



**STANFORD**  
ROWING

# BOATHOUSE OF CHAMPIONS

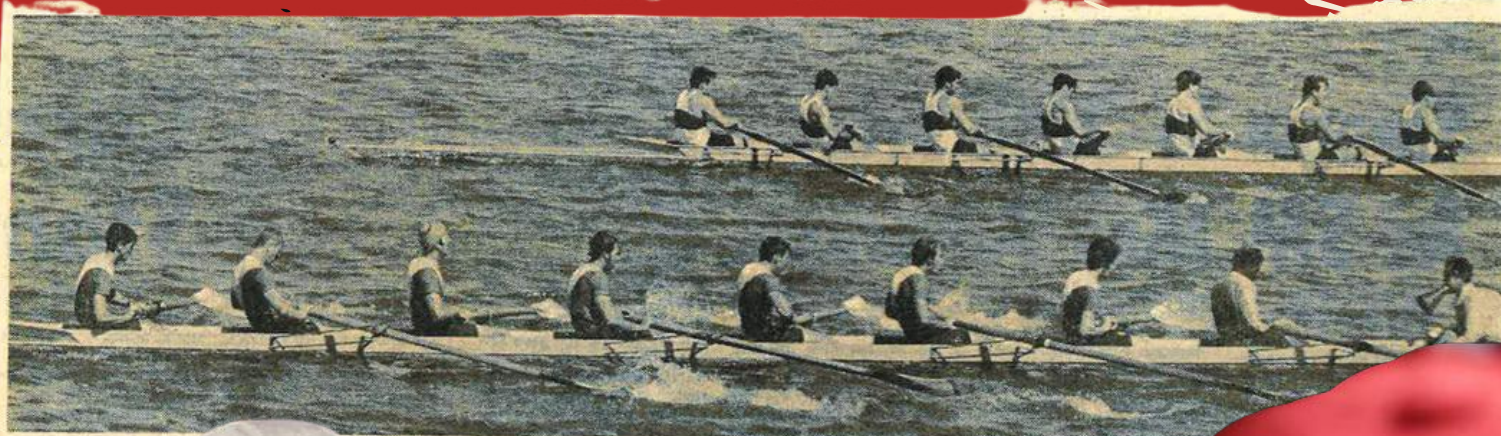
**NEWSLETTER VOL. 5**

SEMI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION  
ON STANFORD ROWING

PRESENTED BY  
THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

# Redwood City Tribune

TWO SECTIONS — 22 PAGES REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA, MONDAY EVENING, MAY 11, 1970 365-3111 10c Copy—\$2.25



## Close in the Early Stages of Saturday's Big Race

Shortly after the half-way point in Redwood City, California, eventually winning the varsity.



# I N D E X

## THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

Our organization and purpose

## CONGRATULATIONS STANFORD WOMEN

Celebrating the 2023 NCAA and Pac-12 title victories

## A JOURNEY TO VICTORY

Hear from Women's Head Coach, Derek Byrnes and a reflection by outgoing senior, Katelin Gildersleeve

## CRCA COACH & STAFF OF THE YEAR

Head Coach Derek Byrnes and Women's coaching staff recognized as the nation's best coach and staff of the year

## NEVER GONNA KEEP US DOWN

Season recollections from Light's Associate Head Coach, Madison Keaty

## 2023 SPRING RACING HIGHLIGHTS

A brief summary of the Cardinal's thrilling 2023 Spring racing season

## THE BUS - AND LESSONS LEARNED OFF THE WATER

Linden Blue '85 recounts memories of the "adventurous" journey to the 1984 Newport Beach Sprints

## WELCOME TO THE FIFTH EDITION OF

## "BOATHOUSE OF CHAMPIONS" A SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION ON STANFORD ROWING, PRESENTED BY THE ROWING ASSOCIATION.



## CATCHING UP WITH THE CLASS OF 2023

The Class of '23 reflects on their Stanford Rowing careers, including the impact of the pandemic

## WE WERE YOUNG ONCE AND OARSMEN AT STANFORD

Bob Kasper '72 captures the thoughts, emotions, and life lessons from rowing at Stanford

## FIRST BOATS: 1980-81 WOMEN'S ROWING WITH COACH JOHN DAVIS

An excerpt from The Rowing Association's conversation with John and Wendy Davis, covering John's early days with the program (*We'll dive into our conversation with Wendy in Volume 6*)

## THE ROWING ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Become a member to ensure that the unique experience of rowing for Stanford endures

## MORE FROM THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

Connect with us and share your story to be featured in Boathouse of Champions

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

@ROW.STANFORD



# THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

*Welcome to Volume 5 of Boathouse of Champions!*

Stanford Rowing is in a great place and continuing to strengthen. As we go to press with this newsletter, The Women are launching an 8 and a 4 into the Thames for *The Henley Royal Regatta*. Meanwhile, the Men are in London with a 2- and looking at their draw in the *Silver Goblets and Nickal's Challenge Cup*. Thank you to the coaches and the supporters that made this happen!

Henley comes on top of a season that was hard fought, showed tremendous growth for all three teams, and culminated in a National Championship for the Women, a Runner-Up for the Lightweight Women, and a return into the top few crews nationally for the Men. What was evident following the teams this year was not only the quality of the rowing but the ability each boat showed to improve and the tenacity with which they raced.

In this edition of *Boathouse of Champions*, we look to not only celebrate these teams but also capture their class stories. Similarly, we've captured a few stories from teams past that we expect you'll find interesting. We've reached into the late 60s-early 70s to capture Rowing at Stanford during a tumultuous time with a piece from Robert Kasper '72, a team leader and coach at Stanford (with a Cal shirt) and a catalyst for both Duke and Navy Rowing. As we continue to work to strengthen Stanford Rowing, we share a story from the early 80s when resources were thinner, and the bus didn't make it to the Newport Regatta. We are also honored to be able to bring you an update on the journey of John and Wendy Davis, two coaches who pioneered the early days of Stanford Women's Varsity Rowing.

The Rowing Association's Purpose is *To Ensure the Unique Experience of Rowing for Stanford Endures*. We set out to **Strengthen, Secure** and deliver **Something Bigger** for Stanford Rowing. Thank you for joining in that!

Please keep your eyes open for a couple of things this Fall:

Reunion Weekend Cocktail Reception before dinner on the Quad  
 Reunion Weekend Boathouse Brunch  
 Head of the Charles gathering Friday night

***Lastly, thank you to all who have become sponsor members of The Rowing Association. Your support will make these wins and future gains sustainable.***

2023



NCAA CHAMPIONS

# STANFORD VICTORY!

PAC-12 CHAMPIONS

# A JOURNEY TO VICTORY

by Coach Derek Byrnes and Katelin Gildersleeve '23

*Good teams are born of great teammates. If there is one way to describe our 2023 senior class of Annabelle Bachmann, Lucy Black, Azja Czajkowski, Sophie Dixon, Katelin Gildersleeve, Regan McDonnell, Rachel Miller, Brie Perry, and Jill Weldon it would simply be – they were great teammates. So, it's no coincidence that our performance over the last four years coincided with their time on the Farm. With that in mind, I asked one of our seniors Katelin Gildersleeve (KG), to write a letter reflecting on her four years as a member of Stanford Women's Crew and on winning NCAAs this season. For context, here are the KG essentials. Coming out of high school, KG was a highly decorated student-athlete. She won the single at Head of the Charles, placed 2nd at Youth Nationals, was only the third single sculler to medal for the USA at Junior Worlds, and in 2019 was named USA Rowing Under-19 Female Athlete of the Year. During KG's Stanford career, she was a cornerstone of our varsity eight, placing 2nd at NCAAs twice and winning a National Championship in the varsity this past season. As decorated of a rower as KG was prior to Stanford, that is not why we recruited her to the Farm. Instead, it was a conversation prior to her commitment, where she outlined her motivation to transition from a life as a single sculler into being part of a bigger team. My takeaway from that conversation was this – KG was going to be a phenomenal teammate. Over the last four years, KG has shown us all what it means to put we before me, stay positive and lead by example. During the 2020 lockdown, KG mailed to each member of the team a care package filled with homemade bread, a heartfelt handwritten note, and chocolate Hershey kisses. During the summer months, she sends gifts to our incoming first years so they know they have a community waiting for them on campus. On weekends, she teaches dance classes for disadvantaged youth in the area. She volunteers her time with student-athlete leadership groups. She never misses an opportunity to help a teammate. She is the teammate who stays after practice to chat with a first-year who struggled through a workout. She is the teammate who runs a full stadium, then immediately jogs back to the trailing teammate to run alongside them until they finish. She is the teammate who completes a hard erg workout, then sits down next to a struggling teammate to erg alongside them. She is the teammate who stays positive and voices confidence within the group during the hardest points of the season.*

