



SUMMER 2024

Radioactive Readiness

Dive into the high-stakes plans to safeguard the U's radioactive materials from falling into the wrong hands. p. 20

Resetting the Rivalry

As Utah and BYU re-enter conference play, both schools are looking to temper the historically heated rivalry. p. 34

Dramatic Shift

Get an inside look at the renovated Nielsen Field House in its new role as an intimate theater. p. 12



SPECIAL EDITION

Take a tour of the culture, characters, and customs of each Big 12 school as the U proudly joins its ranks. p. 26



Outside

Bright Minds behind Dark Skies

Utahns are guardians of a precious resource—unspoiled darkness. With 80 percent of the world’s population blanketed in artificial light, Utah’s commitment to dark skies offers a celestial haven for stargazers. “We’re protecting our starry nights,” says Daniel Mendoza, who leads the U’s dark sky program and is a research assistant professor of atmospheric sciences. The university’s Consortium for Dark Sky Studies introduced the nation’s first minor in Dark Sky Studies in 2019, thanks to a \$250,000 grant from the W.M. Keck Foundation.

This trailblazing initiative housed in the Department of City and Metropolitan Planning merges science, public health, urban planning, and the arts. The

three primary areas of focus are policy, environmental justice, and cultural anthropology—the study of human societies and culture and their development.

These important efforts do more than just improve stargazing, says Mendoza. Light pollution destroys wildlife habitat, is linked to myriad human diseases, and wastes public funds on inefficient lighting systems. Additionally, astrotourism is projected to generate nearly \$6 billion and employ 113,000 people in the Southwest in 10 years, per the Utah Office of Tourism. This nighttime photo of Zion National Park was taken by DarkSky International Director of Engagement Bettymaya Foott HBS’15.





U University of Utah Magazine

SUMMER 2024
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As the U and BYU re-enter conference play, a legendary rivalry gets a fresh start. Find out how both schools are gearing up to redefine their competitive legacy. p. 34



PHOTO BY DAVE TITENSOR

WEB EXTRAS

More available at magazine.utah.edu



From coaching Utah Football to providing dental care in the Arctic to hosting *Romper Room*, the stories of the 2024 U Founders Day Award recipients reflect a rich tapestry of life experiences and a commitment to serving others. Watch the inspiring narratives of this year's awardees at magazine.utah.edu/foundersday2024.

You may know the Einar Nielsen Field House as the U's first basketball arena or the campus rec center. Now, the former athletics facility has been cast in a new role: an intimate performance space for Pioneer Theatre Company and the Department of Theatre. See additional photos of the renovated building at magazine.utah.edu/meldrum.



Get ready, tailgaters—football season is approaching. We've got tips for how to do these parking lot parties right on p. 42. For more info on the Utah game-day experience, along with the football schedule and registration for the U Alumni tailgate, visit magazine.utah.edu/football/schedule.

FEATURES

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Radioactive Readiness The U houses a potent cache of radioactive materials that fuel critical medical procedures and cutting-edge science. But what if they fell into the wrong hands? Go behind the scenes to see how the U and local, state, and federal partners are safeguarding against this unlikely yet possible scenario.

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Meet the Next-Gen Big 12 As the U proudly steps into the Big 12 spotlight this fall, let's get to know the new challengers and familiar foes in this reconfigured power athletic conference. From sports strengths to mascot origin stories, we've got the color commentary on each member university.

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Resetting the Rivalry Since 1895, the Utah-BYU rivalry has earned a reputation as one of the nation's most contentious matchups. Now, as we re-enter conference play together, the schools are aiming to change the tenor. Delve into the history of this storied competition as both universities commit to combine spectacle with sportsmanship.



ON THE COVER

Illustrator John S. Dykes depicts the universities in the Big 12 athletic conference with a menagerie of mascots.

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Ascent to Excellence



I am right now. Our move to the Big 12 (p. 26) is an opportunity for the U to showcase our talent, athletically and academically, to large audiences across a wider swath of the country.

Joining the Big 12 comes at a time when we are evaluating our overall growth and momentum, a moment perfectly aligned with our new strategic planning process—Impact 2030. We want the U to continually serve and respond to the evolving needs of our changing state. That's why we've set bold goals: to grow our student body, raise graduation rates, enhance job placement, and boost research funding. Our vision is to improve the lives of all Utahns and redefine societal impact in higher education.

Impact 2030 is a campus-wide collaboration to evolve our university and position it for future success. This means rethinking how we support our students

and faculty, how we serve patients and the community, and how the evolution of our physical campus contributes to our mission.

During our data-gathering phase this spring, we explored what it means to truly lead and innovate in academia. We considered major challenges facing higher education and discussed new approaches to propel us forward. The involvement of U alumni has been instrumental—many of you participated in our strategy sessions and answered surveys, providing valuable insights that will help shape the U's strategic plan.

I'm incredibly optimistic about what lies ahead. The rollout of Impact 2030 is just around the corner, promising to enhance the U's relevance and the value of our degrees. And I can't wait for our first season in the Big 12. We're ready to make some noise, reignite old rivalries (p. 34), and showcase our vibrant energy.

The University of Utah has never been stronger, and our future has never looked brighter. Thanks for being on this journey with us.

Go Utah!

PRESIDENT TAYLOR RANDALL HBA'90

Fall Feedback

I'm writing to let you know how much I enjoy *University of Utah Magazine*. It's a great way to stay in touch with my alma mater, and I'm always excited to see the new and innovative things the U is working on and implementing. I particularly liked one story from the Fall 2023 issue—"Selling Like Hotcakes." Since I eat oatmeal every day, I decided to give Kodiak brand a try and was delighted when I found it at my local Safeway store in California. I want to let Joel Clark [BS'99] know that I love Kodiak oats and hope to see it on the grocery store shelf for a long time to come!

LYNDA ROBERTS BFA'98 MPA'05
SAUSALITO, CA



Tracking Medication Shortages

The U's Drug Information Service is an invaluable resource for hospitals and others across the country ["Behind the Drug Shortages," Winter 2024].

It's great to see Erin Fox [BA'94 PharmD'99] acknowledged for her fantastic work on this critically important issue. And given all of the lobbying spin on this topic by the pharma industry, health care group purchasing organizations, and pharmacy benefit managers industries, we need more stories like this that lay out the issues for the public in an unbiased and easy to follow fashion. Kudos to [writer] Elaine Jarvik!

BRIAN JACKSON BA'92 MD'96 MS'04
SALT LAKE CITY



Diamond Anniversary

Utah Magazine commemorated the College of Fine Arts' 75th anniversary ["Encore!," Winter 2024] by featuring profiles of current students and highlighting the distinguished achievements of its alumni.

Wonderful article, and the achievements of alums is noteworthy. I was glad to see Gabe Root [above] featured; he is completing the premier run of the new musical *Fate?* at the Grand Theater. His comedic role as Mercer, a Shakespearean wannabe, is memorable, displaying a level of talent that may indeed propel him to Broadway. Clearly, his training and education at the U of U is paying off!

PERRY GORDON FINE, CENTER OSSISPEE, NH



We want to hear from you!

Join the discussion at magazine.utah.edu or email us at magazine@utah.edu. Comments may be edited for length and clarity.

Giving Back

After being inspired on his LDS mission, Wade C. Roberts BA'04 PhD'09 started a nonprofit to aid Cambodian communities [Humans, Winter 2024].

Being a daughter of Cambodian refugee immigrants, this initiative is really wonderful work that hits close to home! Fantastic story.

SONITA CLAIBORNE BS'14, SALT LAKE CITY

SOCIAL SPOTLIGHT

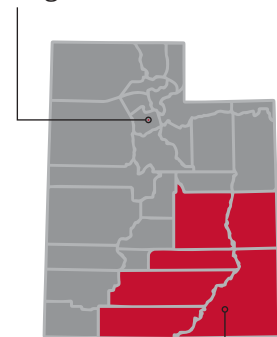
See that area in red? The population in those counties is less than the capacity of Rice-Eccles Stadium. This is one of the many fascinating graphics and statistics shared by the U's Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. Give them a follow at @KemGardnerInst.

Rice-Eccles Stadium capacity compared to select Utah county populations, 2023

SOURCE: UTAH POPULATION COMMITTEE, GARDNER POLICY INSTITUTE

51,444

Seating at Rice-Eccles Stadium



50,881

Total population of Wayne, Garfield, Kane, San Juan, Grand, and Emery counties

News from the U



A Map for the College Journey

A new U platform gives students the tools to navigate the transition from first year to degree completion

Finding your way at a big university like the U can feel like trying to sail a sea of information, tasks, and deadlines. From uNIDs to UMail, meal plans to move-in dates, FAFSA to FERPA, there's a lot to keep track of. It's easy for students to feel adrift (especially when you're among a student body of more than 35,000) and for parents to feel out of the loop. That's where U Belong comes in.

U Belong is a new platform that guides undergraduates through their college experience and helps parents/supporters stay in the know. In one central location—the belong.utah.edu website—students and parents can find a map of sorts, with checklists, FAQs, student services, resources, and important dates. Students can also find info on U Belong's Friday Night Hype events (see p. 15), created to foster a sense of community and belonging.

"We're a big, complex place, so we're just trying to make it a little easier for students to navigate the University of Utah," explains Andrea Thomas BS'88, chief experience officer at the U.

The belong.utah.edu website consolidates crucial information into one accessible space. The website also serves as a central point of contact, with a dedicated email address (belong@utah.edu) and phone number (801-213-1800). Parents and students can also request virtual appointments for help with registration, student services, and much more.

"We try to bridge those gaps between all the different pieces that parents and students have to navigate," explains Michelle Thompson BS'98, manager of the Office of Student Experience.

U Belong's monthly newsletter, aptly dubbed *The Loop*, keeps students and parents up to date with need-to-know info about campus services and resources, deadlines that are approaching (like tuition due dates and class registration deadlines), upcoming social events, and topics like housing or financial aid.

To learn more about U Belong and sign up for *The Loop*, visit belong.utah.edu.

NEWS ROUNDUP



Eboo Patel, founder and president of Interfaith America, was the University of Utah's 2024 keynote Commencement speaker. Patel, a U Impact Scholar renowned for his dedication to interfaith understanding, shared insights from his journey and the importance of leadership in today's complex world. He encouraged graduates to help steer the world through societal turbulence.



The U, alongside six partners, joins a \$15M National Science Foundation-funded initiative to tackle climate challenges in the Southwest, aiming for advancements in carbon capture, water security, and renewable energy. This multi-institutional effort seeks to transform environmental threats into economic growth and innovation opportunities across Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.



Explore U of U Plus, the U's brand-new loyalty program, rewarding you for activities like reading articles, sharing content, and taking surveys. Earn Plus Points for chances to win gift cards, exclusive giveaways—even

trips! U of U Plus is available for all and is free to join. Sign up now at uofuplus.com.



Brighter Smiles for Refugees

The dental chair can be anxiety-inducing even for those who've grown up around American medicine, says University of Utah dental student Yukiko Stephan. So imagine how vulnerable it must be for refugees, grappling with a new language and health care system, whose backgrounds are marred by trauma.

Stephan learned to put herself in refugees' shoes while working at the International Rescue Committee (IRC). She also became acutely aware of their unmet oral health needs. "Some have never seen a dentist before," she notes. "We would see lots of tooth decay and lower knowledge of oral hygiene. Many were experiencing pain." A 2021 U-led study revealed alarming rates of gum disease and tooth decay among Utah's refugees, with almost half needing urgent treatment. Yet the insurance available to new refugees often excludes dental coverage.

Unchecked dental problems can have a domino effect on physical health and quality of life, says Jeri Bullock, U School of Dentistry associate dean for

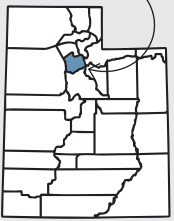
clinical affairs. If mouth pain makes it hard to talk or you're too self-conscious to smile, for example, "that can be a barrier to getting a job."

As an IRC employee, Stephan had already established ties with the School of Dentistry to arrange free health screenings. So when the IRC sought a partner to offer free dental care and oral hygiene education, the dental school was a natural fit. Eligible IRC clients can receive comprehensive oral health care thanks to the School of Dentistry's Oral Health Assistance Program, funded by community donors whose generosity has allowed the number of IRC clients served to grow from 25 to more than 130.

Bullock says the collaboration aligns perfectly with the dental school's mission to provide care to Utah communities in need. It's a mission that resonates with Stephan so much that she changed careers. After graduating from the School of Dentistry, she looks forward to a long career of providing care to underserved populations.

SPOTLIGHT

Salt Lake County



As the state's flagship university, the U is committed to improving the lives of all Utahns. These stories highlight how we're making an impact in every county.

Taking It on the Chin

Humans have evolved to make tools, tell stories, and—at least according to some U studies—to fight. For years, David Carrier, U professor of biology, has been exploring the hypothesis that generations of male-male aggression long in the past shaped the musculoskeletal system of human bodies. Previous work has shown that the proportions of the hand aren't just for manual dexterity—they also protect the hand when it's formed into a fist. Other studies have looked at the strength of the bones of the face and how our heels, planted on the ground, can confer additional upper-body power.

“In mammals in general,” notes Carrier, “the difference between males and females is often greatest in the structures that are used as weapons.”

