

Colby



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From the Editor

Gerry Boyle
Colby College

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CONTRIBUTORS



Tom Kertscher ("Line of Defense," P. 54) is a freelance journalist, author, and former reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. He has authored books about Hall of Fame Green

Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre and legendary basketball coach Al McGuire, and he covers National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball games as a freelance correspondent for the Associated Press.



Christina Nunez ("In Africa, Using Nature to Protect Nature," P. 47; "A Molecular Chess Game," P. 48) is a writer based in the Washington, D.C., area specializing in energy, science, and innovation.

She regularly contributes to the Colby Climate Project and to *National Geographic*, where her work has appeared both online and in the magazine.



Chloé Powers '19 ("Ever More Difficult," P. 66) is the coordinator of Moms2Moms, a grassroots project providing housing to single mothers seeking asylum on the Greek island of Lesbos.

She's also involved in several other migrant solidarity initiatives, including search and rescue efforts, LGBTIQ+ migrant solidarity, and local mutual-aid projects.



Edwin J. Torres '12 ("SOBLU at 50," P. 26) is an award-winning photographer. Torres was born in the Hunts Point neighborhood of the Bronx and raised in a Puerto Rican family. He currently serves as the deputy digital director

for the Governor's Office in New Jersey. In 2016 Torres was the lead photographer and contributed reporting in a Pulitzer Prize-winning story with ProPublica and the *New York Daily News*. His work has been published in the *New York Times*, *Vice*, *The Atlantic*, the *New York Daily News*, and many other outlets.



The semester that began like most others ended unlike any in Colby history.

An ocean-leaping pandemic caused the abrupt shutdown of campus and scattered students, faculty, and staff. Teaching and learning, normally done face to face, shifted to Zoom and other platforms as faculty and students—displaced from Mayflower Hill by the virus—innovated, adjusted, and, to use a word overused in our time of the unimaginable becoming commonplace, pivoted.

And then there was the seismic killing of George Floyd by police—preceded by Breonna Taylor, Stephon Clark, Botham Jean, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and many other Black men and women. The world took to the streets, and in many cities—from Portland, Ore., to Minneapolis, Minn., to Kenosha, Wis.—the protests continue.

Even before this latest tragic killing, we recognized the need to acknowledge our history as it relates to race and to address both systemic racism and progress that has been made through the courage of many.

In fact, this issue of *Colby Magazine* was planned before these reality-shifting events. Staff Writer Kardelen Koldas '15 had been reporting on her feature on the 50th anniversary of SOBLU (P. 26) for nearly a year, spending months tracking down alumni, visiting their homes, engaging in long conversations about race, Colby, and the world as they knew it. Photographer Edwin Torres '12 did the same, reversing Koldas's route as he made his way from New Jersey to Mayflower Hill.

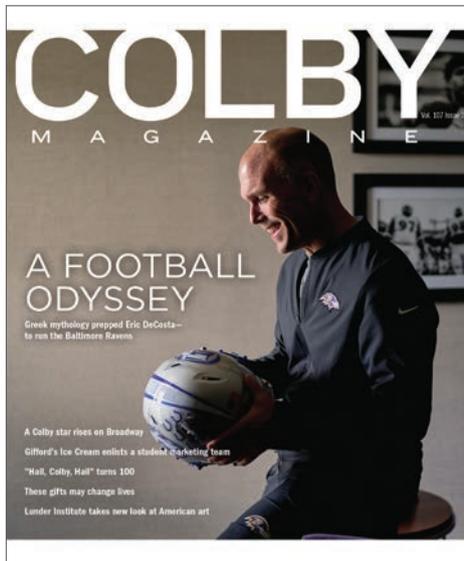
We did not expect that this story would be so tragically timely, that the reflections of SOBLU founders and former and present members would resonate in a very different way. Or that the story would underline the need for racial equality, respect, and understanding that has been unfulfilled for, not only the past 50 years, but centuries. In some ways, we've come a long way as a society since Black students occupied Lorimer Chapel in 1970, but we have such a long way to go.

So this issue of *Colby Magazine* is in some ways a bridge connecting the reality of six months ago to today. The campus closed and now it has reopened. Students left en masse in a single weekend and now are back. A massive effort is underway to ensure the Class of 2020 gets jobs in the midst of the pandemic. Racial inequity was being studied and discussed, and now those discussions are elevated, with real awareness and progress as the goal. (P. 14)

The threat of climate change looms, but alumni and faculty work on solutions. (P. 46) The upcoming election is a target for online interference. (P. 54) The arts are a way to give voice to those who most often are unheard. (P. 50)

As this magazine goes to press, we already are considering the next issue. It's my hope that it will report on progress as the Colby community, from Mayflower Hill to all parts of the globe, does what it always does: faces challenges straight on and continues the search for solutions.

Gerry Boyle '78, P'06
Managing Editor



Magazine Triggers Long-Term Memory

Pictured here with her daughter Kate in February 2020, our mother, Sara Stewart Johnson '58, always looked forward to reading *Colby Magazine*. Sara enjoyed keeping up to date on all things Colby: professors, programs, students, and alumni. True to her adventurous spirit, Sara wanted to go to college out of state and left the tropical climate of Hawaii to explore the far northeast corner of the United States. Without ever visiting the campus, she chose Colby based solely on its reputation as an excellent liberal arts college.