Trust and love. I may sound like a broken record at this point, but they're the heart and soul of SWC– what this team is all about. And the most beautiful thing is how this trust and love has been building each year into the unified mission that led us to win the 2nd national championship in program history– both in New Jersey. The reality is that what we do as student-athletes at Stanford is not easy; each day presents its own challenges (hey, even the 1st annual SWC basketball tournament got a little rough), but on our darkest days, there is something so comforting about knowing that we have so many women around us ready to catch us when we fall. The past four years at Stanford have flown by, but I leave with an immense amount of gratitude for the experiences I had, the people I met, and especially the team that held me so tight as I grew into a fuller version of myself.

In high school, I trained alone. I dreamed of racing in an 8+ and erging in a room full of people, but not even my wildest dreams could have quite prepared me for what these past four years had in store for me (I mean, how could I have known that I would be blessed with the one and only A-hole). Harmonizing to Mamma Mia that caused our heart rates to spike by 10, van rides screaming Dancing in the Dark on repeat, memories, and friendships that will last a lifetime; the list could go on forever, and I am not sure any words could ever truly communicate the feeling. The most supportive teammates that doubled as friends and the best role models made it so easy to feel comfortable being me, carrot Crocs and all. Authenticity has become woven through SWC so seamlessly, and it is apparent that the way we let our differences shine is our greatest strength. I mean, picture this: it's Sunday at NCAAs, Derek is wearing his Hello Kitty shirt and upside-down visor (rumor has it someone asked him to get our actual head coach at NCAAs), Lettie is passing around her sacred coconut, Belle is busting a move, Suze is rocking Lucy's sacred, sequined jumpsuit, and I am teaching anyone who will listen my quarterly dance.

***Continued...***

I am not sure any team would ever describe us as intimidating, but I wouldn't want it any other way. We row because we love doing it, and there is nothing more powerful than unified love and joy. I wanted to take a moment to provide a quick 2022-2023 recap before I close. In late August, the yearly GroupMe was named "SWC Trees Take 23" (hey, you know what they say about manifesting). In September, Lucy Burrell introduced our new, bedazzled pink cowboy hat that was passed from teammate to teammate each week. In November, the entire team headed South instead of East for a scrimmage with USC, chasing and cherishing a beautiful sunset together. Later that month, bagels were broken at Briones as we dualed Cal. December brought a class day win for the incredible Seniors, crediting an immense amount of free speed to their Batman costumes and coxswain Flynn. Early January brought the legend started by Miranda Nykolyn to life as Saturday practice ACTUALLY featured a class basketball tournament. Later that month, we had a team retreat in Aptos before some of us woke up early for a sunrise swim (full circle moment for Lucy Black and me). In February, some parents learned to row, and we brought Country Tuesday to life. Gear dropped in March, and the coaches sent us on a scavenger hunt around campus to retrieve it, requiring us to wear every new piece at once. March was filled with more meters and a Spring break bakeoff where the Seniors did not defend their title. April fools day kicked off our first race of the year in San Diego, and the season flew by with trips to Wawa, Redwood Shores, and Oregon, where we captured our first back-to-back Pac-12 title. Everyone knows what happened on the Cooper River just two weeks later, but the year wouldn't have been quite the same without the memes and beams (shoutout to Regan and Cece, respectively), new never-before-seen erg technology and photography skills (Derek's new creations may just be patent pending and featured on Row2k one day), a team-wide game of duck-duck-goose, and a new boathouse baby. As I enter Corporate America (wish Azja and I luck out there as we sell our souls), I am once again reminded of how rare what we have at SWC is. The power and beauty of working tirelessly towards a unified goal with people we love and who love us dearly is immense—and quite possibly unparalleled. As graduation comes to an end, I am already bummed to never have another morning of battle paddle on the Port, but I am and forever will be grateful for the way that SWC provided the space for me to explore and take risks. There is no doubt I am leaving in such a better place than when I arrived—ready to take on whatever the world has in store for me, with my big, new SWC family by my side.









# CRCA COACH & STAFF OF THE YEAR

*The Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association (CRCA) recently recognized the head coach of Stanford Women's Rowing, Derek Byrnes, along with his coaching staff, as the nation's best coach and staff of the year.*

*Under Byrnes' leadership, the Cardinal achieved their first team national championship since 2009, resulting in Byrnes being named the Division I National Coach of the Year by the CRCA. Additionally, Molly Hamrick, the Alben Family Associate Head Women's Rowing Coach, and assistant coaches Sarah Dougherty and Megan Biging were collectively acknowledged as the CRCA's Division I Staff of the Year.*

*During the 2023 season, Byrnes guided Stanford to remarkable success, securing a national title and claiming the program's second consecutive Pac-12 Championship. As a result, Byrnes also received his second consecutive Pac-12 Coach of the Year award. Stanford's accomplishments at the 2023 national title chase included earning national titles in the 1V8 and 2V8 categories, bringing the university's total individual national champions to four. Previously, Stanford had won titles in the varsity eight (2009) and second varsity eight (2011) events.*

*Since assuming leadership of the women's rowing program, Byrnes has consistently guided Stanford to strong performances, including six top-three finishes at the conference championship (including two consecutive conference championships) and six top-6 finishes at the NCAA Championships. This includes a national championship win and two national runner-up finishes in 2021 and 2022.*

*The Coach and Staff of the Year awards, presented by the CRCA, are determined through voting by the association's membership. These awards aim to recognize head coaches whose teams have achieved exceptional success throughout the season while maintaining a high standard of professionalism and integrity.*





# NEVER GONNA KEEP US DOWN

*by Coach Madison Keaty*

When I think of the past year and this team, I remember a line from the classic 1997 Chumbawamba one-hit wonder - "I get knocked down, but I get up again; you're never gonna keep me down!" In sum - they were a resilient, gritty, and driven squad.



In sum – they were a resilient, gritty, and driven squad. In the midst of the ups, downs, and everything in between that came with year two of the program rebuild, each teammate stepped up to the plate and contributed to cultivating a more competitive squad on and off the water. With our focus on process and progress throughout the year, they set ambitious intentions each quarter and kept the momentum going, moving the program forward in the right direction. This was particularly evident in our freshman class, who brought great work ethic, competitive spirit, and determination to the team. Every single frosh contributed to the racing squad during the course of the 2023 Spring season, and over half of the IRA Championship squad consisted of underclassmen. While ultimately, we aim to return to a top finish at IRAs, the most important definition of our success is going as fast as we are capable of going. The team can be extremely proud of the continual progress they made towards that from start to finish. We saw several improvements throughout racing, with a few wins at duals vs. Princeton, BU, and Wisconsin and a sweep of the WIRA Championship Varsity 8+ and 4+ events. We already have our sights set on next year and look forward to putting in the work and growth with the 2023-24 team.