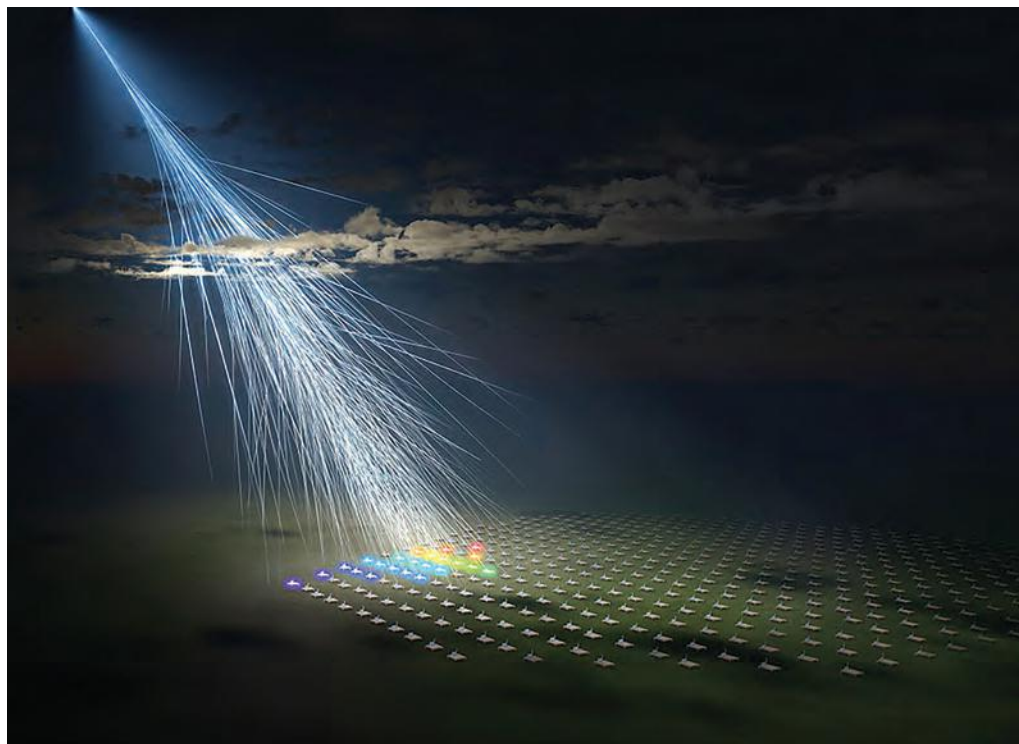
One study found that males' average power during a punching motion was 162 percent greater than that of females, with the least powerful man still stronger than the most powerful woman. Such a distinction between genders, Carrier says, develops with time and with purpose.

The evolutionary battlefield of our past provided the perfect foundation for one U student's further research—into the cushioning effects of beards. Ethan Beseris HBS'18, while an undergraduate, joined Carrier and Steven Naleway, associate professor of mechanical engineering, in a study that earned an Ig Nobel Prize in 2021. The lighthearted award is intended to celebrate science that first makes people laugh, and then makes them think.

The team used sheep fleece to model human hair and epoxy composite to model facial bones, then utilized a drop weight impact tester to measure impact force and energy absorbed. They determined that “fully furred samples” could absorb more energy than samples that had been plucked or sheared. The findings were published in the journal *Integrative Organismal Biology* in 2020.

It's an uncomfortable thought to consider that men may be optimized for fighting, says Carrier. But it doesn't mean that men today are destined to live their ancestors' violent lives. “Human nature is also characterized by avoiding violence and finding ways to be cooperative and work together, to have empathy, and to care for each other,” he adds.





Enigmatic Particle Detected

A mysterious cosmic ray observed in Utah came from—nowhere?

Scientists have detected a rare and tremendously high-energy particle that is mystifying astronomers because it originates from an apparently empty region of space.

The particle, named Amaterasu after the sun goddess in Japanese mythology, is the second highest-energy cosmic ray ever detected. It rivals the single most energetic cosmic ray ever observed, the “Oh-My-God” particle that was detected by the U’s Fly’s Eye experiment in 1991.

It’s believed that only cosmic phenomena of unimaginable magnitude, dwarfing even the explosion of a star, can produce such energetic particles. Yet the Amaterasu particle seems to have originated from the Local Void, a desolate expanse on the fringes of the Milky Way.

“You should be able to point to where they come from in the sky,” says John Matthews, Telescope Array co-spokesperson at the U and co-author of the study. “But in the case of the Oh-My-God particle and this new particle, you trace its trajectory to its source and there’s nothing high energy enough to have produced it. That’s the mystery of this—what the heck is going on?”

With leading collaboration from the U and the University of Tokyo, the Telescope Array (which notably detected the Amaterasu particle) consists of 507 surface detector stations meticulously arranged in a square grid that covers 270 square miles outside of Delta, Utah, in the state’s West Desert.

In their observation that published in the journal *Science* last fall, the international Telescope Array alliance found that the rare phenomena might follow particle physics unknown to science. The Oh-My-God and the Amaterasu particles were detected using different observation techniques, confirming that while rare, these ultra-high energy events are real.

“These events seem like they’re coming from completely different places in the sky. It’s not like there’s one mysterious source,” says John Belz, professor at the U and co-author of the study. “It could be defects in the structure of spacetime, colliding cosmic strings. I mean, I’m just spit-balling crazy ideas that people are coming up with because there’s not a conventional explanation.”

U Research Seeks to Understand Medical Cannabis Benefits and Interactions

Thousands of new Utah patients are approved for an active medical cannabis card every month. But much remains unknown about how cannabis interacts with other medications, what other factors increase its risks, and even which health conditions medical cannabis is effective for.

University of Utah Health, in partnership with the state, has launched a new research initiative to advance scientific understanding of medical cannabis and help patients and providers make informed health decisions about this increasingly common medication.

Valerie Ahanonu BS’09, senior manager of the Center for Medical Cannabis Research, says the center will support cannabis research within the U and statewide, enhance education on cannabis for patients, providers, and pharmacists, and work toward establishing a DEA-approved site for growing research-grade medical cannabis.

Much of the research will focus on medical cannabis already on the market in Utah, says Rep. Jennifer Dailey-Provost BS’02 (along with an emergency health graduate certificate from the U), who sponsored a bill helping fund the center. “This is one of the premier research institutions in the nation,” she adds. “We couldn’t ask for a better place to keep the heart of a meaningful research program than the University of Utah.”

Jerry Cochran MSW’05, interim director for the center, says that with all the positive and negative hype surrounding medical cannabis, it’s important the community has a trustworthy source of evidence-based information. “In certain circles, medical cannabis is being pushed as a cure-all, but I think it’s going to help certain things and not others,” he notes. “Science needs to take the lead in this area so that we continue to help people.”

The center will partner with the U’s Genetic Science Learning Center to create educational material about medical cannabis and will also work with the Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library to produce a database full of up-to-date information.

BY THE NUMBERS

Ever wonder what tourists bring to Utah each year besides their hiking boots and cameras? How about \$1.37 billion in direct tax revenue. Dive into the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute's latest report for more eye-popping stats.

\$11.98 BILLION

spent by visitors to Utah in 2022



98,600 JOBS

created from travel and tourism



\$23.38 BILLION

total economic output from tourism in Utah



26.9 million

passengers recorded at Salt Lake City International Airport in 2023

10.6 MILLION



visitors to Utah's Mighty 5 national parks

12 million

visitors to Utah's state parks

7.1 MILLION



skier days and \$2.64 billion in skier spending during 2022-23



Humanities Dean Hollis Robbins (left) cuts the ribbon at the Student Success Hub opening accompanied by Hub staff.

Transforming Student Success

A new success center for Humanities students is already helping them land internships and launch careers

A new resource aimed at boosting job prospects for U students has officially opened its doors. The Student Success Hub, in the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities building, is propelling students toward career success through a suite of resources, including internship, networking, career coaching, and advising services.

The Student Success Hub—or the Hub, as it is frequently called—is committed to bolstering the success and confidence of humanities students, ensuring they're well-prepared for thriving careers after graduation, notes College of Humanities Dean Hollis Robbins. The Hub offers weekly internship workshops and opportunities to network with local companies, which is instrumental in securing post-graduation employment, adds Robbins. To date, the Hub and its coaches have assisted more than half of all humanities students in completing one or more internships, with over 40 percent of those internships leading directly to job placements.

“Our supporters have allowed us to dream big, and as a result, the Hub is already contributing to student success in transformative ways,” Robbins said at a ribbon cutting event celebrating the opening last fall.

The Hub is a fun and welcoming space for students, featuring comfortable study areas, conference rooms, and The Bean Yard Coffee Shop, says Karen Marsh Schaeffer, the college's director of student success and engagement. “The Hub gives a physical location to celebrate and support our students as we watch them thrive at the U,” notes Schaeffer. Additionally, the Hub is instrumental in facilitating learning abroad opportunities and hosting events to help students develop success strategies, while also serving as a gathering place for student organizations and collaborative events with the nearby Tanner Humanities Center.



PICTURE

Spring 2024 marked a new chapter for U students as they unlocked the doors to the Orrin G. Hatch Center in Washington, D.C. This initiative, supported by the Orrin G. Hatch Foundation and the Kem (BA'67 JD'70) and Carolyn Gardner (BS'69) family, gives students a strategic residence from which to engage in internships across the city. Located near Dupont Circle, the center includes furnished living spaces, kitchens, lounges, and event facilities, addressing the long-standing challenge of housing for the Hinckley Institute's national internship program, which places over 100 students annually in various D.C. internships.

Doers welcome.

Innovation Showdown Ignites Careers

Senior Dawson Bertuzzi and sophomore Christina Dong stepped into the Salesforce Chatbot IDEathon Challenge like athletes gunning for a national title. And an intense 10-minute presentation later, the students in the David Eccles School of Business emerged victorious. Classrooms served as their practice gyms—and this competition to solve a real-life business problem with a chatbot gave them the chance to showcase their prowess in a more exciting arena.

This year's contenders in the annual challenge faced a formidable test: design a chatbot tailored for University Connected Learning, one that would serve as a digital navigator, guiding students through a labyrinth of web resources and program materials. "It was tough, and there was so much to consider. We learned mostly through trial and error," says Dong. "We just tried to keep the student experience in mind and what would be most useful for them."

Given just eight days to prepare, students had to come ready with a short pitch for a panel of judges, who would assess them on documentation, a process map, how well they addressed the problem at hand, and the structure and functionality of their bot. "I love competing and learned a lot," says Bertuzzi. "I thrive when I'm under pressure, and I especially enjoyed giving the presentation."

This is just one of many challenges hosted by the Eccles School, notes Henner Mohr, an associate professor in the Department of Operations and Information Systems. Other competition areas include social impact, hackathons, and business consulting, to name a few. "These competitions are a good way for students to be exposed to challenges they might face after graduation, network with other students and judges, and even land job offers," he remarks.

Bertuzzi plans to go into consulting and says the exposure these competitions bring is invaluable. And while Dong isn't sure what she wants to do post-graduation, she notes, "This competition confirmed it—data science is the field for me."

ALICIA BAKER



1

Curtain Up

The U's Einar Nielsen Field House has gotten a major upgrade—but this time it's big news for artists, not athletes. Originally opened in 1939, the field house was home to U athletics and recreation for decades. It's where adoring crowds cheered on the Runnin' Utes until 1969 when the Huntsman Center opened its doors, and the campus community lifted weights and played tennis within its walls until the Student Life Center debuted in 2015.

Now, thanks to a major gift from the Meldrum Foundation, it has been retrofitted into a 387-seat venue shared by the Department of Theatre and Pioneer Theatre Company.

"When I first joined Pioneer Theatre Company in 2012, the Board of Trustees asked what my dream items were. At the top of the list was a more intimate space to better produce contemporary works with smaller casts," says PTC Artistic Director Karen Azenberg. "The physical space between actor and audience is breathtakingly close. It's going to create groundbreaking theater moments not only for PTC and the U's Theatre Department, but for the U and Salt Lake City at large."

- 1 A catwalk system 25 feet above the stage and seats provides access to lighting and other equipment.
- 2 A "thrust" stage surrounded by three sides of seats brings the audience close to the actors.
- 3 Exterior details, such as this circular brickwork, were preserved and restored where needed.
- 4 The dressing room includes makeup stations, changing rooms, and restrooms.
- 5 In a nod toward the building's features, architects designed this entrance to mimic the field house's iconic windows.
- 6 The open space below the stage—also known as the trap room—accommodates staircases, trap doors, and other openings in the stage floor.



2



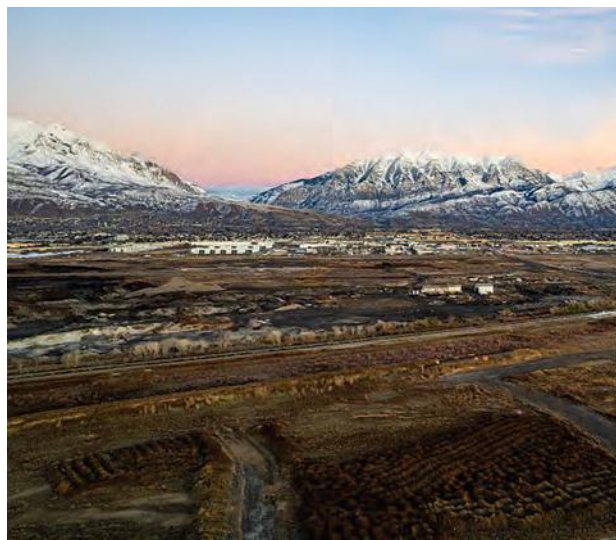
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Web Extra See more photos of the new theater at magazine.utah.edu/meldrum

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Gallery



Utah's New Health Landmark

Huntsman Cancer Institute is bringing cancer research and care closer to thousands with a planned facility in Utah County

The U's Huntsman Cancer Institute recently received \$75 million from the Utah Legislature toward a new cancer research building, part of the first phase of establishing a comprehensive cancer center in northern Utah County. Woodbury Corporation and Flagship Companies—the developers of a new walkable mixed-use city center dubbed Utah City—also donated \$20 million in land to the project. The new funding follows the Huntsman Foundation's announcement of a \$75 million lead matching gift in June 2023.

Situated on a 48-acre plot of land just north of Vineyard Station, the new 20-acre campus is located near FrontRunner, I-15, and Provo Municipal Airport. "This campus will enable us to expand access to our world-class cancer research and leading-edge cancer care as an integral part of a vibrant, health-centered community," says Mary Beckerle, CEO of Huntsman Cancer Institute and Distinguished Professor of biology at the U. "The proximity to Utah Valley University and Brigham Young University further enhances our ability to collaborate with academic institutions and foster hands-on learning for the next generation of cancer scientists and health care providers."

Huntsman Cancer Institute is the National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center for Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, and Montana. The new cancer center will reduce the burden of travel and increase access to cancer prevention, screening, education, and care for hundreds of thousands of people in the region. With expanded facilities and resources, the institute will be able to offer a wider range of innovative treatments and accelerate research efforts, bringing us closer than ever to a future free from cancer.



PHOTO BY ELLIOT JAGNIECKI

Jeremiah Bernau PhD'22 (left) operates a coring device with Ben Marconi while extracting cores from the Bonneville Salt Flats in 2019.

