1984*, *The Circle* offers a scary look at a believable future. Pick it up, and you won't be able to put it down.

Richard Wright: Orvil E. Dryfoos Chair of Public Affairs Professor of Geography recommends:

Case Histories by Kate Atkinson
I read *Behind the Scenes in the Museum* ages ago and for some reason had not picked up another Kate Atkinson book since. Big mistake. Great character development meets clever plot lines meets terrific story telling. Two thumbs way up.

Leslie Henderson: Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Associate Dean for Diversity Professor of Physiology and Neurobiology Geisel School of Medicine

The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace by Jeff Hobbs
Compelling and extraordinarily relevant today, especially for those of us at Ivy League institutions trying to understand the juxtaposition of different worlds and the cultural chasms that exist even among committed and well-meaning people.

Being Mortal by Atul Gawande
For those with aging parents and for those who will also someday be old (i.e., nearly all of us), an incredibly valuable book to understand how to end a good life.

Let's Explore Diabetes with Owls by David Sedaris
The most memorable lines likely should not be reprinted for public consumption (but I am laughing just thinking of them). Acerbic and uplifting at the same time, Sedaris's humor was often the best thing at the end of many long days.

The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown
My husband, who rowed, highly recommended this book, but it is certainly for more than just those with a first-hand familiarity with crew. There are trite references that one could make as to the meaning of the boat—but simply put, this is a beautifully written history of the Depression, the Dust Bowl, of America in the time of Nazi Germany, and a group of ordinary men who together were extraordinary. As Timothy Egan notes in his review, "*The Boys in the Boat* is about who we used to be. And who we still could be."

Remember seeing *The Clash* at Thompson Arena junior spring? Song title takes on a new meaning now...

DONATE NOW!
Please consider making a donation to the Dartmouth Alumni Fund before the June 30th deadline.

www.dartmouth.edu/~alfund/

Considering a career change?

Job change is something we are told is, and will continue to be, the norm for the millennial generation. For our parents' generation, it was anything but. And as for us, we seem to sit somewhere in between, bringing up the rear for the baby boomers, even as we break new ground for those coming down the pike behind us. Educational circles have been buzzing about "21st century skills" for some time now and among those skills are certainly the flexibility and adaptability necessary to succeed in an ever-more-quickly changing world. Strong arguments abound for the power of a liberal arts education to build those skills and, if some of our own classmates are any example, it would appear that this is true indeed. Go Dartmouth.

For more stories and ideas about making a change, check out some of the following resources:

o **Dartmouth Alumni Career Webinar Series: Strategies for a Successful Career Pivot**
The series began on April 6th with "A Checklist for Career Change," and it continues through June with new content every few weeks. To see upcoming topics and to view past webinars in the series, go to: *alumni.dartmouth.edu/von/webinars*

o **When to Jump (www.whentojump.com)**
When to Jump™ is "a curated community featuring the ideas and stories of people who have made the decision to leave something comfortable and chase a passion."

o **"Five stupid things I did and you should avoid when changing careers,"** by Dan Lyons - *The Boston Globe's Globe Magazine*, April 19, 2016
Dan, who wrote a best seller about taking a job at Hubspot at age 52, dissects where he went wrong and offers these words of advice:

- Reinvention is hard.
- Personality beats skill.
- Age bias is real.
- Be ready to fail.
- Be prepared to get fired.

Dan Lyons is the best selling author of *Disrupted: My Misadventure in the Start-Up Bubble,* published by Hachette Book Group and available at amazon.com.

o **"Job Hopping Is the 'New Normal' For Millenials: Three Ways to Prevent a Human Resource Nightmare,"** by Jeanne Meister - *Forbes Magazine*, August 14, 2012

Spotlight on our Class Secretaries

There are lots of ways to share your news and updates: our class website, our class newsletter, our new monthly class email, and the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine.* **John McManus '85** and **Leslie Davis Dahl '85** have been our Class Secretaries for over 30 years and are responsible for the Class of '85 content in the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*. When you have news to share, consider sending it to Leslie and John, especially if you'd like to to share it with a wider audience than just our class. *The Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* is published 6 times a year.

We think you'll agree that John and Leslie are talented wordsmiths, able to weave exceptionally engaging content for us all to enjoy, even in the absence of specific news. But let's make it easier and send them our updates. At the very least, send them a quick note to say hi!

Thank you Leslie and John!!

In our next issue....

That's a lot of trophies! Any guess as to which Dartmouth team of the 1980's won a whole lot of them? Hint: two of the team's biggest stars are '85s. Find out more in the next issue of our Class of '85 newsletter!

(*photo from the Rauner Library archives*)

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