An important acknowledgment goes to our graduating senior/5th-year squad – Annika Khouri, Dhamanpreet Kaur, Maria Metzger, Emily Molins, and Valeria Gonzalez – for their impact and contributions to the program, especially this year. Annika has been a bright light to her teammates with her consistent hard work and infectious laughter. Dhamanpreet's discipline and commitment to improvement have been incredible to witness – she spent the last two years crushing medical school while rowing – no big deal. Maria began rowing only 17 months ago and brought great positivity and an attitude of gratitude to each day. Emily has a work ethic, toughness, and a love for rowing beyond compare (and we're so excited to have her back for a 5th year!) We were so fortunate to have Valeria join our team this Spring and lead the V4+ at IRAs with her experience, competitive drive, and love of racing. We can't wait to see where their future endeavors take them!

Finally, a huge thank you to all our support staff, family, friends, and alumni for the continued support of the Stanford Lightweight program. With your support, we get to not only represent Stanford in the pursuit of success on the water but also enjoy the little things that mark the Stanford Lights experience – the laughter and stories at team dinners, the "Yeah Lights!" cheers at practice, and countless other memories made on and off the water. We are so grateful for the team to get another lap around the sun.



# 2023 SPRING RACING HIGHLIGHTS

*The Cardinal's 2023 Spring racing season was highlighted by stellar performances across all three teams. Below, you will find a brief summary of each event.*

## April 1-2

### Stanford Invite

- The Men swept the weekend, winning all six races against Oregon State, Temple, and Santa Clara at Redwood Shores.

### San Diego Crew Classic

- All four Women's boats – 1V8, 2V8, 3V8, and 1V4 – placed second in their events, narrowly behind Texas in each case, identifying the speed gap they would need to close before NCAAs.
- The Lights 1V8 placed third behind Openweight boats from the University of San Diego and MIT.
- Great to see alums Jason Stinson '90, Zander Packard '92, Greg Klingsporn '92, Adam Kreek '07, and Sam Chang '05 racing in masters events.

## April 7-9

### Big Ten Invite

- The Women placed first in 11 of their 12 races with a close second in a single race, edged out by Brown.

### Pac-12 Invite

- The Men went 5-1 with wins against BU (1V8 and 2V8), Wisconsin (1V8 and 2V8), and Northeastern (1V8) at Redwood Shores.

## April 15

### Class of '15 Cup Princeton Dual

- The Lights' Eight put up a strong effort before ultimately falling to the eventual National Champion, while the Four earned a close victory over two Princeton boats.

### Big Row

- The Women excelled across multiple events against Cal at Redwood Shores, with wins in the 1V8, 2V8, 3V8, and 1V4, and coming up just short in the 4V8.

## April 22

### Wisconsin Dual

- The Lights displayed their strength, beating Wisconsin's Eight by 15 seconds at Redwood Shores. Wisconsin scored victories in the Four and the Double.

## April 29-30

### Big Row

- Stanford Men exceeded expectations against CAL, coming within 5 seconds of the eventual National Champion in the 1V8.

### Pac-12 Dual

- In a final tune-up before Pac-12s, the Women won seven of eight head-to-head races vs. Iowa and SMU at Redwood Shores.

### WIRA Championship

- The Lights won the 1V8 and 1V4 and took second in the 2x, racing on Lake Natoma against Openweight crews from across the west coast.

## May 6

### BU Dual

- The Lights scored an impressive victory, beating BU's 1V8 by 5.3 seconds in choppy water on The Charles.

## May 14

### Pac-12 Championships

- Women go BACK-TO-BACK with a second title in as many years, winning in impressive fashion.
- Men's 1V8 raced very well, narrowly missing second place to Washington. 2V8 demonstrated significant progress with a strong third-place finish.

## May 26-28

### NCAAs

- Stanford Women crowned NCAA CHAMPIONS (!) with an impressive performance that included winning the 1V8 and 2V8 events on Cooper River Lake in Pennsauken, NJ.

## June 2-4

### IRAs

- Men's 1V8 finished 8th in the nation after narrowly missing the A Final and placing second in the Petite ahead of Harvard, Dartmouth, Cornell, and Penn on Mercer Lake in West Windsor, NJ. 2V8 wins the C Final – beating Wisconsin and Navy among others – to finish 13th nationally.
- The Lights 1V8 finished 2nd in the country to Princeton, narrowing the gap from their April dual race on Lake Carnegie.

## June 27 – July 2

### Henley

- W4- advanced to the semi-finals of The Town Challenge Cup, before falling in a close race to Leander Club, home of one of Great Britain's national training centers.
- W8 also advanced to the semi-finals of their event, The Island Challenge Cup, after victories over Oxford University Women's Boat Club and Oxford Brookes University "B", before falling to Penn.
- Flynn Traeger and Henry Stewart raced the M2- in The Silver Goblets & Nickalls' Challenge Cup, coming up a bit short in the heats to a boat from Yale.

**Visit our website [www.therowingassociation.com](http://www.therowingassociation.com) for continued coverage and in-depth recaps of Stanford Rowing and Alumni racing!**

# THE BUS – AND LESSONS LEARNED OFF THE WATER

*by Linden Blue '85*

*The following is from a tribute to fellow Stanford Oarsman Jim Kuhn '86, who we lost too young.*

The Crew had to travel from the Stanford Campus to its ramshackle boathouse at Redwood Shores, about 12 miles north, to practice on the waters of San Francisco Bay. For years, this was done using private cars, and as the trek normally began at around 5:00 am, some people would miss rides, have car trouble, etc.

So Coach Dreyfuss found he could buy a very old bus, probably late 1950s vintage, to transport the Crew to and from practice as a complete unit. This worked quite well for the 20+ mile round-trip on the level-grade Highway 101.

In the Fall of '84, the Crew was scheduled to race in the 500-meter Newport Beach Sprints. As this meant traveling nearly the length of California, costs had to be minimized. So the plan became to load the boats on the roof and the oars and three teams of eight oarsmen each plus coxswains inside of our ancient bus and drive South.

We piled in with our personal belongings and made ourselves comfortable for what would be a long trip: the bus had never really traveled much faster than 50 mph, TOPS! Jim Kuhn '86 and Clay Taylor '85 and I found somewhat cramped traveling niches in the rear of the bus. The oars were somehow all crammed into the interior of the bus, so riding comfortably was a challenge.

As we made our way past San Jose and up the winding Pacheco Pass to the southeast, those in the back were the first to notice the smoke. That bus had seen much better days and was really not meant for a 500-mile road trip, fully loaded or empty. Something was wrong with the engine cooling system, which apparently hadn't manifested itself on the 30-minute drives from Stanford to the boathouse.

Not only had the remaining drops of cooling water flashed away to vapor, but something was on fire, and the resulting black smoke made its way from the engine compartment up to our seats in the back.

At this point the engine began cutting out, so we had to pull over anyway. Everyone got out and stood around the back as the engine hood was lifted. Jim was instrumental in quenching the fire by throwing dirt on it. That was smart because it can be a bad idea to throw water on burning wires, although I don't think we had much water anyway. Clay figured out a way to hang a banana under his nose to avoid the smell of smoke.

Jim took over the wheel from Team Captain, Mark Wogulis '85, and the bus somehow made it over the summit and a good way down the Central Valley to a place near Coalinga...

There our propulsion became too intermittent to continue. Apparently, the venerable engine had blown a head gasket, so its ability to produce power became minimal. Jim knew that every time the bus stopped, the chances that he could coax it to move again worsened. So he focused on finding a suitable repair shop WITHOUT STOPPING. In the age before cell phones, this meant someone from inside the bus had to get outside it, then find and speak with an auto mechanic to see if they could fix a bus engine. The only way to accomplish this was by jumping off the moving bus. A hardy teammate named Sigurd Berven '86 (today, ironically, an orthopedic surgeon) volunteered for the task, and Jim picked the spot and told him to JUMP! He sailed out of the open bus door at around 10 mph, tried to "hit the ground running," but instead exploded into a long series of involuntary somersaults. Then he got up, dusted himself off, and limped to a nearby repair garage. Ultimately, that garage is where the Crew bus ended its trans-California road trip.