Salt Flats Surprise

New research into the age of vast salt areas in Utah offers insights into environmental changes and climate variations

Salt crusts at Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats began forming long after Lake Bonneville vanished, unveiling a dynamic geological history far different from previous assumptions, according to new research by the U. This study, drawing on radiocarbon analysis of pollen in salt cores, indicates that the iconic salt flats started accumulating between 5,400 and 3,500 years ago, debunking the theory that they were a direct result of Lake Bonneville's retreat 13,000 years ago.

The Bonneville Salt Flats, stretching over 40 square miles in the Great Basin Desert, are renowned for their flat, white expanse, serving as a venue for land-speed records and as a picturesque setting in films such as *Buckaroo Banzai* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. The research, led by Jeremiah Bernau PhD'22, utilized advanced drilling techniques and radiocarbon dating to unearth the true age of these salt crusts and the underlying sediment layers.

"This now gives us a record of how the Bonneville Salt Flats landscape responds to environ-

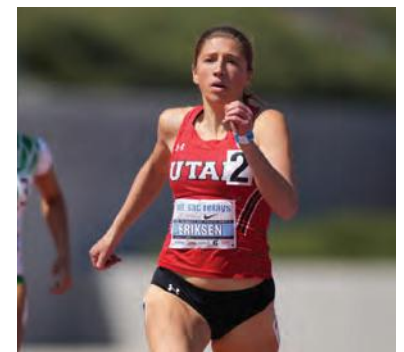
mental change," Bernau explains. He highlighted the significance of the findings for understanding the area's geological evolution and its response to past climate variations. The study revealed that the flats' formation followed a period of significant erosion and gypsum sand accumulation, reshaping our view of this landscape's stability over the last 10,000 years.

Senior author Brenda Bowen PhD'05, a geology professor and director of the U's Global Change and Sustainability Center, emphasized the broader implications of their findings. "We can show that a lot of material was removed before the salt came in," says Bowen, drawing parallels to the contemporary issues facing the Great Salt Lake and the potential for dust erosion.

Since 1960, scientists have been monitoring the salt flats as a part of lease agreements and management plans overseen by the federal Bureau of Land Management. The playa lost about a third of its salt volume over the past six decades.

PICTURE

When the world tunes in to the Paris Olympics this summer, be sure to watch for stand-out U athletes, like recent grad Josefine Eriksen BS'24. A native of Stavern, Norway, the Utah Track & Field star helped the Norwegian team punch its ticket to Paris in the 4x400m relay. Eriksen's performance in the qualifiers contributed to a new Norwegian team record and marked the country's first Olympic relay qualification since 1920. Watch U social media outlets (@UUtah) for all the latest as U student-athletes and alumni qualify for and compete in this year's Summer Games.





Friday Night Hype

The U campus is almost unrecognizable for many alums, thanks to changes like new buildings, stadium expansions, and more housing. But perhaps the most notable difference: campus is more alive than ever. Take Friday nights, for example. The new Friday Night Hype weekly event series features everything from snowshoeing to film screenings, and silent discos to casino nights. “Fridays are getting a remix with fresh themes and activities each week, and all students are invited,” says Michelle Thompson BS’98, manager of the Office of Student Experience. “It’s true that the U has changed a lot over the last 10, 20 years. But that vibrant spirit you might remember—it’s stronger than ever.”

Friday Night Hype is a collaboration with more than a dozen campus partners. Discover more about how Friday Night Hype is revitalizing campus life at belong.utah.edu/friday-night-hype and contact experience@utah.edu to get involved.





PHOTO BY DAVE TITENSOR

Navigating Future Scientific Frontiers

From its historic place as the fourth node of the original Internet, through many other groundbreaking milestones, the U has carved a path of technological innovation. This legacy continues at the U's Scientific Computing and Imaging (SCI) Institute with the new Responsible AI Initiative, led by Manish Parashar. Joining as director of the SCI Institute in 2021, Parashar brought his expertise in enhancing national cybersecurity and advancing scientific discovery through computing. Anchored by a \$100 million investment, the AI initiative is a bold stride into a future where artificial intelligence is crafted with conscience and clarity.

What happens at the SCI Institute?

We use complex computing and data analytics to

enable innovative solutions to real-world challenges. SCI started 30 years ago, and we've grown from a small group with big ideas into a powerhouse known around the world for using computation, data, and images to understand and solve scientific puzzles. Imagine using cutting-edge tech to get a clearer picture of how cancer grows or to figure out the hidden links between our environment and mental health. That's what we do. We use technology to make life better for everyone.

What is the Responsible AI Initiative?

AI is the most impactful technological advancement of our time. And we're leading the charge to ensure it is developed with an ethical compass, deeply considering the impact on our moral and societal fabric. This initiative is a meeting ground for experts from diverse fields—where computer scientists sit with ethicists, lawyers, and other scientists to mold smart and socially aware AI and apply it to important regional challenges.

Education is key; we're dedicated to demystifying AI ethics through resources that prepare students and professionals for the future. We're reaching out to the community and engaging everyone, from the public to policymakers, ensuring our AI solutions are inclusive and transparent.

How will SCI's leadership strategically enrich the AI initiative?

The essence of SCI's approach is collaboration without boundaries. For instance, our joint ventures with humanities to probe the ethical dimensions of computer science highlight our dedication to a well-rounded exploration of AI's societal implications. The Responsible AI Initiative will amplify these efforts as we aim to cultivate a generation of AI practitioners who are not only technically proficient but also ethically attuned and socially conscious.

Creating Breakthroughs in Mental Health

The U's new facility aims to revolutionize brain and behavioral health research, care, and treatment

Some 970 million people worldwide—including 14 percent of adolescents—suffer from a mental health issue or drug abuse, according to the World Health Organization. Collaboration is crucial in addressing mental health challenges, and a new state-of-the-art facility dedicated to mental health and brain research is coming to the U. Last fall, Huntsman Mental Health Institute at the University of Utah—known nationally for its leading work in crisis care with the SafeUT app and 988 suicide crisis line support for Utah—broke ground on the new Utah Mental Health Translational Research Building in Research Park.

The new 185,000-square-foot building will create a working lab for researchers and educators to collaborate across disciplines, including medicine, artificial intelligence, architecture, art, technology, public policy, business, and law. Teams will tackle such issues as suicide, child and young adult mental health, mental health stigma, workforce shortages, and mental health care access for all.

Beyond its physical infrastructure, the initiative symbolizes a commitment to attracting top-tier leaders and researchers, enhancing educational missions, fostering creativity, and making mental health care more accessible to a broader audience, says Mark Rapaport, CEO of HMHI. The building is designed with distinctive research neighborhoods and cutting-edge technology, including the only 7-Tesla MRI machine in the world dedicated to the study of the brain and behavioral disorders.

At the heart of this collaboration is translational research, a concept gaining momentum in research, academia, and policy, adds Rapaport.



“This enables us to deliver the research, care, and treatment options to combat one of our nation’s most critical health crises,” he notes. “We want to create a place that will bring in a new era of knowledge, hope, and healing for all.”

The facility is scheduled to open in 2026 and has received the generous support of the Utah Legislature and philanthropic donors. Learn more at hmhi.utah.edu and follow HMHI on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X, and LinkedIn for the latest news and other resources.



Anna Docherty of HMHI

Largest-Ever Genetic Study of Suicide Finds New Risk Factors

The reasons why people attempt suicide include triggers like trauma and stress, as well as inherited genetic factors. A new study has identified 12 DNA variants, or variations in the human genetic code, that are associated with risk of attempting suicide. The research highlights genetic links between suicide attempt and factors that influence physical and behavioral health—including impulsivity, smoking, chronic pain, ADHD, pulmonary conditions, and heart disease.

These findings suggest that some of the genetic underpinnings of suicide are shared with these conditions. One day, this information could lead to a better understanding of biological causes of suicide and improvements in prevention strategies. Eventually, such advances could help health care providers identify people who may need mental health support.

“Many people who die from suicide have significant health conditions associated with that risk,” says Anna Docherty, the study’s author and associate professor of psychiatry at HMHI. “If we can use genetic information to characterize the health risks of those who attempt suicide, we can better identify those patients who

need contact with the mental health care system.” The research was published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

No single gene causes suicide. Rather, the cumulative effect of many different genes influences a person’s risk. Researchers used statistical methods on data from 43,871 suicide attempts and 915,025 controls in the largest genetic study of suicide, combining data from the Million Veteran Program and the International Suicide Genetics Consortium. They found that genetic variants linked to suicide attempts also correlate with various psychiatric and physical conditions and behaviors.

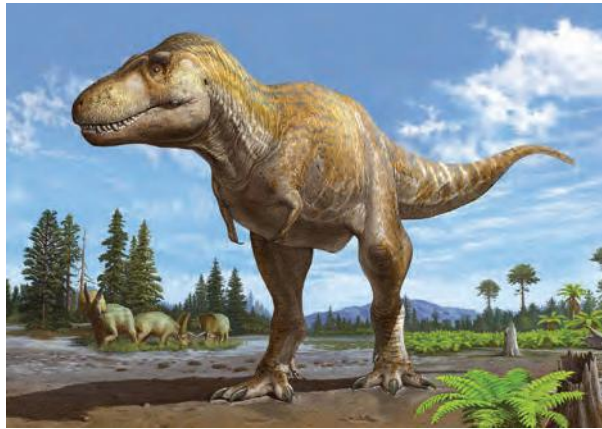
Ancient Predators Uncovered

Scientists unearth evidence of tyrannosaurs in North America millions of years before *T. rex*'s reign

A groundbreaking discovery in New Mexico has reshaped our understanding of the tyrannosaur family tree, introducing a new species that predates the infamous *Tyrannosaurus rex*. A partial skull of the *Tyrannosaurus mcraeensis* was discovered and studied by a team of scientists from the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science. Mark Loewen PhD'09, a U professor of geology and geophysics and researcher at the Natural History Museum of Utah, was a study co-author.

The study, published in *Scientific Reports*, highlights the subtle yet significant differences between *T. mcraeensis* and *T. rex*. Unlike its famous cousin, which dominated the landscape approximately 66 million years ago, *T. mcraeensis* roamed the earth about 72 million years ago, showcasing that the tyrannosaur lineage was established in North America far sooner than paleontologists previously thought.

"The differences are subtle, but that's typically the case in closely related species. Evolution slowly causes mutations to build up over millions of years, causing species to look subtly different over time," says Nick Longrich, a co-author from the



SERGEY KRASOVSKIY, NMMNH

Milner Centre for Evolution at the University of Bath (UK).

The new fossils also suggest that larger, more heavily built, and more advanced species evolved in the southern United States, compared to the smaller and more primitive tyrannosaurs that inhabited Montana and Canada. For reasons that remain to be discovered, dinosaurs may have evolved to larger sizes in the south, a body size pattern opposite the pattern seen in modern mammals.

The newly discovered *Tyrannosaurus mcraeensis* was roughly as tall and long as a *T. rex*, which measured up to 40 feet long and 12 feet high. The researchers found that subtle differences in the jaw bones make it unlikely that it was a direct ancestor, raising the possibility that there are still more new tyrannosaur discoveries to be made.

"As we find more and more specimens, we continue to better understand the evolution of the lineage that led to the largest terrestrial predators ever to roam the earth," adds Loewen. "This is just the beginning of a series of new tyrannosaur specimens we will unveil in the coming future."



PICTURE

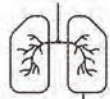
The U's Red Butte Garden is your home for the summer. Take yoga or tai chi, meander through themed spaces including the Fragrance and Medicinal gardens, explore the Floral Walk, learn about water conservation—even take in a concert at Utah's most scenic venue. For a full lineup of classes, events, and other details about how to make the most of your visit, check out redbuttegarden.org.

BY UTAH. FOR UTAH.

As Utahns ourselves, we know what matters most to our community. That's why our health insurance is designed to serve Utahns best. From our local customer service advocates and personalized plans to our award-winning network of providers, we're committed to keeping Utah healthy and strong. Because when we take care of each other, **we all thrive.**



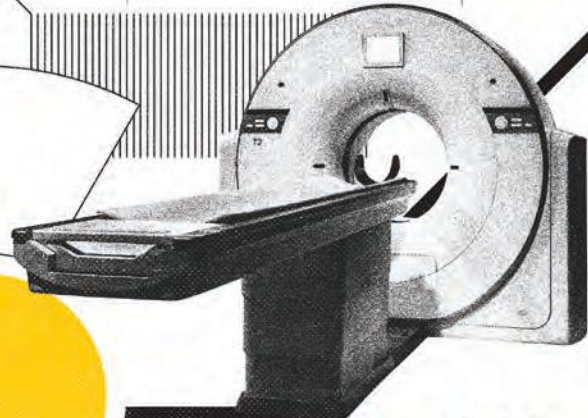
HEALTH PLANS
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH



Co-60



Ir-129



1,000 mrem



Cs-137



mrem



No. [REDACTED]

Edited by [REDACTED]
Date: 5/17/24
Initials: S.B.

DEPARTMENT OF [REDACTED]
OFFICE OF [REDACTED]

RADIOACTIVE READINESS

SECRET



[REDACTED]

WASATCH THUNDER

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] SEPTEMBER 6, 2023, AN O [REDACTED]

ROOM. A TERRORIST HAD STOLEN [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

*Revised
May 17, 2024*

WHAT IF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS GOT IN THE
WRONG HANDS? LEARN HOW THE U IS WORKING TO
HELP SAFEGUARD AGAINST THIS SCENARIO.

Written by: Lisa Potter

Art by: Israel Vargas

Date: Summer 2024

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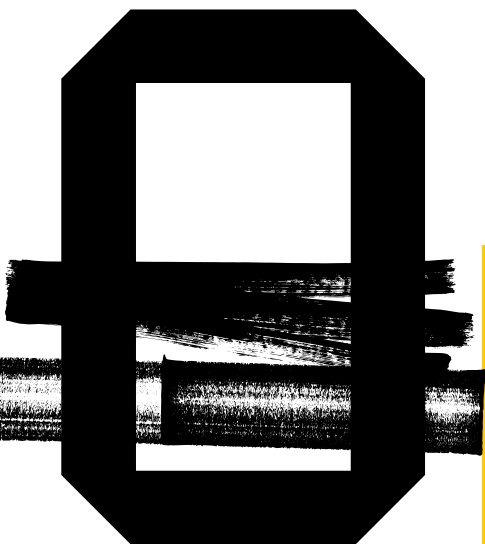
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ULTRA

No. [REDACTED] - Summer 2024

U. M. CLASSIFIED

U. M. CLASSIFIED



ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2023, an official from the Department of Energy (DOE) briefed a packed room. A terrorist had stolen radioactive material from University of Utah Hospital. It was cesium-137, an extremely potent salt compound used in a common medical device. Just a pinch of the stuff would make a devastating, dangerous, and dirty bomb.