Majoring in English literature, Sara had a lifelong passion for the written word, starting her career as an editor for *Good Housekeeping* and later as a much beloved teacher of English, journalism, and photography in high schools in Eureka, Calif., Bend, Ore., and Kamuela, Hawaii. During summer breaks, she wrote feature articles for the *Bend Bulletin* newspaper, often including her original photographs. In retirement, Sara's passion for language expanded to include learning Italian and traveling to small towns in Italy. Sara also expressed her love of life through art: she became a juried watercolor artist, volunteered with the local art association, and helped restore



Sara Stewart Johnson '58 with her daughter Kate, reading Colby Magazine together.

the Rademacher House in Bend into an art gallery.

Neither Parkinson's nor Lewy Body Dementia could extinguish her love of the written word, and she continued to enjoy reading *Colby Magazine* as a resident of Windsong Memory Care community in Salem, Ore. As the dementia compromised her short-term memory, Sara's long-term memory was still preserved, and she would tell stories of her classmates and adventures in Waterville and the surrounding areas. Colby classmates became lifelong friends, and she enjoyed learning about their lives by reading the magazine. Often highlighting and making notes in the margins, Sara would read the entire magazine cover to cover to ensure that she didn't miss any tiny detail. Each issue gave her great joy. Our mother passed away May 8, 2020, at 84.

Anne Bynon, Scottsdale, Ariz., and
Kate Speckman, Salem, Ore.

One Plague Year Recalls Another

Like most in my Colby Class of 1968, I graduated from high school in June 1964 and, to say the very least, was very apprehensive about what awaited me in

Waterville.

But before arriving on campus, Colby required us to read *Hiroshima* by John Hersey, *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, and *Journal of the Plague Year* by Daniel Defoe. Undoubtedly, my classmates remember.

All of these books and their teachings have stayed with me through all of these years, and through my varied careers, successes, and failures. However, over these many years, the *Plague Year* has remained in the forefront of my mind. As has been said many times, past is prescient, and I hope that Colby will be brave enough and smart enough to make the *Plague Year* required reading again as the past should never be allowed to outrun us.

Thanks to my friend Thom Rippon '68 for re-kindling these thoughts of very long ago and for helping me to reassemble them for this remembrance.

Ted Sasso '68
Saddle River, N.J.

Depth and Breadth

Like good French wine, *Colby Magazine* gets better and better with age. The depth

and breadth of the articles in the recent issue were truly over the top. I continue to be so very proud of being an alumnus of Colby.

My congratulations to you and your staff for continuing to keep us apprised of the exciting happenings at Colby and in the Waterville community.

[Ed Fraktman '53](#)
Wayland, Mass.

Conversation via Social Media

 facebook.com/colbycollege

 twitter.com/colbycollege

 instagram.com/colbycollege

On Pay it Northward, Colby's effort to support the Class of 2020

[Jennifer O'Neill '97](#) This is absolutely fantastic! So proud of Colby for standing up for our community in a meaningful, tangible way.

[Allison Morrill Chatrchyan '92](#) Ever grateful to Susan Ferries Vogt Moore '63 for giving me my first break—hiring me 27 years ago!

[Kate Brunelle '04](#) Ok, this is how you do it in this environment. Super smart.

[Meghan Scheck '97](#) This is how you teach a generation to act with compassion and gratitude. This is how we show what caring for each other means and looks like.

[Tobi Schneider P'03](#) When this initiative began I thought it a terrific idea and contacted businesses to see if they could help. Proud to be a Colby parent and supporter.

[Susan Sarno Mihailidis '93](#) Amazing! So proud of my alma mater...

On the May 24 celebration of the Class of 2020

[Joshua DeScherer '99](#) Congratulations to the Class of 2020 (and especially to the orchestra and choir seniors who I missed performing with in the spring concert).

[Rona Peart Brodrick P'22](#) What a heartfelt tribute! Appreciate your words, President Greene, and outstanding student speaker! The planting of the tree and singing brought tears. Congratulations

On the awarding of the Condon Medal to Bethashley Cajuste '20

[Brad Sicchitano '99](#) Congratulations! This is a significant award and achievement. I was fortunate to receive the award in '99 and was beaming with pride as I heard President Greene share the description of the Condon Medal. Best wishes!

[Sakpase JJ Anmwe](#) We are so proud of you, child of God. Congratulations!

On Professor Cheryl Townsend Gilkes as this year's Charles Bassett Teaching Award winner

[Thokozani Kadzamira '92](#) Congratulations, Professor Gilkes! You inspired me to explore uncharted territories while at Colby! I will never forget you.

[Alexandra P. Gelbard '03](#) This honor is so well deserved as you have made such an impact on students, including myself. Your words brought me to tears

[Scott Lainer '87](#) One of the greatest pleasures of my life was attending classes taught by Charlie Bassett.

On Chido Mpfu '20 and her plan start a medical equipment company in Zimbabwe

[Collins Kibet '22](#) What a great dream you have for our beloved continent! Wishing you all the best every step of the way.