*Continued...*

Next, we thirty-some oarsmen, coxswains, and coaches stood around, discussing our next move. Jim took the lead for action, and hitched a ride with a passing car in search of rental transportation. The rest of us stayed on the side of the road and did our homework.

By late afternoon, two rented Lincoln Towncars and a van showed up. After barely stuffing three teams into those cars, we drove off, hopeful of making it to Newport some time before midnight. I began to fancy a decent sleep before the next day's races. We left behind the stricken bus, our precious boats and fiberglass oars, to an uncertain fate. Orange Coast College would just have to loan us their heavy wooden oars and vintage boats.

Then, someplace along I-5 near Kettleman City, the van quit. I don't think it ran out of gas, it just quit. Perhaps it was related to the bus somehow. By now it was 8 or 9 pm and dark. We were reduced to hitchhiking again. Most motorists flying down I-5 in the night had trouble believing that our group of overly tall college kids were really innocent travelers in need, so I remember that no one stopped for a very long time. Being unsuccessful hitchhikers in the dark on a major American highway was somewhat humiliating. Jim finally got a car to stop.

He thus managed to catch up with the Towncars at a filling station, and we realized that our transport requirements now greatly exceeded our transport resources. It was close to midnight by the time we finished shuttling everyone into a highway motel. In Newport, still hundreds of miles to the south, the Sprints went on without us.

Rowing taught us that, when preparing for great adventures, planning is everything – and the occasional feasibility study doesn't hurt either.

*Coxswain Heidi Kuhn '86 recalls flying to the Newport Regatta, instead of taking the bus, only to get there and find no team.*



*Coach Farwell has his '84-'85 Crew decked out in "Bad to the Bone" polos*

*From bottom, L to R: Coach Farwell, Ann Noel, Megan (Magley) Pigott, Heidi (Minch) Kuhn, Tom Wheeler, Brendan Kelly, Jay Demski, Rick Shunk, Scott Gode, Blaise Stoltenberg, Sig Berven, Brian Birney, Dave Schmid, Andy Rebele, John Latting, James Moore, Jim Grant, Skip Teel, George Clever, Jim Kuhn*

# CATCHING UP WITH THE CLASS OF 2023



*Stanford Rowing Alumni celebrating reinstatement circa 2021*

*The Rowing Association invited the Class of 2023 to reflect on their Stanford Rowing careers. Most '23ers were frosh when the pandemic hit in March of 2020, forcing the cancellation of Spring racing and requiring this class to spend much of its sophomore year studying and training away from The Farm, which they did while supporting the successful efforts of Save Stanford Rowing and 36 Sports Strong, among others, to reinstate the Men's and Lights' programs, along with the other 9 Stanford varsity sports whose status was impacted by Covid-19. Sustaining the program through this time of uncertainty and beginning the rebuilding process now that our future is more secure will be one of the great legacies this class leaves behind. And as their reflections make clear, overcoming adversity and exploring one's limits within a community of great people that become great friends and having a lot of fun is what Stanford Rowing is all about. It's as true today as it was for all of us that came before and – through good fortune and our continued hard work – the many that we hope will come after.*

# GRATITUDE AND LOVE: STANFORD LIGHTS SENIOR REFLECTION

by *Emily Molins, '23*

"Ants!" was the sign-off on the email I received one week prior to the start of my freshman year at Stanford. Above, Head Lightweight Coach Kate Bertko had linked a TED Talk titled "The Emergent Genius of Ant Colonies," in which ecologist Deborah Gordon detailed the seemingly chaotic yet somehow seamless system of the ant colony. Specifically, Gordon's work addressed the question of task allocation: that is, she asked not how the ant colony is organized but rather how it changes what it is doing. Facing floods, shortages in food, and nest damage, how, without anybody telling them what to do, do these ants adjust and survive? While at the time I had found Kate's choice of video amusing but of little account, it has since proven to be anything but.

Similar questions have surfaced these past years as a member of this program. Amidst the pandemic, team cuts, and eventual reinstatements, the path forward as a lightweight rower at Stanford has felt incredibly uncertain. This uncertainty is new to a program with a reigning legacy within the sport. Years prior, I remember watching the 2017 IRA grand finals in my high school boathouse as Stanford Lights swept every event by open water. "No one's going to catch them," mused the announcers – undeniable for a crew that had already established open water 500 meters in.



The following year, I arrived on campus alongside the rest of the Class of 2022. Welcomed by an energetic, strong-willed trio of senior captains, I found myself immediately surrounded by a team culture grounded in a fierce work ethic and undeniable goofiness. Standards were high and goals lofty as we strove to extend the team's decade of collegiate dominance. But amongst the 2x6ks and erg test pieces was the sprinkling of "Talent Show Fridays" and Saturday on-the-water challenges (at least, until the practice when we flipped an 8+). Over the course of that year, we trained hard, trained to have fun, and trained to make Kate proud. Sitting bow seat of our 8+ that Spring at IRAs, I remember my two-seat collapsing back into an embrace after we crossed the line with a smidge of open water on Princeton. Another photograph from the podium was hung on the boathouse wall as freshman year came to a close.

That Fall, we restarted training in a similar guns-blazing fashion. Welcoming a new cohort of walk-ons, I was first introduced to Anni, a member of our now makeshift senior class. Our team's history of embracing walk-ons each year has remained one of my favorite and arguably most important aspects of this team. It's one thing to recognize that what we have is something special, and it's entirely another to be willing to share it. Notably, 3/4 of my senior class would not be here without our walk-on process. Anni's infectious positivity and steady determination made her the perfect addition to our team as we continued gearing up for the Spring. However, nature would prove to have other plans in store.

As the pandemic sent college students across the country back home, we took to Zoom for our erg workouts and weekly team calls, hoping for a Spring season still around the corner. Spirits remained high through the cancellation of races as we adjusted to the new pace of life. Outdoor cycles, marathon ergs, and scenic trail runs became staples of the new Stanford Lightweight training plan as sights were shifted to the upcoming year. It wasn't until that June that we felt the future of our program threatened. Sitting on the back porch of our cabin in Craftsbury, Vermont, three Stanford rowers and I tuned in to the announcement that the upcoming season would be our last.

**Continued...**

The following months were a whirlwind of calls and planning. Like many teammates, I opted for a gap year to continue training and weighing my options. I questioned what staying would look like for me, my teammates, and my younger sister as an incoming freshman on the team. It wasn't pretty, and it wasn't fair.

With the help of fiercely passionate student-athletes and parents, I joined the effort to reinstate our sports. If I have learned anything from the tenacity of my coaches and teammates during my time here, it is to hold fast when the going gets tough. That following May, I received the call that Stanford Lights would be reinstated. I remember crying, still in Vermont, thinking about what it would mean to be able to return to the boathouse I hadn't seen in quite some time with the team I love.

Following a quarter abroad at Oxford, I finally returned to Stanford in January of 2022, nearly two years since leaving at the beginning of the pandemic. While I was met with a handful of wonderfully familiar faces, there were also many new ones: a new sophomore class, a new freshman class, and a new coaching staff. Two of those new members were Maria and Dhamanpreet, the final two teammates rounding out our senior class. Maria joined the team as a walk-on that Fall and continues the legacy of incredible Stanford walk-on women with the utmost grace. It has been such a privilege to witness her journey to becoming the speedy, poised rower she is today, and I'm so grateful to call someone as kind and committed as her my teammate. Dhamanpreet (or D, as she's affectionately called, or Dr. D if you're feeling funky) joined us during her first year of medical school. She is as much an athletic weapon as an academic one and juggles the rowing uni to scrubs transition each morning with an effortlessness that leaves me in awe.