Now what?

This was one in a series of scenarios posed during Wasatch Thunder, an all-day event where nearly 200 people from the University of Utah and local, state, and federal agencies practiced their response should someone actually steal a radioactive source from the U. Co-hosted by the U, the FBI, and the DOE, Wasatch Thunder is part of the national Silent Thunder program, created some years ago and supported by the federal Office of Radiological Security (ORS) and the FBI to upgrade security for radioactive substances in the country. The program's mission is to enhance global security by preventing radioactive materials from being used in acts of terrorism. They provide support, funding, and free training to any institutions with sources in the U.S.

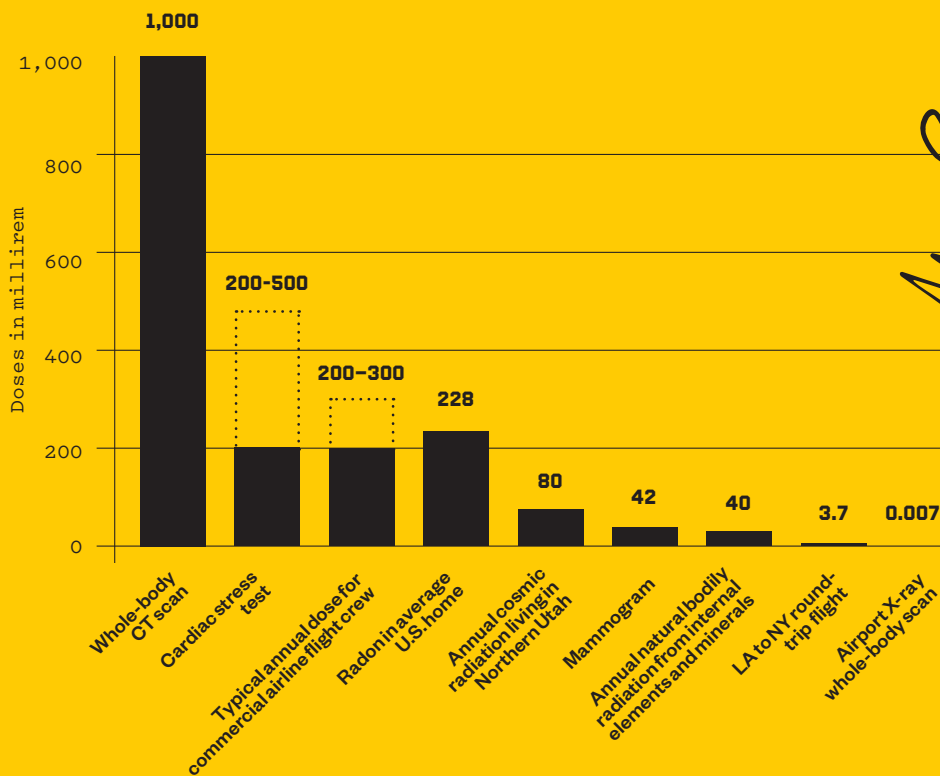
“As a leading health care system and research university, we need to have access to equipment that facilitates cutting-edge medical treatment and scientific inquiry. That means dealing with radioactive material,” says Frederick Monette, executive director of Environmental Health and Safety and radiation

DECODING COMMON RADIATION EXPOSURE

We encounter low levels of radiation in our everyday lives—from the environment, the foods we eat, and even from the cosmos. Many experience additional doses from medical procedures and diagnostics. But what exactly does this mean for us, and why should we care about different types of radiation?

Think of radiation as an invisible traveler, zipping through space and materials, carrying energy on its journey. It comes in two main guises: electromagnetic and particle radiation. Electromagnetic radiation includes the warmth of the sun on your skin, the signals received by your radio, and the light that enables you to see this page. It's also the X-rays that peek inside your body at the dentist's office and the gamma rays that sterilize medical equipment (and that superheroes might blame for their powers). On the flip side, particle radiation is more like tiny bullets, made up of charged fragments of atoms that shoot through space at incredible speeds.

Ionizing radiation is like the heavyweight champion of radiation types—it packs enough punch to knock electrons off their home base in atoms. Why does this matter? When atoms in your cells lose electrons, they can turn rogue and potentially harm DNA. If our cellular blueprints get damaged and the cell doesn't fix errors correctly, it can cause them to divide uncontrollably. This is how some cancers get started, so it's clear why ionizing radiation is something to be respected and why safety standards in hospitals and nuclear facilities are so strict.



safety officer of the U. “It’s crucial that we provide training, support, and emergency responses to use that technology safely. Luckily, we don’t have to do it alone.”

Though highly unlikely, an attempted theft would trigger a massive, coordinated response at all levels, from the U campus to federal agencies. Wasatch Thunder brought all stakeholders to Research Park to build connections and strengthen protocols ahead of a threat. If the crew assembled was any indication, the emergency response to such a threat would be a complex one with multiple moving parts. In the room were representatives from two dozen university and government agencies—from the U Emergency Management Division to the Salt Lake County Department of Public Health to the Utah Transit Authority. A hundred-plus other attendees were on hand to evaluate protocols and find areas for improvement.

LOW PROBABILITY, HIGH CONSEQUENCE

Radioactive substances are everywhere. The names may sound scary—cesium-137, iridium-129, cobalt-60—but these materials can be forces for good, with applications that include cancer therapies, medical diagnoses, structural testing, wastewater treatment, and food sanitation. If weaponized, though, radiation can cause potentially catastrophic damage. The ORS uses three strategies to keep dangerous substances out of the wrong hands.

“Our mission is to protect, remove, and reduce,” says the agency’s Michael Fink. “Protect radioactive sources used for vital medical, research, and commercial purposes; remove or dispose of disused radioactive sources; and reduce global reliance on radioactive sources by replacing them with alternative technology.”

Unlike firearms or chemicals, stealing a radioactive substance can be a death sentence. Sources are encased in lead, concrete, or water shielding—materials too heavy to carry easily. The danger and effort, paired with fortress-like security, make the likelihood of theft low, but not zero. In the past, law enforcement kept its eye mostly on foreign adversaries, but that’s shifted in recent years.

“One of our biggest threats are local, homegrown violent extremists,” Michelle Cammack, assistant weapons of mass destruction coordinator at the FBI, told the group. “The Internet and social media provide a conduit for radical ideas. These people don’t travel out of the country to join a group. They do it here.”

Cammack shared several case studies that show a rise in domestic terrorist plots over the last few years, though none involved radioactive material. Thefts have occurred, however, and Cammack mentioned an incident from 1998, when someone stole 19 steel tubes of cesium-137 from Moses Cone Hospital in North Carolina. Authorities suspected a hospital employee but lacked enough evidence to charge. The material was never recovered.

RISK VS. REWARD

Why would the U risk housing such potentially dangerous substances? They’re powerful tools for detecting and treating certain diseases, especially cancer. Huntsman Cancer Institute can’t provide world-class care without it. Radiation therapy employs X-rays, gamma rays, and charged radioactive particles to kill cancer cells. Diagnostic tests like positron emission tomography (PET) scans use a radioactive substance injected into the bloodstream to highlight cancer cells so oncologists can see where tumors are located and whether treatments are working.

Scientists also harness radioactive sources for society-enhancing research. Edward Cazalas, assistant professor of nuclear engineering in the

U’s Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, studies the effects of radiation and develops tools for detecting it. How does he work with the U’s radioactive sources?

“Very carefully,” he laughs. Part of his research involves testing electronics that have been exposed to extreme radiation. That’s a crucial piece of the puzzle for missions that rely on technology to function at high altitudes or in space.

“There’s lots of radiation in space,” Cazalas says. “If you think about a mission to Mars, the problem isn’t finding volunteers to go, or building the rockets to get there. The problem is the radiation.”

Cazalas attended Wasatch Thunder to better understand threats to sources that he works with.

“It is supremely important to keep our assets safe,” he says. “Most adversaries are dumb, but the smarter ones can cause much havoc.”

“

One of our biggest threats are local, homegrown violent

extremists. The Internet and social media provide a conduit for radical ideas.

A UNITED FRONT

Over the course of the Wasatch Thunder event, one theme kept rising to the top: collaboration is key for mitigating any threat. We can do it, but we can’t do it alone.

“We have seen Utahns step up and be at their best during emergencies. We must also be ready to respond to intentional acts, including the potential use of a weapon of mass destruction,” said Utah Governor Spencer Cox in a recorded message to Wasatch Thunder participants. “I have no doubt that the relationships formed and strengthened today will have long-lasting benefits to both Utahns and the nation as a whole.” **U**

Lisa Potter is a science writer for University Marketing & Communications.

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THE PERFECT PLACE TO
HUDDLE
WITH MOVERS AND SHAKERS.

A private club where members gather to connect,
celebrate, work, and cheer on our Utes all year long.



KEN GARFF
UNIVERSITY CLUB
AT RICE-ECCLES STADIUM









STATE



UCF

MEET THE NEXT-GEN

BIG 12

As the U enters a new power athletic conference, get to know the history, traditions, and unique flair of each member.

GET READY

FOR A GAME-CHANGING MOMENT IN UNIVERSITY OF UTAH ATHLETICS.

▶ **This fall, the U debuts as a proud member of the Big 12 athletic conference, now 16 schools strong thanks to a realignment that brought in four former Pac-12 members. The incomers bring athletic prowess to an already competitive conference with strength across its 23 sports. It's widely considered the best men's basketball league, for example, and is one of the elite "power" conferences—along with the ACC, Big Ten, and SEC—that dominate the college gridiron. The infusion of fresh talent promises an electrifying season. As we gear up for the drama ahead, let's get to know our adversaries, old and new. To traveling U fans, expect charming college towns and exciting cities. To the rival bands of college fans, we'll meet you in The MUSS. Just prepare yourself for the third down jump.**

WRITTEN BY
LISA ANDERSON
and contributors

ILLUSTRATION BY
JOHN S. DYKES

STILLWATER, OK

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 26,000 / **NICKNAME:** COWBOYS
MASCOT: PISTOL PETE / **TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 54, INCLUDING 34 IN MEN'S WRESTLING / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 1945 (46-6 OSU)

▶ Welcome to Stillwater, Oklahoma, known as one of the friendliest cities in America and a true college town. A charming downtown full of shops and restaurants hugs the southeast corner of Oklahoma State University. On campus, you'll find Georgian architecture, lush trees, and expansive lawns. Strolling past Theta Pond, you can't miss the 650,000-square-foot OSU Student Union—the largest in the world, with a hotel, 550-seat theater, lounges, food court, shops, the Rancher's Club restaurant, and even an esports arena. It's also home to the **National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum**. After exploring campus, there's only one thing to decide: where to eat. Will it be the world-famous Eskimo Joe's, Hideaway Pizza, the first-ever Sonic Drive-In, or something else?

— Aaron Lovell, U of U Health Associate Director of Marketing



CINCINNATI, OH

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

ENROLLMENT: 51,000 / **NICKNAME:** BEARCATS / **NCAA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 2, IN MEN'S BASKETBALL / **FUN FACT:** THE BEARCAT, AKA THE BINTURONG, IS NATIVE TO ASIA AND REPORTEDLY SMELLS LIKE POPCORN / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** NONE

► In a city where urban bustle meets Midwest charm, UC is “an exciting place to be,” says Ryan White PhD’07, UC’s divisional dean of natural sciences. The vibrant campus features architecture by Frank Gehry and UC alum Michael Graves, with Nippert Stadium at its heart. You’ll often catch students studying in the stands or jogging on the field. Like alum Travis Kelce, the football program is grabbing attention recently, making history in 2020-21 as the first non-power-conference team to make the playoffs. Basketball legend **Oscar Robertson**, broke records here as three-time leading NCAA scorer and three-time College Player of the Year. The men’s college basketball outstanding player trophy is now named in his honor.

Oscar Robertson went on to play for the Cincinnati Royals (now Sacramento Kings) and the Milwaukee Bucks.



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WACO, TX

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 21,000 / **NICKNAME:** BEARS
MASCOTS: BRUISER AND MARIGOLD (COSTUMED) AND INDY AND BELLE (LIVE BLACK BEARS) / **TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 14 / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 2023 (20-13 UTAH)

► From Tuesday Dr. Pepper Hour to the Diadeloso (“Day of the Bear”) spring fest, traditions abound at this private Baptist university. If you visit on game day, go sailgating on the Brazos River before heading to McLane Stadium. There, you’ll witness **the famous Baylor Line**: a stampede of gold jersey-clad freshmen cross the field and form a human tunnel for players to make their entrance, all the while shouting their rallying cry, “Sic ‘em, Bears!”

LAWRENCE, KS

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

ENROLLMENT: 29,000 / **NICKNAME:** JAYHAWKS / **MASCOTS:** BIG JAY AND BABY JAY / **TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 16 / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 1996 (45-42 UTAH)

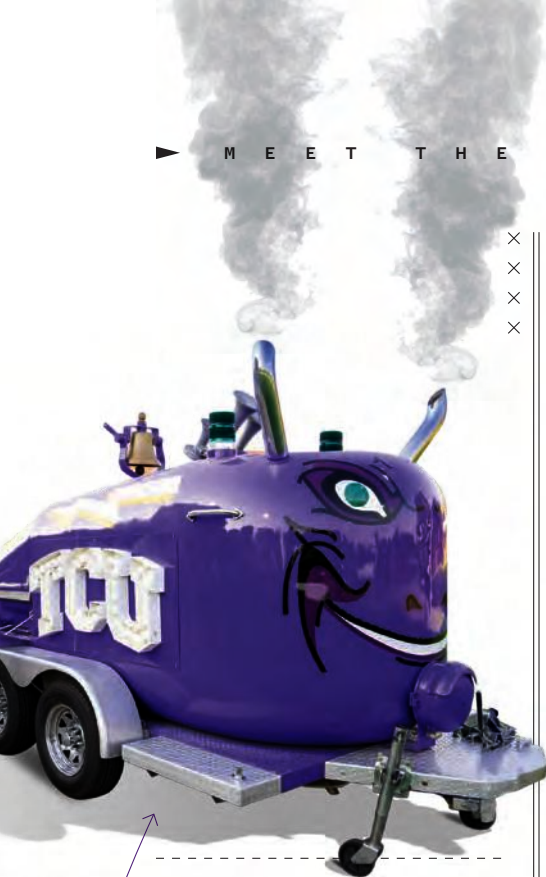
► Do Kansas fans tend to brag about their men’s basketball program? Probably. Are they justified? Absolutely. KU holds **the most NCAA championship titles** (four) of any Big 12 school and the most conference titles in the entire country. What else from the school whose first coach was James Naismith, the founder of the game itself? Kansas pride is on display at every game, as fans cheer on their team by “waving the wheat” (swaying their arms) and chanting “Rock Chalk, Jayhawk.”



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► W H A T ’ S I N A N A M E (O R N U M B E R) ?

The Big 12 and Big Ten may share a “big” title, but don’t be fooled—they’re separate conferences. The U joins the 16-strong Big 12, while across the divide, the Big Ten grows to 18, with new additions including USC and Washington. And pay no attention to the numbers. Even though each conference has expanded, they’ve both made the decision to keep their legacy names.



FORT WORTH, TX

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 13,000 / **NICKNAME:** HORNED FROGS / **MASCOT:** SUPERFROG
NCAA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS: 5 / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 2010 (47-7 TCU)

▶ First things first: what is a horned frog? It's actually the Texas horned lizard, reported to have once swarmed TCU's football field. If you visit campus, look for the horned frog statue and rub its nose for luck. In the stadium, catch fans with their horned frog sign of two curled fingers. And get ready for **the smoke-spewing Frog Horn** that celebrates touchdowns with an ear-splitting blast.

TEMPE, PHOENIX, AND LAKE HAVASU, AZ

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

NEW TO THE BIG 12 / **ENROLLMENT:** 146,000 / **NICKNAME:** SUN DEVILS (INSPIRATION: DESERT SUN + DUST DEVILS) / **MASCOT:** SPARKY / **NCAA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 24 / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 2023 (3-55 UTAH)

▶ ASU's social work doctoral program may have been the main draw for alum Jason Castillo. But the fact that he could tailgate in shorts in November? Icing on the cake. Castillo, associate dean for academic affairs in the U's College of Social Work, moved from wind-chilled Wyoming to sunny Tempe and Phoenix to attend one of the nation's largest universities. "To me, ASU was this huge urban jungle," he says. There's always something to experience, from Tempe Town Lake paddleboarding to bustling Mill Avenue nightlife to ASU's fiery football games. With **a roaring student section called**

the Inferno and fireworks after every touchdown, the Sun Devils will be bringing the heat to the Big 12 this fall.



MORGANTOWN, WV

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 27,000 / **NICKNAME:** MOUNTAINEERS / **MASCOT:** THE MOUNTAINEER
TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS: 28, WITH 19 FOR THE RIFLE TEAM
LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP: 2017 HEART OF DALLAS BOWL (30-14 UTAH)



▶ When the Utes play at West Virginia University, don't be alarmed when a **bucks-kin-clad mountaineer** fires a musket into the air—that's just how WVU kicks off the game. Appalachian spirit is strong here, and the university celebrates it with events like Mountaineer Week—picture bluegrass concerts and a beard-growing contest. "There were always a lot of undergrads who would grow those long ZZ Top beards," remembers U Enrollment Management's Steve Robinson, a WVU alum. If you make the cross-country trek, stick around after the game for the sing-along to John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads." But, Robinson points out, "They only play it when the Mountaineers win, so Ute fans probably won't want to hear it."

TUCSON, AZ

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

NEW TO THE BIG 12 / ENROLLMENT: 53,000 / NICKNAME: WILDCATS / MASCOTS: WILBUR AND WILMA
TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS: 22 / LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP: 2023 (42-18 ARIZONA)

► The University of Arizona is a paradise for snowbird students like Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson MSW'99 PhD'08. "I have fond memories of practicing flag football at midnight year-round," says the U social work professor who attended UA for her

undergrad. Vogel-Ferguson remembers hikes up Sentinel Peak to paint the "A." followed by technicolor sunsets. In this desert landscape, the only thing hotter than Tucson's temps is the scorching Arizona-ASU Territorial Cup, America's oldest college football rivalry trophy.



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SALT LAKE CITY, UT

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH



NEW TO THE BIG 12 / ENROLLMENT: 35,000 / NICKNAME: UTES / MASCOT: SWOOP, A RED-TAILED HAWK / TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS: 30 (16 IN SKIING, 10 IN WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS, 3 IN MEN'S BASKETBALL, 1 IN WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY)

► Here's a riddle for you: "I've hiked to the white Block U and posed at the red Block U. I've graffitied the wall at the Pie. I've sprinted uphill from a class on Presidents Circle to a class at HPER. I've taken midday billiards breaks at the Union, lost my voice at the Huntsman Center, lost my hearing at Rice-Eccles, bused with The MUSS, clapped at Kingsbury, cheered at Kerfuffles, and flashed the U till my thumbs gave out. Who am I, sir?"

The answer is something U alumni proudly shout at every game, our yell ringing across what could very well be the country's most beautiful campus. We may have chosen the U for different reasons. Maybe it was the research opportunities, nationally ranked medical/business/law school, well-respected arts and humanities programs, or the proximity to multiple ski resorts (hey, we all have our priorities). But there's one thing we alums have in common—we're Utah fans, sir, and will be till we die. Go Utes!

HOUSTON, TX

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

ENROLLMENT: 46,000 / NICKNAME: COUGARS
MASCOTS: SHASTA AND SASHA / NCAA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS: 17, WITH 16 IN GOLF / LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP: 1978 (42-25 HOUSTON)

► In the heart of Space City, the University of Houston trains some of NASA's next rock(et) stars, offering aerospace engineering degrees and the world's only space architecture graduate program. The 2023 Big12 newcomers are already proving themselves in the conference, with recent successes in football and basketball. If you're ever in the stands among UH fans, look for the Cougar sign—one hand up, ring finger touching palm. It's an homage to the live mascot who lost a toe in 1953.



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ORLANDO, FL

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

ENROLLMENT: 69,000 / **NICKNAME:** KNIGHTS
MASCOTS: KNIGHTRO (COSTUMED) AND THE UCF KNIGHT AND PEGASUS (LIVE) / **NCAA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 1 (NON-CONSENSUS) FOOTBALL TITLE / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** NONE

► Kennedy Space Center? Disney World? Those are just a few student internship choices at this Orlando school. Nicknamed SpaceU, UCF was founded in the 1960s to train the space race workforce. Today it's a comprehensive university with 220+ degree programs. If you visit during Homecoming Week, watch for Spirit Splash—a favorite tradition where students jump into the campus's huge reflecting pool. At the Bounce House (FBC Mortgage Stadium), keep an eye out for **soaring rockets above the 50-yard line**—it intentionally aligns with the latitude of KSP's launch complex.

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MANHATTAN, KS

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 20,000 / **NICKNAME:** WILDCATS / **MASCOT:** WILLIE THE WILDCAT / **NCAA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 0 / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** NONE

► Smack dab in the heartland, K-State is full of agriculture wizards. The nation's first land-grant university has won more national collegiate crops contests—32—than any other school in the country. The **fierce football contenders** have claimed the last 15 Sunflower Showdown titles against their almighty foe, University of Kansas. If you attend a game, stop by the campus dairy bar first for some Purple Pride ice cream.

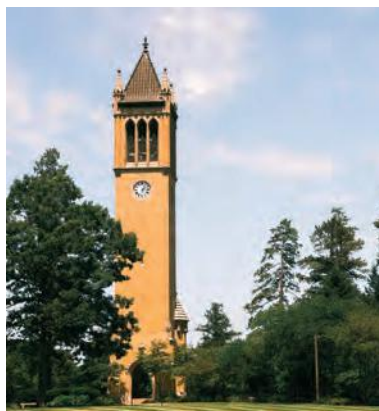


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AMES, IA

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 30,000 / **NICKNAME:** CYCLONES / **MASCOT:** CY THE CARDINAL / **TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 19 / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 2010 (68-27 UTAH)



► When potential students tour Iowa State, they stop at **the Campanile**—a clock tower in the center of campus—and are asked the same questions: How many bricks did it take to build the Campanile, and how many bells does it have? Over 50,000 bricks and 50 bells went into the iconic structure, just one of many beautiful buildings at Iowa State. The university has one of the largest collections of public art in the nation and one of the most electrifying coliseums in college basketball. Jack Trice Stadium, the only CFB stadium named after an African American, hosts the Cyclones football team. If you attend a game, perk up your ears for the “Juicy Wiggle” and watch the crowd dance.

— Zeb Callahan, Assistant Athletic Trainer, U Gymnastics, Iowa State '18

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 ► W H E R E T O W A T C H B I G 1 2 G A M E S

The Big 12 has media rights deals with ESPN and FOX Sports. Games are mostly broadcast on the ESPN family of networks (ESPN, ABC, ESPN2, ESPNU, and Big 12 Now/ESPN+), as well as FOX and FS1. Other TV partners may carry non-conference games and tournaments. Check utahutes.com for info on upcoming games.

LUBBOCK, TX

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 40,000 / **NICKNAME:** RED RAIDERS / **MASCOTS:** THE MASKED RIDER (LIVE) AND RAIDER RED (COSTUMED) / **TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 3 / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 1973 (29-22 TTU)

► At this west Texas university, conference matches are more like Showdowns at the Big 12 Corral. A **masked rider** atop a black horse leads the football team onto the field, while the gunslinging Raider Red cowboy mascot paces the sidelines and fans throw tortillas from the stands. The atmosphere is no less intimidating in the basketball arena, which has birthed phenoms like Sheryl Swoopes. The WNBA legend led the team to NCAA victory in 1993 before beginning her pro career.



PROVO, UT

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 35,000 / **NICKNAME:** COUGARS / **MASCOT:** COSMO
TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS: 14, INCLUDING 1 IN FOOTBALL / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 2021 (26-17 BYU)



► If you're heading to Brigham Young University, a Big 12 member as of 2023, get ready to climb. From the west, it's 192 stairs up to campus. But BYU students are used to climbing. After all, it's another 1,000 vertical feet to the **famous Y on the mountain**. Visitors are often stunned by the majestic Wasatch Mountains seen from LaVell Edwards Stadium and outside the Marriott Center, the Big 12's largest football and basketball venues.

Sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, BYU invites students to seek heights of secular and spiritual learning. They balance rigorous coursework in business, accounting, law, engineering, and more with religion classes and weekly forums with speakers from inside and outside the faith. As BYU students climb into their careers after graduation, they're reminded: "Enter to learn, go forth to serve."

— Aaron Lovell, U of U Health Associate Director of Marketing, BYU Class of '04

BOULDER, CO

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

NEW TO THE BIG 12 / **ENROLLMENT:** 37,000 / **NICKNAME:** BUFFALOES / **MASCOTS:** RALPHIE (LIVE) AND CHIP (COSTUMED) / **NCAA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:** 25, INCLUDING 18 IN SKIING / **LAST U FOOTBALL MATCHUP:** 2023 (23-17 UTAH)

► "When this New England girl first saw Boulder, Colorado's stunning, **red rock Flatirons** after driving 2,000 miles cross country, it was love at first sight," writes April Goddard MPA'97, senior director of advancement at the U's College of Social and Behavioral Science, about her alma mater. "After experiencing 300 days of sunshine, 45,000 acres of open space, 300 miles of bike trails, and world-class Eldorado Canyon climbing nine miles away, I waved goodbye to Maine winters forever. I quickly adapted to what Gallup and *Forbes* have named our nation's fittest city. A quirky, cam-

pus-centered community with firm roots in its hippie past, Boulder is full of athletic, educated people—only Silicon Valley has more STEM jobs per capita. Before moving to Utah, my husband and I were married on Flagstaff Mountain, looking down on Boulder Valley's breathtaking vista." **U**

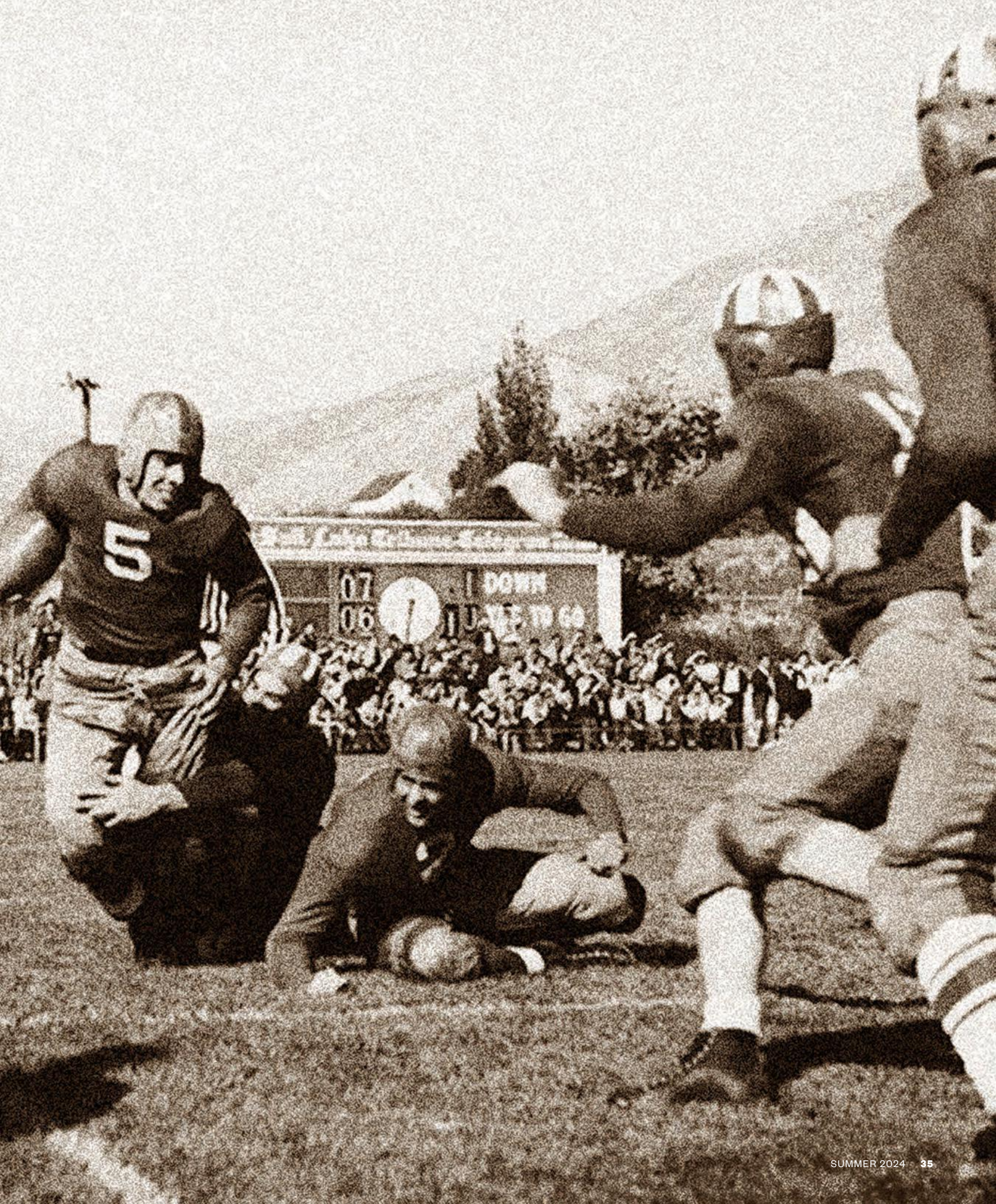
Lisa Anderson BA'02 is associate editor of *Utah Magazine*.