Together, our team was tiny, the days of fielding two eights a distant memory, but we were a mighty bunch. Through the Spring, we worked to adapt as a group and learn under our new coach, Madison Keaty. The effects of the pandemic still lingered as cases sporadically appeared and we withdrew from races. Still, we took the season in stride, understanding that rebuilding the legacy that had originally drawn us all to this program would take time. It's never easy to have the rug pulled out from under you, but what matters most is how you respond. This year was the year of pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps, and despite earlier reservations that Winter, we found ourselves racing competitively by Springtime. Lining up at IRAs, it was an all-hands-on-deck situation. Of our team's fourteen healthy rowers, every single one raced at Nationals – a rather remarkable fact.

Now, we find ourselves at the nexus point of rebuilding and performing. Welcoming an incoming recruit class of eight freshmen this past September, Stanford Lights is being re-energized. A new assistant coach brings the fresh experience of collegiate lightweight racing, and our head coach continues encouraging progress within our program. Margins are becoming tighter, and the future is looking brighter.

Maybe this is not the senior year I, Anni, Maria, or D, had envisioned a few years ago. Our roster stands at half the size it was my freshman year; the focus shifted from tallying wins to regaining confidence. Yet, each Monday morning at 5:30, I climb into the driver's seat of the team van in the Mirrielees parking lot, start the engine, and begin my morning pick-ups for practice. We row the same cherry red Hudson 8+ that we did when I was a freshman five years ago. The sunrise over the Bay remains a constant backdrop to our water sessions. The Stanford crest continues to grace our chests on race day. Much has changed, but even more, has stayed the same. Returning to the original video Coach Kate sent me before the start of my first Fall here, perhaps that is the secret to weathering challenges: acknowledging that even during the most uncertain times, there will always be some things we can be sure of if we take the time to look-around us, to others, and within ourselves.

It has been a true privilege to have been a part of this team these past years and to have been able to call the Stanford Boathouse home. We are a senior class that, while makeshift in nature, could not be more proud of this team nor more grateful for the opportunity to contribute to its upward journey. As parting words, Anni, Maria, and D share advice for incoming Stanford Lights as they work to carry on a legacy of grit, determination, and love.

*Continued...*

## **Annika Khouri '23**

When I stumbled across this team my freshman year, I had absolutely no idea what I was getting myself into. I definitely questioned what I was doing the first time I stood on the side of the street at 5:30 AM, waiting for an unfamiliar van to pick me up; but even on that first van ride, I was immediately sure that I had made the right choice in deciding to walk on. From day one, I felt so incredibly welcomed by every member of the team – my newfound teammates offered advice, cheered me on, and gave me a nickname that has stuck all the way to senior year. From Ford to Ahall to the stadium concourse; from Charlie's to the wires, endless times over and over; from Friday evening post-20/20 run Sweetgreen + Salt & Straw excursions to our Zoom erg parties to Suites Spring, to Saturday morning "vanventures" to Dunkin': I couldn't have imagined doing all of this with a different group of people. Over the last four years, it's been the people that have defined my experience, made me laugh and smile countless times, and made Stanford Lights my home and my family on campus. In the last couple of years, I've often thought back to my favorite Kate Bertko quote: "Don't let the highs get too high, or the lows get too low." I've certainly tried my best to heed that advice, but I am also so grateful for the way my teammates have been there to support me when the lows get just a bit too low to manage alone.

On the other hand, the highest of highs are always a little better with friends. There is nobody else I would have wanted by my side to experience the absolute elation we all felt the morning Kate told us our team was reinstated, for example. So, if I had to give any advice to future Stanford Lights, I would say two things: first, try not to let the highs get too high or the lows get too low. But second: if that does happen, let your teammates be the people who lift you out of those lows and celebrate the highs right alongside you.

*Yeah Lights, forever and ever*



## **Maria Metzger '23**

Walking onto the Lightweight Rowing team during Junior year seems like a crazy decision (and maybe it was), but it was a pivotal decision for me. I've had the privilege to train and grow alongside some of the most talented athletes, who have also become my best friends. This sport has challenged me in ways I'd never been challenged, and I'm so grateful for all of the growth and learning that I've experienced through this. To future members of Stanford Lights, I offer the following advice: when wakeups get tough, and it's hard to find motivation, think about how hard you worked to get here. You're experiencing college and life in such a unique and special way, and that's something to be grateful for every day! Lean on your teammates. As you continue to get to know each other better, lead with empathy and build support systems with one another. Enjoy every day! I'm already feeling nostalgic for this team, and I know I'm going to miss it so much. Try to remind yourselves and each other of why you love rowing and this team <3.

## **Dhamanpreet Kaur '23**

I cannot recall the number of times someone has looked at me like I'm crazy for rowing on a varsity Stanford team while going to med school. In fact, my advisors tried to stop me. But my reason behind it was simple: participating in collegiate sports is truly like no experience you will ever have again. When Covid put a stop to sports during my junior and senior years, I thought my career was over. Having the opportunity to finish out my last two years has truly been the greatest blessing. Cherish every moment you have – the van rides to practice, the dinners with your teammates, the days you feel like you might as well be rowing a kayak in the ocean, the tears of joy and of frustration ... it's very special to have something you care so much about and even more so to share that passion with the wonderful people you get to call your teammates.

## RESILIENCE: STANFORD SENIOR MEN

The Stanford Men's Rowing experience is coming to an end for the Class of 2023, and it has certainly been an eventful journey. Spanning two coaches, multiple injuries, a pandemic, and a temporary loss of varsity status, we have been through our fair share of adversity. But despite many challenges, this senior class looks back fondly on an incredibly special four years

In both origins and energy, we could probably be called "the Midwest class." Five recruits came from midwestern beginnings: Porter Weisberg and Scott Buzard from Chicago, Jack Clark from Wisconsin, Henry Stewart from Indiana, and Flynn Traeger from Ealing ("Midwest" London). We gained some west coast energy along the way, though, with Valeria Gonzalez and Elysia Smyers joining the team as coxswains from the Bay Area (midwest California). This group of seven has become extremely close over four years.



*Stanford Men's pandemic training in the "Pain Cave", Fall 2020*

Freshman year was marked by the formation of new friendships and adaptation to the demands of college rowing. Ironically, as hard as it felt at the time to adapt to college and the training, we look back on it now and are adamant it truly was some of the hardest training we've done in our Stanford careers. Some workouts during this period that still make us shudder to think about include countless 2x6000m ergs, the dreaded 3x19' test pieces, and of course, the legendary 6 AM 20'@20 test (which was sometimes immediately followed by pairs time trials on the water).

It's worth noting that this was also Ted Sobolewski's freshman year, and he did not disappoint. The training was hard, but it left the team in an extremely strong spot approaching the Spring. By March, the freshman class was thrilled to race in what seemed like the fastest boats Stanford had fielded in years. All was well, and we were looking forward to the start of the racing season. However, Covid-19 had other plans.

The pandemic sent most of the group home for several months, and the Fall of sophomore year was spent training in isolation. Not only that, the entire team struggled to grapple with the reality of being slated to lose varsity status at the end of the year. Uncertainty loomed ahead.

However, this did not stop the team from getting back together. Henry found rowing opportunities at Eagle Creek Reservoir in Indianapolis, and the boys moved to the heart of the midwest for the Fall of 2020. This period was filled with morning rows in the single and gritty ergs in Henry's garage-turned-pain-cave (see image). At the start of the Winter quarter, the Midwest class moved once again - this time to Austin, Texas. Scott, Porter, and Jack continued to train in warmer weather, all the while hoping for some kind of Spring season. Meanwhile, Flynn Traeger spent his Fall and Winter quarters living the life in New Zealand, which was effectively pandemic-free, training with Waikato RPC and preparing for the season to come. Elysia Smyers coached at her high school club, Los Gatos Rowing Club, for the Fall and Winter, and Valeria Gonzalez spent time at home developing her coxswain skills virtually. This involved many hours in the bath, screaming at rubber ducks to pull harder.

**Continued...**

Good news arrived at the end of the Winter, and the entire team was back on campus to begin the Spring season in March. This season was truly the highest of highs and the lowest of lows for the senior class. It began with a 24-second loss to UW – a dark time for the program – but ended with success on many fronts. The varsity eight placed 5th at the IRA National Championship, the team was reinstated after a huge amount of alumni support, and our own Flynn Traeger received IRCA All-American honors.

Junior year brought with it a gradual return to normalcy after the pandemic, as well as new challenges for the team. With no new incoming freshman class after the temporary loss of varsity status, we were left greatly lacking in numbers. Injuries and illness hindered progress throughout the year, and the class was left dissatisfied by a 13th-place finish at the IRA. It became a year that demanded redemption. As we gathered at Alpine Inn for the end-of-year team banquet and appropriately wrapped up the season in the parking lot afterward, the groundwork was being laid for the year to come. Heading into our final year of college rowing, we had a fire within us to prove the high standards of SMC and cement our legacy.

Senior year has been a special culminating experience for us. For the first time in two years, the team welcomed a new freshman class and experienced a much-needed rise in numbers, which brought with it a huge boost in morale. The Fall and Winter quarters were executed at a very high level by the entire team, all thanks to senior leadership (or so we like to think). This set the team up for a rejuvenating start to Spring racing. On the water, boats are moving at exciting speeds once again, and the first and second varsity eights enjoyed 6-1 and 5-2 regular season records, respectively. Highlights of the season would be wins over Boston University and Northeastern or a very close battle for second and third place with Washington at the Pac-12 Championship. We were delighted to see our own Henry Stewart honored as the Pac-12 Scholar-Athlete of the Year – a title he much deserves for his commitment to pushing the limits of what's possible as a Stanford Men's Rower, both in the classroom and on the water. The team has high aspirations and confidence heading into the IRA National Championship, and we're looking forward to one last trip down the track at Lake Mercer. (editor's note: the varsity eight finished an impressive 8th in the nation, five spots better than 2022)

Of the many characteristics that have come to define the graduating senior class, we think that perhaps the most significant is resilience. Through a loss of varsity status, a pandemic, and several major injuries, we are proud to look back on our time here as having been dedicated to growing the fantastic culture and values of SMC that we were so blessed to have been brought into back in 2019. The legacy of this class is its ability to stick together, support each other through difficult times, and come back swinging – traits we hope the team will continue to exhibit in the coming years. We hope we have left the team a better place than where we found it, and we dedicate all of that to our teammates and those who came before us for laying such strong foundations.





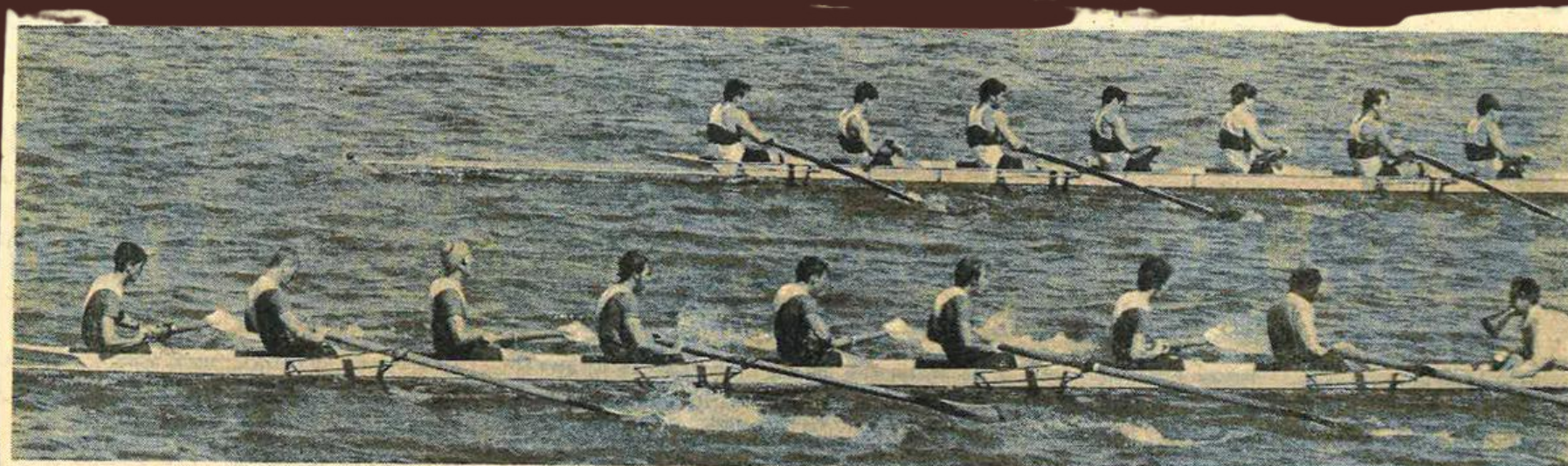
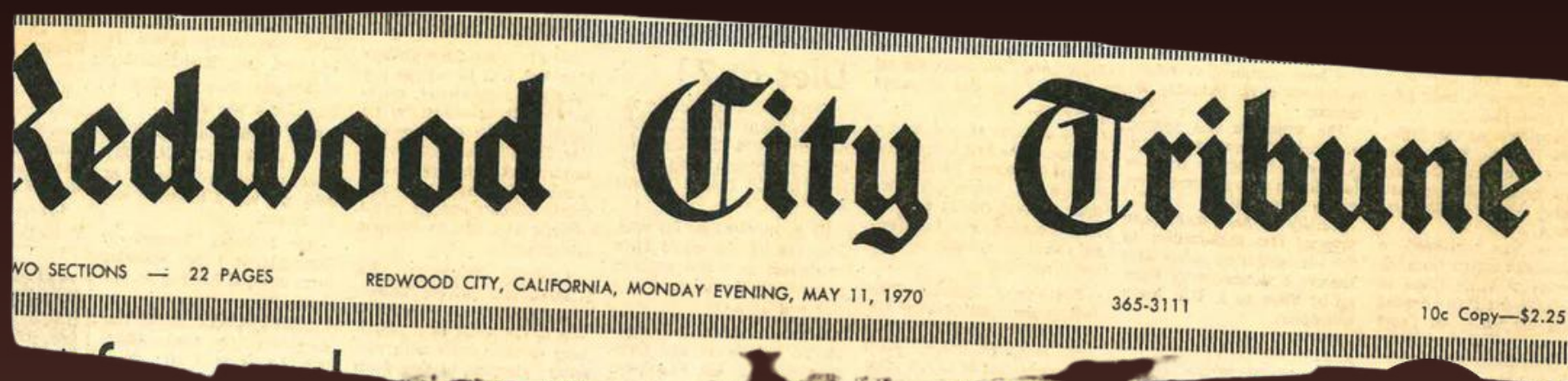
*Standing L-R: R. Kasper, J. Topic, J. Powell, P. Preissler;  
Kneeling L-R: S. Nyarady, J. Lachman, D. Evans, A. Cornwell)*

# WE WERE YOUNG ONCE AND OARSMEN AT STANFORD

*Bob Kasper '72*



*It seems so long ago. The faded news articles and color Polaroid pictures that my mother so carefully placed into a scrapbook capture the results and the moment, but nothing of the underlying thoughts and emotions – and the life lessons. We were young once and oarsmen at Stanford...*



—Tribune photo by Fred Rode

### It Was Close in the Early Stages of Saturday's Big Row

Shortly after this shot was taken near the half-way point in Redwood City Harbor, Stanford (fore-

ground) moved into a commanding lead over California, eventually winning by three full lengths

for the Tribe's fifth straight victory over the Cal varsity.