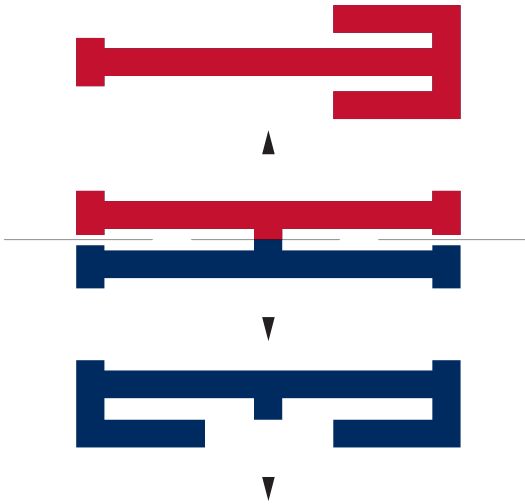
RESETTING THE

As the U and BYU
re-enter conference
play together, both
look to change the tenor
of the competition.

BYU
WAS
THE
BYU

WRITTEN BY
SETH BRACKEN





first recorded sporting event between the U and BYU, then known as Brigham Young Academy, was a baseball game ending in a scoreless tie and a bench-clearing brawl. That auspicious start in 1895 set the spark of what would become a heated rivalry. For more than a century, the two neighboring schools had epic matchups in everything from football to swimming and soccer to softball.

Temperatures between the two cooled slightly after 2011 when the U entered the Pac-12 and BYU went independent. Now, they're set for their first conference match-up since that change—BYU entered the Big 12 conference in 2023 and the U will join this summer. As they enter a new era, both schools are looking to reset the rivalry and change its tenor.

"We love a bit of friendly competition at the U," says U President Taylor Randall HBA'90. "It can help elevate the play of our athletes, and our fans love it. But ultimately, we have incredibly talented students representing schools and the larger community that all of Utah can be proud of."

The ties between schools are intricate, adds U Athletics Director Mark Harlan. "There is a long and storied history of competition between the two schools, and so much familiarity from program to program among our coaches, staff, and student-athletes," says Harlan. "That adds a great deal of meaning to those rivalry competitions in all sports, and our fans certainly have a heightened anticipation for those matchups as well."

Mirroring the U's dedication to sportsmanship, BYU Athletic Director Tom Holmoe says that BYU appreciates the mutual effort required to sustain the respectful nature of the competition. "This is one of the best rivalries in the country. Having played, coached,

and been the AD for 26 years of BYU-Utah games in multiple sports, I can uniquely say that we've had something super special here—for players, coaches, and fans—for an entire century," says Holmoe. "Let's do all we can to preserve and respect this competitive rivalry, and part of respecting the rivalry is respecting each other."

Risk and Legacy

In many ways, you can't celebrate one team without acknowledging the impact of the other. Let's look at football, for example. Depending on how you count the series—some don't include the games played before an annual matchup began in 1922—Utah currently leads 62-34-4, but that doesn't quite tell the whole story. Take the only time BYU was ranked No. 1 in the nation—it came after beating Utah in 1984, en route to the national championship. On the other hand, Utah busted the BCS twice—clinching invites to the 2004 Fiesta Bowl and the 2008 Sugar Bowl—by defeating BYU.

In 2015, Utah signed wide receiver and kick return extraordinaire Britain Covey, a diehard BYU fan, who is now one of the NFL's star punt returners. In 2018, BYU signed Zach Wilson, a Utah fan from Sandy, Utah, who went on to become the No. 2 overall pick in the 2021 NFL draft. And now Wilson's younger brother, Isaac, a four-star recruit, is on Utah's roster. Even legendary BYU coach LaVell Edwards MS'60 went to grad school at the U.

The ties don't stop at football. Consider the leadership of both schools during the 2000s: while Cecil O. Samuelson, a U grad [BS'66 MS'70 MD'70] and Crimson Club founding member, was serving as BYU's president, Utah's president was Michael K. Young, a descendant of Brigham Young and a BYU grad [BA, 1973].

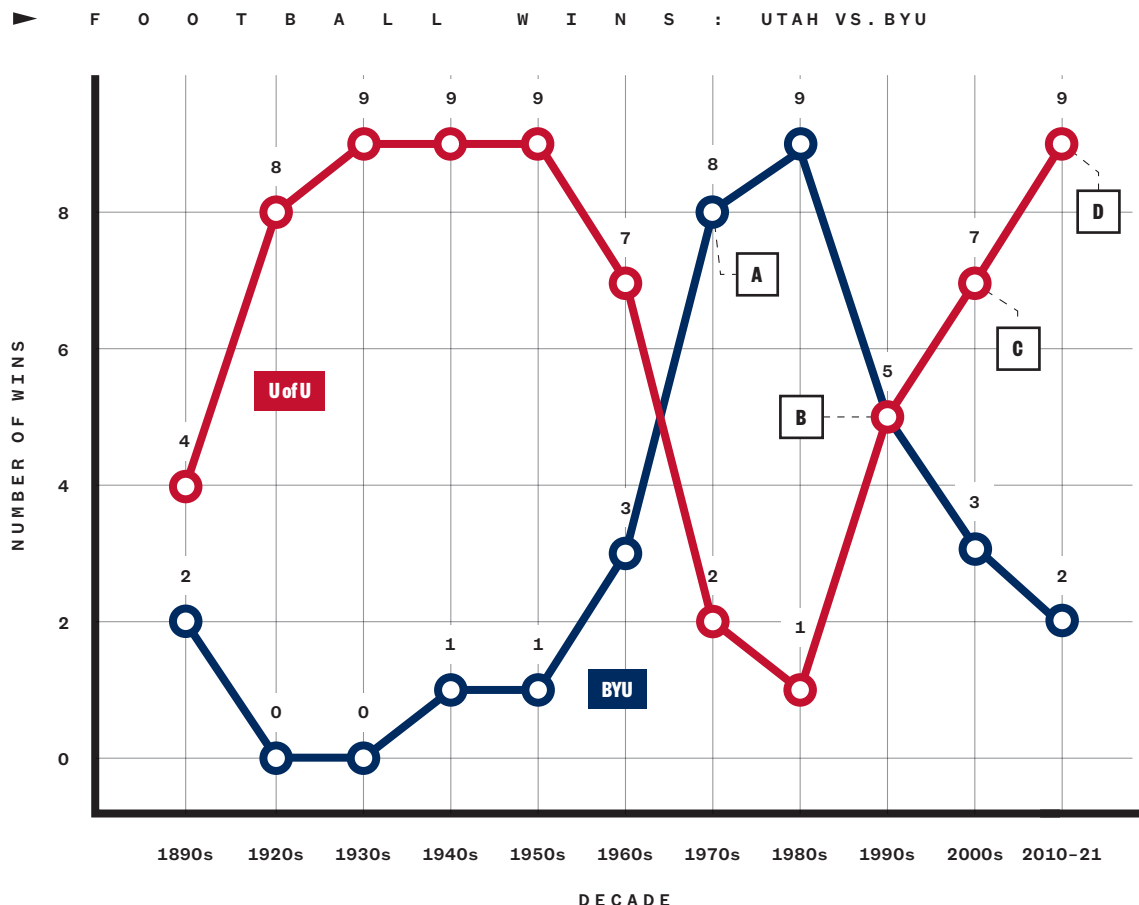
That's just how these two teams tangle.



Web Extra See a list of some of the surprising prominent figures with ties to the U and BYU at magazine.utah.edu/rivalry

What Makes a Good Rivalry?

Before the football series took a hiatus in 2021, NFL.com rated the BYU/U matchup as the No. 6 best college football rivalry in the country, noting it is known to "split generations of families." Familiarity can sometimes breed contempt, noted Bomani Jones in an ESPN article about what makes a good rivalry. "These rivalries are huge because of the recruiting ramifications—particularly when both schools are dependent upon the state's talent.







Plus, fans get bragging rights over millions of people, something that's extra-special fun," he wrote.

So, what inspires rivalry? In many cases, it's a matchup of state schools—think Oregon vs. Oregon State. Others are state school versus nearby private institution—North Carolina vs. Duke, say. And in some cases, religion even comes into play.

But falling into the trap of polarization can be damaging, U Impact Scholar Eboo Patel noted at a recent fireside hosted by the U Latter-day Saint Student Association. The founder and president of Interfaith America said this potentially dangerous situation occurs when people hate others more than they love themselves. "You cannot have a civic life in a diverse democracy if people with diverse identities can't have conversations," he remarked.

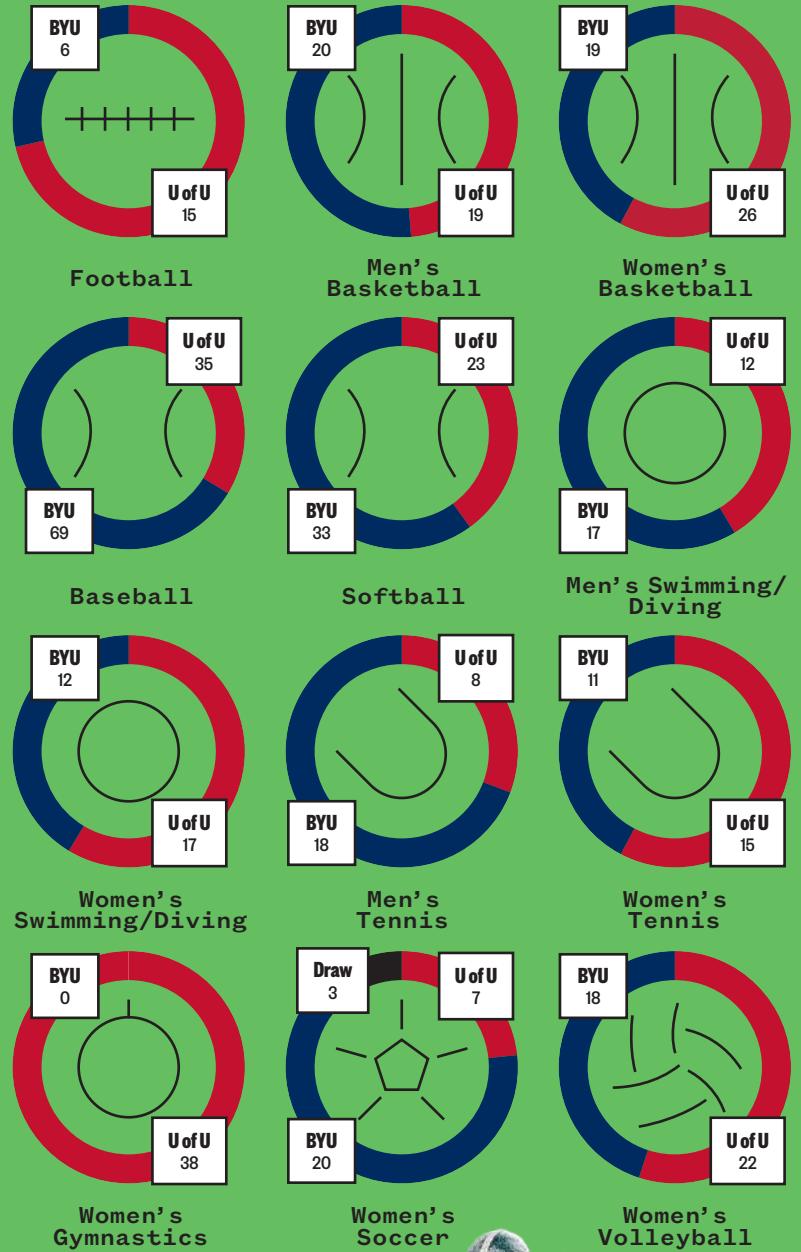
When tensions are high, take a step back and reflect on the bigger picture, adds Randall. "We're rivals on the field, but allies in education and partners in building a stronger, more united community," he notes. "This next chapter in our rivalry is more than a game—it's a chance to show that competition can co-exist with camaraderie and respect. Let's lead by example."