In retrospect, my years rowing at Stanford – 1968 to 1972 – reflected the turmoil engulfing the entire nation, and the crew was not immune from its influence. Ours was a men's only club sport coached by an ex-oarsman, Stanford admissions officer turned Stanford law student, Will Condon (who would go on to be Attorney General for the State of Alaska) and a former oarsman, Stanford law grad and newly minted Santa Clara DA, Dick Herzog. The power behind the scenes was our "rigger" and Pocock wooden-boat master craftsman, Conn Findley.

The first race of the year with USC was named in his honor: The Conn Findley Cup. When you first met Conn, you would never have guessed that he was a multiple Olympic medalist. Once you got to know him, the stories began to flow – usually about the nuances of slight adjustments that made all the difference, but stories that made you realize that you needed to make some adjustments yourself if you wanted to be a better leader or oarsman.

Our volunteer coaches, Will and Dick, were cut from the same cloth – truly in it for the love of the sport and to pay back something for all that the experience had given to them. Over the past several years, I have been viewing the Ted Lasso series on Apple TV. Ted's approach to coaching reminded me of Conn and Will and Dick – they were able to make us "Believe." Will and Conn have passed on, but I am still in frequent contact with Dick.

***Continued...***

Not one of the 50-plus freshmen who showed up for the first crew practice at Stanford Stadium that Fall had been recruited to row. We all had either seen a notice posted on our freshman dorm bulletin board or had had a member of the varsity crew walk into our room to cajole us into trying a new sport.

Despite its club status, Stanford crew was noted in the late 60s for being very competitive and consistently beating CAL. I had gone to high school in the Bay Area and knew of that success. I also knew that it required strong legs and stamina. I was soon to find out it required a lot more!

The story was much the same for all of us. Harry Waters, from East Palo Alto, was also not afraid of hard work. He also saw a note on a bulletin board, and by his second season was stroking our varsity eight to a 3-length victory over CAL. Jim Topic and I, also sophomores, were the bow pair in that boat. Of all the crews we raced over those four years I don't recall any other crew with a black oarsman.

An interesting sidelight to that 1970 Big Row is that Stanford won the Jim Reynolds Cup after the CAL frosh boat refused to compete out of sympathy with the Cambodian War protest.

The experience we had from that first day at the stadium kept a band of us together, on the water and off, for all four years. In those days we always ended Spring break three-a-day practices with a class day race – sophomore/junior/senior boats racing over our 2000-meter course. Our class won it all three years.

Being a member of the crew and as a member of Navy ROTC while the campus was being thrown into chaos with Vietnam War protests, I learned a lot of life lessons. The importance of teamwork, taking care of your mates, accomplishing more as a group than you ever dreamed possible as an individual, hard work and persistence through pain, never, never giving up – all lessons learned outside the classroom during those four years.

Something that few of my non-crew classmates then knew, the Summer after my junior year I was on the USS O'Callaghan in the Gulf of Tonkin for my First Class "cruise" – part of my ROTC training. The lesson learned at Stanford: when to talk and when to stay silent. The lesson learned in the Gulf: why Memorial Day is a national holiday. ROTC was eliminated from the Stanford curriculum in 1973.

I always wondered if I was able to pass on to my crews the same ability to believe in themselves that my coaches had given to me. The truth was brought home ten years ago when two of my former oarsmen at the Naval Academy invited me down to the Navy Yard in Washington DC for lunch. John and Terry at that time were the Head of the Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program and the Head of the Navy's Strategic Systems Programs. John would later become Chief of Naval Operations. At the lunch they gave me a copy of "The Boys in The Boat" by Daniel Brown about nine young men from Washington and their quest for gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. As an inscription Terry wrote in part: "Who would have imagined your leadership and friendship would have had such an impact – Every day is pay back to honor men like you who believed in me before I believed in myself." John wrote: "As Terry says, you have had an influence on so many of us – far beyond what you might expect. It is no coincidence that so many of your team rose to senior leaders in the Navy – including flag officers well above the average population!" What more does a coach ever need to hear?

Looking back, I would have to say that what we accomplished at Stanford was extraordinary. Somehow, we as a small band of brothers, kept our balance both literally on the water and mentally in an increasingly unsettled world. We were able to stay away from drugs and mayhem, stay focused on the truly important matters in life – friends doing seemingly impossible things together – while witnessing some of the most beautiful sunrise mornings on the Bay with the boat moving swiftly and almost effortlessly beneath us – sunrises that our classmates never saw and movements that our classmates never experienced.

*Continued...*

*I am still practicing law and running an ice cream company in Walpole, New Hampshire. My wife, Barbara, and I raised four wonderful women who are now all married and have given us the gifts of 6 active and bright grandchildren – so far. Only one daughter rowed in college, but I remain hopeful for the grandchildren, although my sons-in-law seem to favor a sport called lacrosse! I still “enjoy” a 20-minute piece on the ergo two to three times a week. It proves that I am still alive.*



*Bob Kasper with Terry, John and his daughter, Annie*



# FIRST BOATS: 1980-81 WOMEN'S ROWING WITH COACH JOHN DAVIS

*The Rowing Association caught up with John and Wendy Davis late last year. The couple shepherded the Women's Rowing program for over a dozen years. This excerpt from our conversation covers John's early days with the program. We'll dive into our conversation with Wendy in Volume 6 (coming this Fall).*

*A graduate of UC Irvine, John Davis started coaching the women's rowing club in 1980. Wendy joined the program as the women's rowing novice coach in 1983. The pair married in 1985. When John took a break from coaching in 1991, Wendy took over as the head coach. The young family stayed two more years before Wendy took the reins at Yale in 1993.*

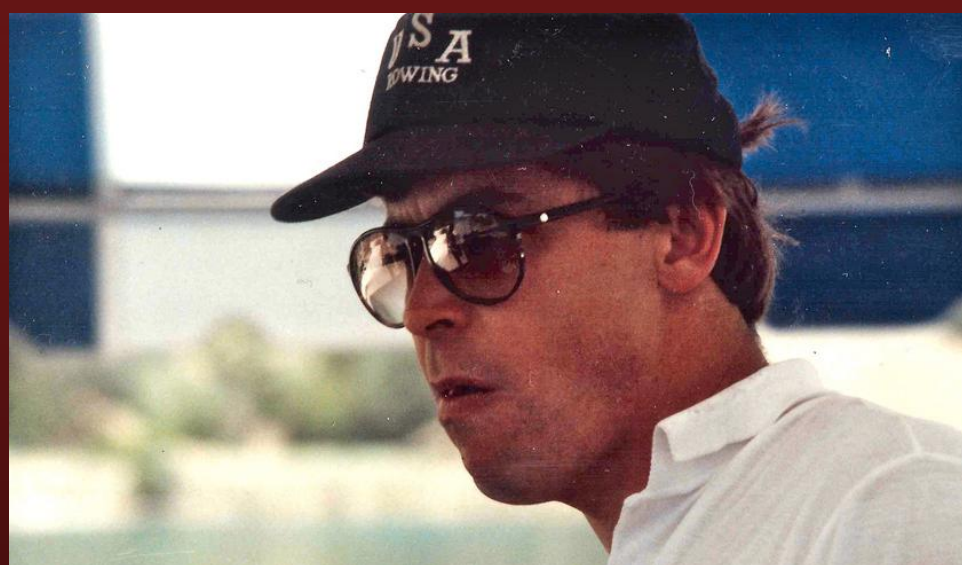
*This pair helped grow the program during the early Title IX days for women's rowing, taking it from a club team to a perennial contender in the Pac-10 and at Nationals.*

I got my start in coaching at my alma mater, UC Irvine. I coached there for a year. I trained and went to the 1980 Olympic trials. I got killed at Trials and figured being an Olympic athlete was out of my reach. I moved back home to Eureka, California, and worked for my dad.