TURNING POINTS

- A**  **LaVell Edwards** MS'60 was hired as BYU head coach in 1972. Under his leadership, the Y became known for its high-scoring games and prolific quarterbacks.
- B**  The 1990s saw the Utes rise, painting the decade in Utah Red. The turning point came in 1993 after the U hired tenacious coach **Ron McBride**. That year, Utah clinched a victory in Provo, their first in 22 seasons.
- C**  **Urban Meyer**'s 2003 arrival transformed U football, leading the Utes to a historic BCS bowl win in 2004 as the first non-BCS team to do so. His successor, ex-Cougar Kyle Whittingham, clinched a 31-17 win over No. 4 Alabama in the 2008 Sugar Bowl, securing Utah's status as the season's only undefeated team.
- D**  The landscape of college football in Utah shifted in the 2010s. The U, under coach **Kyle Whittingham**, made a monumental move to the Pac-12, while BYU chose to walk the path of a football independent.

RIVALRIES : UTAH VS. BYU

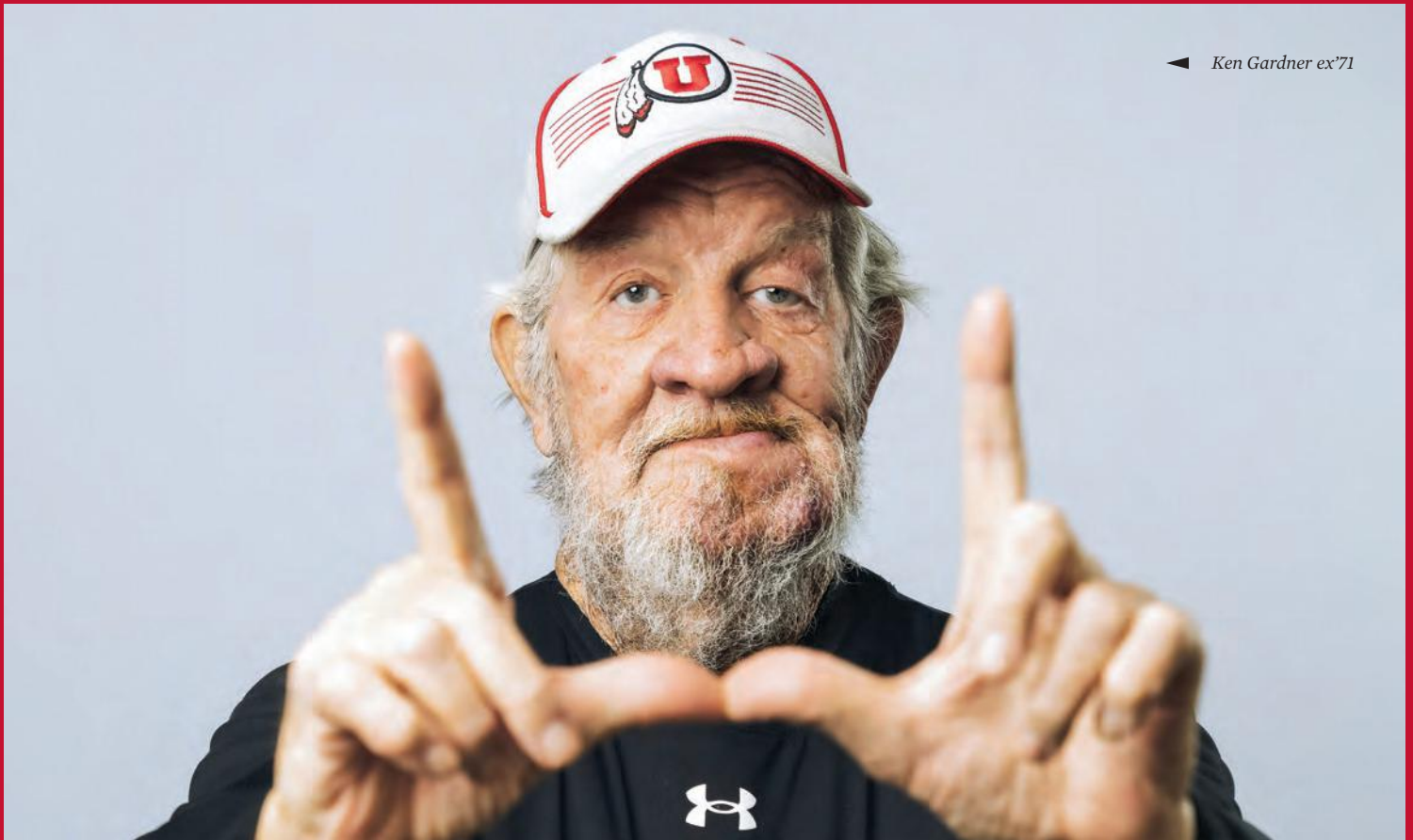
From exhilarating triumphs to agonizing defeats, the two teams have a remarkable past. And the last 25 years of play between the schools tells a story of fierce competition.



(Previous spread) The U led early football matchups and won for 40 consecutive years.

U players Jason Potter and Kautai Olevao tackle BYU's Kevin Feteri in 1999.





A Shared Heart

PHOTOS BY DAVE TITENSOR

K

en Gardner ex'71 bleeds purple. The heart currently pumping blood through the former U basketball star was once in the chest of an ex-BYU football player. In 2013, Nick Longshore was critically injured in an ATV accident and later died in an Idaho hospital. His heart was the perfect match for Gardner. "Thanks to that BYU heart, I've been gifted 10 wonderful years of life," he says. "I've walked two daughters down the aisle and seen four granddaughters born. None of that would be possible without Nick, and I am eternally grateful to him and his family."

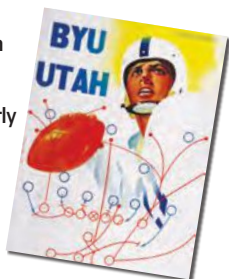
Gardner met his donor's family six months after the operation thanks to some unusual coincidences that led them to reach out. "When Nick passed, his wife was pregnant, and the day I met them I got to hold the four-month-old daughter

of the man who gave me a second chance at life," says Gardner. "I held her close to my chest so she could feel her dad's heart beating for the first time."

With his second lease on life, Gardner, who also played professional basketball in France and was named best American player in the league twice, has raised awareness around organ donation and started a nonprofit called Hearts 4 Hearts. "I remember playing BYU each year and all the intense feelings and increased stakes that came with it," shares Gardner. "But I think I'm the living embodiment of how we're all part of the same community. And while the rivalry can be fun for fans, and the intensity can be a boost for players, it's important to remember that at the end of the day, we're all in this together."

► DID YOU KNOW ?

1 The U began playing BYU in the Western Athletic Conference in 1922. In football, the U won for nearly 40 consecutive years, with BYU being shut out in 10 of the first 20 meetings.



2 Both Utah and BYU have had strong showings in NCAA tournaments in women's basketball: Utah with 18 appearances, including one Elite Eight and three Sweet Sixteen appearances, and BYU with 15 Elite Eight appearances and two Sweet Sixteens.

3 In women's gymnastics, the all-time record is 103-2, with BYU's last win in 1998.



4 The men's basketball series is rated one of the top 10 most historic rivalries in terms of most games played.

Red & Blue Family Hue

It's easy to cheer for your team when they're winning. And it's easy to love your family when they're on your side. The challenge arises when those paths diverge. But it comes easier for some—take siblings Bizzy Bowen and Andy Phillips BA'16 MS'16, for example. Bowen was a midfielder on the BYU soccer team while Phillips was a walk-on placekicker for the U.

"Growing up, we only wore BYU gear," says Bowen. "But when Andy was on that field, you'd never find bigger U fans than me and our family." Conversely, Phillips was a common sight in Provo—his wife was a Cougarette—and he got to know players, coaches, and BYU staff. "Everyone is so supportive, and I still feel comfortable walking in and saying 'hi' to [BYU athletic director] Tom Holmoe in the halls," adds Phillips.

Their family ties extend even more across both campuses. Their dad played soccer for BYU, and their older brother and mom went to the U for medical school and graduate studies, respectively. But they've found a way to navigate the passionate world of college sports with grace, humor, and a whole lot of family support. "Rivalry games are more intense, and they're not always pretty, but they are a lot of fun," says Phillips. "For us, it all comes down to recognizing that it's the passion for the game and support of one another that unites us." After all, adds Bowen, beneath the jerseys and face paint, we're really all on the same "team"—even if we occasionally sit on the "wrong" side of the stadium. **U**

Seth Bracken is editor of Utah Magazine.

Andy Phillips
BA'16 MS'16
(left) and
Bizzy Bowen



5

In men's basketball, the U has one NCAA championship and made 29 tournament appearances with four Final Four showings, while BYU has participated in 31 NCAA tournaments, reaching the Elite Eight three times, and finishing as runner-up in 1951.

6

BYU leads the overall series in men's basketball 135-129. On the women's side of the battles, the U leads 69-43.



7

The first men's basketball game between the two schools was in 1909.

8

U and BYU alumni offices have traditionally held a food drive competition around the football rivalry game, bringing in more than \$100,000 and 390,000 pounds of food annually. The competition is slated to start back up this fall.





Career High

A U alum navigates the exciting and unpredictable world of sports PR

You've got to love athletics with a passion when you work in PR at a 24/7 sports network, says Danny Chi BA'01, senior director of communications and West Coast publicity for ESPN.

"It's a lot of work... not a typical Monday to Friday job," Chi explains. Every game carries the potential for a crisis, from commentator gaffes to serious injuries. But despite the demanding nature, Chi can't imagine himself doing anything else.

"I'm truly blessed," says the self-described die-hard fan. "If you love sports, this is the epicenter."

Chi's career journey started his senior year at the U, when an advisor told him of an internship opportunity with Nike—his favorite brand—and their communications team for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

"I was so fortunate to work during the Olympics, because it allowed me to meet folks from all over the world and see the levels at which comms professionals operated," he notes.

The connections he made led to a job post-graduation at an entertainment PR agency in Los Angeles, working on campaigns for TV shows, movies, and sporting events. He was all in for the sports, but the Hollywood stuff—not so much.

"The client I felt most connected to was ESPN," Chi recalls. "Sports are unscripted—they tell their own stories. You never know what those stories will be, but they come from some of the most amazing people."

When the network offered him a job, he jumped at the chance. Chi oversees media relations initiatives at ESPN's L.A. studios, with a focus on communications strategy for the National Hockey League, the X Games, and ESPN's 34 owned and operated college sporting events. His job brings him face to face with some of the world's most famous athletes, but Chi says he rarely gets star-struck—except when meeting former Utah players.

"Everybody knows I'm the Utes guy at ESPN," he smiles.

U ALUMNI EVENTS CALENDAR

Mark your calendars for U Alumni meetups this summer and fall. Network, connect with old friends, and forge new connections at these events:

Young Alumni at the Salt Lake Bees

Tuesday, July 23

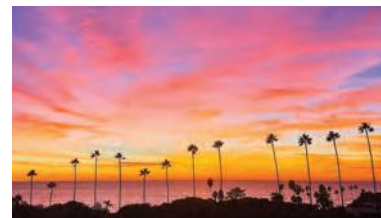
Join other alums who have graduated in the last 10 years. Registration gets you a ticket and a meal.



Utah Night at the Rockies

Tuesday, Aug. 6

Head to Coors Field in Denver to cheer on the Colorado Rockies with other U alums.



San Diego Alumni Chapter

Saturday, Aug. 24

Meet and connect with alums in Southern California.



Homecoming Week

Saturday, Sept. 21-Saturday, Sept. 28

From a 5K fun run to an emeritus alumni reunion, Homecoming at the U is an event-filled week leading up to the big game against Arizona.

Stay tuned for updates on tailgates in Logan (Utah State) and Stillwater (Oklahoma State) in September, followed by get-togethers in Seattle, Phoenix, and Houston in October.

For details on all the events and to join your chapter, visit alumni.utah.edu. And don't forget to follow @UtahAlumni on social media for updates.

h

Telle Whitney

BS'78

When I started at the University of Utah in 1973, I didn't know anything about computer science. I started out as a theater major, then tried political science and various other things. And then out of desperation, I took something called an interest inventory test. That was the first time I found computer science.

I feel very blessed because when I found my passion, it just shone. The U had one of the earliest computer science departments in the country and was doing groundbreaking work. I loved my classes and tried to pack my schedule with everything possible. One of the faculty helped me apply for graduate school—I hadn't considered doing that before. So it opened up a world of possibilities that has served me well throughout my life.

I graduated with a doctorate in computer science from Caltech. When I came to Silicon Valley, there were not many women around. I was desperate to meet other women in the tech industry, so I developed a network. That really provided a nurturing place for me. I made a close friend named Anita Borg during that period, and we founded what became the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing conference. It was based on this idea that women were often overlooked in terms of their contributions. We wanted to celebrate their achievements.

When I hear the stories from the women who attend, it feeds my soul. If you are one of just a very few in your department, having the chance to see these role models and hear about the positive impact their technology work has on the world, it makes a huge difference. I remember a young mechanical engineer who stopped me in the hallway, and she was just sobbing. She said, "I wish I had been able to attend something like this years ago. This changed my life."

12 Tips for Tailgating in the Big 12

Tailgating at the U is an art form. It's been crafted between the peaks of the Wasatch, fueled by tradition, and now, it's infused with new energy as we enter the Big 12. Whether you're joining in the fun for the first time or you've been firing up a portable grill for decades, we're looking forward to celebrating with you at tailgates both home and away. To help get you started, here are "12 Big Things" you need to know to join U Alumni this football season.

1. Sign up with U Alumni.

Join the U Alumni tailgate for food, drinks, and good company. Don't forget to sign up first at alumni.utah.edu.

2. Watch your clock.

Tailgate action really ramps up about 2½ hours before game time.

3. Don the correct gear.

Check the U Athletics site for game-day themes like Dark Mode. And consider dressing in layers—weather can switch up fast in Utah.

4. Take the Red Line train.

Your football ticket is your free TRAX pass to Rice-Eccles.

5. Find Tailgate Way.

At home games, most tailgate action unfolds along Guardsman Way, but activities and action are all around on game day. From Presidents Circle to upper campus, enjoying a stroll around the grounds is part of the fun.

6. Meet up with The MUSS.

Mighty Utah Student Section (MUSS) members tailgate before every home game with music, food, and games. They also go on the road for at least one away game a year with the MUSS Bus.

7. Join the club.

Groups of fans and organizations sponsor specific tailgates. The Utah Pig Bus, for example, sells season wristbands and is known for its live music and whole-hog roasting. The Ken Garff University Club also hosts tailgates for members. And Smith's has a tailgate spot where your previous week's grocery receipt gets you access.

8. Wander the lot.

Dedicated tailgating spots have a long wait list, but not to worry! Meander along Guardsman Way and join in the action—you'll be especially welcome if you bring a bite or a beverage.

9. Connect with your community.

U tailgates are renowned for welcoming all ages—embrace that spirit, get your face paint on, and head to the stadium.

10. Go clear.

Only transparent bags are allowed in the stadium.

11. Create a friendly atmosphere.

Welcome fans from the opposing team with open arms! Show them the hospitality Utah fans are famous for.

12. Hit the road.

U Alumni hosts tailgates, open to all Utah fans, for a few of the away games, too. Check the schedule at alumni.utah.edu.



The Founders Day honors are among the highest given annually by the U.

Building a Legacy Together

Founders Day at the U is a testament to the influential achievements of its alumni family

Since its establishment in 1850, the University of Utah has experienced remarkable growth and evolution. In celebration of its storied past, the university annually hosts Founders Day, honoring distinguished alumni and honorary degree recipients who have profoundly impacted their communities, professional domains, and the institution. The accolades bestowed during this event rank among the highest honors the university can award. Meet the honorees for this year.

Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients



Jesselie B. Anderson BA'68 has made lasting contributions to Utah's community, particularly in children's advocacy, the arts, and education. A decade-long member of the Utah Board of Education and a collaborator with Utah's congressional delegation, Anderson has influenced various organizations and served in pivotal roles at the U, including on the President's Campaign Cabinet Executive Committee and the U Hospitals and Clinics Board of Directors.



Edna Anderson-Taylor BFA'59 was the first woman on KUED and the beloved Miss Julie of *Romper Room* on KSL TV for 17 years. Following her TV career, she worked at KSL Radio and co-founded American Women in Radio and Television in Utah. In retirement, she led the Assistance League and, with her husband, Jerry, funded scholarships for underrepresented students in the U's Communication Department. They recently established the Edna Anderson-Taylor Institute, a platform focusing on women in journalism.



Verlinda Montoya BSN'82 MS'90 served as an elder, medicine woman, and spiritual leader for the Northern Tiwa and Hopi tribes, contributing 40 years to health care for the underserved. As Heart of Humanity Home Care's CEO, she provided culturally respectful health services. A Lakota-Sioux adoptee, she led traditional ceremonies for 20 years. Her passing from cancer is mourned by the U community, and her family posthumously received her award.

Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD) Alumni Award



Anjanette Watts Walsh DDS'19 provides vital dental care to Native communities in Utqiagvik, Alaska, one of the country's most remote towns, which experiences 24 hours of darkness from November to January. She's a dedicated provider in an area known for extreme conditions. A Salt Lake City native, Walsh's commitment stems from her deep appreciation for the local people and culture. At the U, Walsh was co-president of the Student Advisory Committee and student speaker at the School of Dentistry's 2019 Commencement.

Distinguished Service Award



Ron McBride shaped Utah Football for 21 years, clinching 88 wins, six bowl games, and two conference titles. His legacy includes inductions into multiple Halls of Fame and receiving the NAACP's Martin Luther King Jr. Award. Off the field, he established a foundation that supports after-school programs for at-risk students.



Vicky McBride BS'82, a dedicated U alumna, has contributed to education and counseling, and has served on several boards, including Friends for Sight, Combined Health Appeal, and Prevent Child Abuse. Together, the McBrides have significantly impacted Utah student-athletes' lives. They are parents to four U-educated children.

Visit alumni.utah.edu by Sept. 6 to submit a nomination for the 2025 Founders Day Awards.



Web Extra Don't miss honoree videos online at magazine.utah.edu/founders2024

Class Notes

'40s



Wat Misaka

Wat Misaka BS'48 is the subject of a new picture book, *Wat Kept Playing: The Inspiring Story of Wataru Misaka and His Rise to the NBA*, by family member Emily Inouye Huey. Misaka broke the color barrier in pro basketball, despite being only 5-foot-7 and playing at a time when many of his fellow Japanese Americans were locked up in internment camps and racism was being used as a policy tool.

'70s

Adam Rose BA'70, who journeyed from a post-WWII German displaced persons camp to a prolific career in academia, established the Adam Rose Family Scholarship for Refugee Students in the U's Department of Economics, honoring the professors who inspired him and the Salt Lake community that welcomed his family in 1951.

'80s



Akhlesh Lakhtakia

Akhlesh Lakhtakia MS'81 PhD'83 is winner of the 2024 SPIE Gold Medal, which he received for his research on electromagnetic fields in complex materials. Lakhtakia is a professor at Penn State University and is widely recognized for his groundbreaking research on nanotechnology and on the behavior of electromagnetic fields and waves in complex materials. In 2007, he was recognized by U Alumni as a Founders Day Distinguished Alumnus.



Lori Labrum

Lori Labrum BS'89 is the new transit market sector leader at TranSystems, which plans, designs, and oversees construction to enhance transportation networks and infrastructure. Labrum joined the company about a year ago as senior vice president

and west transit market and national bus-rapid transit (BRT) leader. With over 30 years of experience, she's played a pivotal role in planning and designing over 200 miles of BRT systems, overseeing key projects in Utah and Houston.

'90s

Jeffery McFarland JD'91 is a partner in the litigation group of Eisner, LLP, representing entertainment industry clients in high-profile, high-stakes business disputes. He was previously a principal in the Los Angeles office of McKool Smith. McFarland has also practiced at Am Law 200 firms and served as the co-chair of Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan's national media and entertainment practice.



Kirk Tanner

Kirk Tanner BS'92 is the new president and chief executive officer of Wendy's. He was previously CEO of PepsiCo Beverages North America, with a career at PepsiCo spanning more than three decades. Tanner is a member of the advisory board of the U's David Eccles School of Business.



Bassam Salem

Bassam Salem BS'93 MS'95 MBA'99 MPL'04 is founder and currently general manager of Atlas-RTX, a conversational AI engagement platform. He also founded the startup consultancy Mindshare Ventures and previously served as COO of MaritzCX, among other tech leadership roles. Salem emigrated to the United States at age 13 and began programming professionally at 16. He is a member of the U's Board of Trustees.

'00s

Courtney White MPA'00 was selected as interim president of Utah Tech University early this year. He had most recently served as chief of staff and associate vice president of executive affairs for the university. Previously, White worked as assistant commissioner for policy & planning at the Utah System of Higher Education.

Nicole Walker MFA'01 PhD'06, **Erik Sather** BA'03, and former University of Utah visiting professor **Robin Hemley**

SPOTLIGHT



Alex Smith BS'04 was named to the 2024 College Football Hall of Fame class, becoming the first U player and one of only two Utes to be inducted, joining former head coach Ike Armstrong, in the class of 1957. Smith still holds the U record for single-season touchdown passes with 32 and total touchdowns in a season with 42. In 2004, he earned first-team All-American, was a Heisman Trophy Finalist, and was named National Player of the Year by *Sports Illustrated*. He capped off his Utah career as MVP at the Fiesta Bowl (where he set the bowl record for touchdown passes, with four) before going to the NFL as the No. 1 overall pick. Smith was an NFL quarterback for 16 seasons, earning Pro Bowl invitations three times and making an astonishing return from a life-threatening injury before retiring in 2021. Out of about 5.6 million former college football players, just over 1,000 are in the Hall of Fame. Smith is now an NFL analyst for ESPN.

worked with director David Shields on the film *How We Got Here*, which was recently selected for the Golden State Film Festival. In the new documentary, diverse voices trace the history of post-modernism from its roots in art and philosophy all the way to Fox News and Q-Anon. Walker is an essayist, poet, and MFA Program director at Northern Arizona University. Sather presently works in television services with the marketing and communications team at NAU. Hemley is the author of 15 books and currently co-directs the MFA in creative writing at Long Island University-Brooklyn, among other roles.



Art Scott BS'49 and **Jim King** BA'51 have been friends for 90 years and counting, since meeting on the first day of kindergarten at the Stewart School on the U's campus when they were five years old. Both went on to attend the U, married in Salt Lake, raised children here, and spent the majority of their careers here, Scott at Utah Power for 10 years and then as an aeronautical engineer at Hercules for 29, while King was a professor at the U for three decades. The two have traveled together with friends and family many times. During a trip to Alaska, they attended a salmon fry at a baseball game that started at 11 p.m. on the longest day of the year, so the stadium never had to turn its lights on. In their 50s, they trekked for four days across the Grand Canyon. A year later, they hiked the 42-mile Teton Crest Trail. King has continued hiking into his 90s, and Scott still walks a mile a day.

SPOTLIGHT



Sui Lang L. Panoke

Sui Lang L. Panoke BS'03 is senior vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Zions Bank. She is also the founder of Rethink International, Hardware Creative Collective, Rethink Tank, and Women Politics Media. Panoke was a panelist for the U's 2024 MLK Economic Plenary, where experts delved into critical issues surrounding economic disparities and strategies for fostering greater equity in our society.



David Hawkins-Jacinto

David Hawkins-Jacinto PhD'08 is the new executive director of strategic communication with the University of Virginia Office of Student Affairs. Hawkins-Jacinto spent nearly a quarter century at the U—as a student, professor, and staff member, most recently as senior communications manager for Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion. He was core faculty in the Department of Writing & Rhetoric Studies (WRS) from 2006-22, teaching dozens of different classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and designing innovative new courses such as Body Rhetorics. He re-

ceived two Excellence in Teaching awards from WRS and was honored in 2022 with the Department Chair's Award for his long service to the department.

'10s

Lisa Fay Coutley PhD'14 has published a new book of raw, lyrical poems, *Host*, which explores parasitic relationships and asks: how can people heal from intergenerational trauma—and how can humans mend themselves when they live on a planet they abuse daily? With a degree in English and creative writing, Coutley is also the author of *tether*, *Errata*, *In the Carnival of Breathing*, and *Small Girl: Micromemoirs*, and is the editor of *In the Tempered Dark: Contemporary Poets Transcending Elegy*.

Blake Van Zile JD'15 is an attorney with Chenoweth Law Group. Van Zile has grown a business, real estate, and general civil litigation practice representing businesses, financial institutions, commercial landlords, and individuals, as well as handling partnership disputes, enforcement proceedings, breach of contract, and business tort claims in Washington and Oregon state, federal, and appellate courts. Van Zile also negotiates and consummates commercial transactions and maintains an expanding general business counsel practice.

Noble Williamson HBS'18 recently rejoined the U as a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Mathematics with an enthusiasm for making algebraic geometry accessible to students. With a fresh doctorate from UC Riverside, he brings innovative combinatorial and computational methods to his teaching. Noble's commitment to mentorship, honed during the unique challenges of the pandemic, promises to enrich Utah's mathematics department.

'20s



Margaret Wolf

Margaret Wolf MS'20 was named interim assistant director of the Idaho Water Resource Research Institute. In her doctoral studies at the U, Wolf has studied how subsurface stored water in mountain environments interacts with surface water supply to control streamflow efficiency in the Upper Colorado River Basin and the Great Basin. She says, "I am passionate about the outdoors and how climate change will impact western water supplies."



Enrique Sanchez

After five years with a police department, **Enrique Sanchez** BA'21 became the Intermountain State director for the American Business Immigration Coalition, a bipartisan national organization that promotes immigration reform. In this position, he has had the opportunity to meet with key leaders including President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden, President George W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush, members of Congress, and governors.

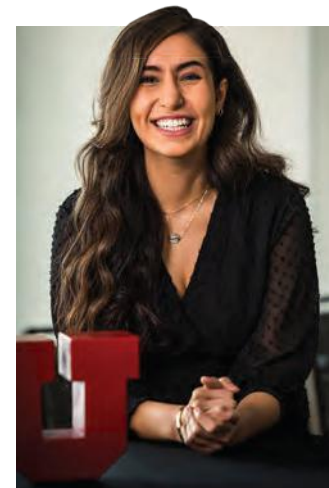


Mitch Shin

Mitch Shin BA'21 is a chief correspondent covering South Korea and North Korea for *The Diplomat*, a current-affairs magazine for the Asia-Pacific region.

Shin is also a Research Fellow at The Institute for Peace & Diplomacy and a regular columnist for *The Korea Times*. His main research areas are inter-Korean relations, U.S.-DPRK relations, and U.S. policy on North Korea, deterrence, and nonproliferation.

SPOTLIGHT



Born and raised in the suburbs of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, **Ruba Alraqibah** BS'23 received a scholarship in her home country to come to the U for its biomedical engineering program, ranked among the top 50 in the U.S. During the COVID pandemic, Alraqibah had to return home and Zoom into classes until 3 a.m. due to the 10-hour time difference, but of that difficult time and her time on campus, she says, "I am thankful for the support and guidance I received from professors, advisors, and mentors who strived to create an environment I was able to thrive in." She continues, "I made meaningful connections with mentors and leaders that helped shape my views, goals, and vision." Alraqibah notes that now, "I am very excited to be working as an engineer in a medical device company here in Utah."



Alison Saporta

Alison Saporta MMU'21 is a vocal mentor for the National Children's Chorus. She recently performed various operatic roles and was a featured soloist for the Art

Song Preservation Society of New York in their *Make Music Day* concert. This past November, she performed as Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) and last April, she performed as Laetitia (*The Old Maid and the Thief*), both with Opera Magnifico. She also performs at synagogues and churches.



What's up with U?
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SPOTLIGHT

Marcela Torres BFA'15, an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and organizer, champions personal and community healing through practices rooted in Mesoamerican traditions and responses to colonialism/diaspora. In 2023, Torres, who uses they/them pronouns, earned recognition from the Illinois Arts Council and engaged systems-impacted youth in Brooklyn, crafting performances and installations that interrogate local histories. They combine martial arts, dance, pottery-making, and more to create interactive, immersive experiences aimed at addressing colonization's intergenerational trauma. With home bases in Chicago and New York City, Torres has shared their reparative vision nationwide and held residencies at notable art centers and sculpture parks.

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Cheer Squad

When it comes to cheering up people with cancer, Cosmo and Swoop are on the same team. Huntsman Cancer Institute patients were in extra need of a lift during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the cancer hospital enacted a strict zero-visitor rule to protect immunocompromised patients. The U and BYU's mascots huddled up to bring smiles by displaying encouraging signs outside the hospital windows. As one patient said, "This day just got so much better!"

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