One afternoon, I spotted the Humboldt State team loading boats. I became the second or third coach for the women's team there. Rowing was a club sport. When I wasn't working in the family business, I was out on the water.

*In 1980, women's collegiate rowing was still brand new. Congress passed Title IX in 1972. In 1976, the Yale crew had famously strode naked into the Yale Athletic Director's office to protest inequality in funding women's sports.*

Before my time at Stanford, Cathy Thaxton-Tippett got things rolling. She was probably one of the best athletes ever to row at Stanford. She rowed in high school and wanted to go to Stanford. But there was no rowing program. She pretty much founded the program, rounded up friends who were interested and headed down to Redwood City.



*Cathy Thaxton-Tippett would row for the 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1988 Olympic teams. She also represented the US at the World Championships in 1977, 1979, and 1983.*

About a year into my time at Humboldt, the crew invited the Stanford club for a scrimmage. They made a road trip from Palo Alto. They had no coach and came on their own. The bunch piled out of a station wagon – all of these tall athletes – Jolene Esparza, Martha Kauffmann, Helen Crocker Frick, among others.

**Continued...**

We gave them one of our crummy boats. We were rowing in a crummy boat too. Over the course of the next two days, we did a couple of practices and a race together. And Humboldt just destroyed them. We went to dinner before they drove home. They asked me if I would come down and coach in Palo Alto.

The more I thought about it, the more I thought I'd rather be coaching than working for my father. I went home, parked my beater sports car, and drove my beater Volkswagen van down to Palo Alto. Joanie Freitas, who was co-captain, found me a place to stay with her aunt. I worked for nothing for the next two years.

***Athletes carpooled to Redwood City in those days. The team's first boat Larissa Lynn was a sturdy Pocock that weighed in at 313 pounds. After John Davis' first year, the team was able to buy a new Kaschper, Jordy's Flyer, a bantamweight 235 pounds, and their first set of Concept 2 oars.***



That first year we were just rowing in a barge and did better than I thought we would. Once we got into Jordy's Flyer, we were pretty quick. Cal won what was then the national championships in 1980. We came back the following Fall with nine rowers. Margie Fetter and a couple of others had rowed in high school. We had one or two novices in the boat. They were the team we built the whole program on.

We raced one thousand meters in those days. With a thousand meters, you always felt you had a chance; We would row 36 to 39 strokes a minute for the base. We'd do a thirty-stroke start, take a 10, settle for 10, take a 10, settle for 10, and then wind it up. And that was it for a thousand meters. And you could stand on the bridge at Redwood Shores and watch the finish.

***John and the team were fortunate that the Athletic Director, Andy Geiger, kept an eye out for the club sport and its new coach.***

***Continued...***

At first, things were a bit tough with the men's program. They had their own tradition of scrapping things together. They had built their own boathouse back in the 50s. The men were used to having the run of the place. Once or twice, Andy Geiger had to sit me, Bob Whitford, who was the men's coach at the time, and the captains down together to smooth things over. It helped me that he had rowed at Syracuse.

Things did improve in the Spring of 1981, though. I recall one weekend morning where Bob Whitford was off to a wedding and had left me with both teams for the practice.

We were doing two sets of 5x2' – that was a staple workout the women did in those days. We started the women's boat a length up on the men's JV and the JV a length up on the men's varsity. It was a good practice. The women pulled away from the JV on a couple of the pieces. And, as we rowed back into the boathouse, the men cheered for the women. From there on, the tension thawed except for the occasional flare up- bumping elbows in the boathouse.

***John recalls that those days were spirited in many ways.***

One morning I came down to the dock, took a look in my launch, and saw paint all over it. I don't say anything. We head out for practice. About 1500, maybe 2000 meters from the docks, we reach the power lines. And at the base of one of the towers was an oar painted across the concrete. They had gone out and painted this thing on a Saturday night.

I came in and said to the team, "Do not tell me who did this because I will have to kick you off the team." I felt I had put my neck out there to coach them. I didn't want to end up with someone hurt or get fired by the university.

The next day I go to my VW van and find it full of food – falafels, cookies, cakes, and pies. There must have been 50,000 calories in the back of that van. That was all led by Helen Frykman. That's one of my favorite memories from those days.

***In the spring of 1981, Stanford Women lost to Cal badly at the San Diego Crew Classic. As they prepared for that year's dual race with Cal, one of their best athletes, Joline Esparza got injured.***

We kept Joline out for the dual race. We lost but we were close. When the PAC-10s came around, people knew that we'd been close without Jocelyn. Before our race that day, there was a crowd on the bridge at Redwood Shores. Some of the Cal athletes said to us – one person couldn't make that much of a difference.

Cal jumped out to a lead at the start that morning. But our boat reeled them in – we came through and beat them. The whole bridge was shaking that day. We ended up ranked 4th in the country that year. And the next Fall most of those women were back. We added a second eight too.

*Continued...*

*From those 80-81 lineups, Joline Esparza and Jocelyn Kearing-McCandless would go on to represent the US at Worlds and the Olympics.*

*During those years, John held a variety of jobs to make ends meet, running delivery routes and tending bar at the Dutch Goose. During the Summers, he would work for Stanford facilities. John clearly recalls the day he learned rowing would become a varsity sport.*

I had read in the San Francisco Chronicle that day that Stanford was going to cut sports. Later that morning, Andy Geiger passed me in the hall. He turned around and grabbed me, telling me I should attend a press conference that afternoon.

Geiger gets to the podium later and denies the rumors. We're not in the business of going out of business. We're not cutting sports; he goes on, we're adding sports. He describes a new three-tier system for sports at Stanford, and there, in tier C, was rowing – right there with field hockey and wrestling.

When I tell people I coached at Stanford for twelve years, they imagine something grander. They don't know what it was like back then. When I arrived, Conn Findlay, and Mark Rosenbaugh were assembling the shed. Every Fall, we would have to go through every piece of equipment to get the black widows out before the students returned. I wouldn't trade it for the world, though.

Those athletes made me. They were really dedicated. The investment level on the part of the athletes was so high. They were so bought in. That's one of the things you learn in life – if you buy into something, if you take responsibility, things have more meaning.



*After stops at Stanford, Yale, and the University of Minnesota along the way, John and Wendy Davis now live in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Wendy is coaching at UT nearby. John Davis is officially retired, but fans of Biff the Bus will be happy to hear that John routinely drives a tour bus to keep things interesting.*







# BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

*To Ensure that the Unique Experience of Rowing for Stanford Endures*

## MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM – THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

### BECOME A SPONSORING MEMBER

*With a \$50/year membership donation, a \$500 Patron donation  
Or  
a \$5000 one-time Lifetime Membership donation*

*Donors can also make a Lifetime Membership in another person's name or in their honor.*

*Alums in their first two years after graduation will be granted funded Membership thanks to the generous support of a Rowing Association supporter. We will invite recent alumni to contribute in year 3 after graduating.*

*Memberships are 100% deductible as The Rowing Association is now a registered 501(c)(3).*

**CLICK TO BECOME A MEMBER**

### *How are funds used?*

*Funds are used to Operate The Rowing Association – Communications, Events, and Development.*

### *Will The Rowing Association do fundraising other than Membership?*

*Yes, The Rowing Association will continue to fundraise in collaboration with Stanford to Strengthen Stanford Rowing. Your help here has made a tremendous difference. Thank you!*

*The Rowing Association may also periodically lead a fundraiser to drive an incremental opportunity for a team (example: racing at Henley).*

*Donors wishing to make a Lifetime Membership contribution (\$5000) can do so through DonorBox, or directly to The Rowing Association.*

The Rowing Association  
1100 Alma Street, Suite 210  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

*Attn: Greg Klingsporn*

*Contributions can also be made through Donor Advised Charitable Accounts. The Formal Name is:*

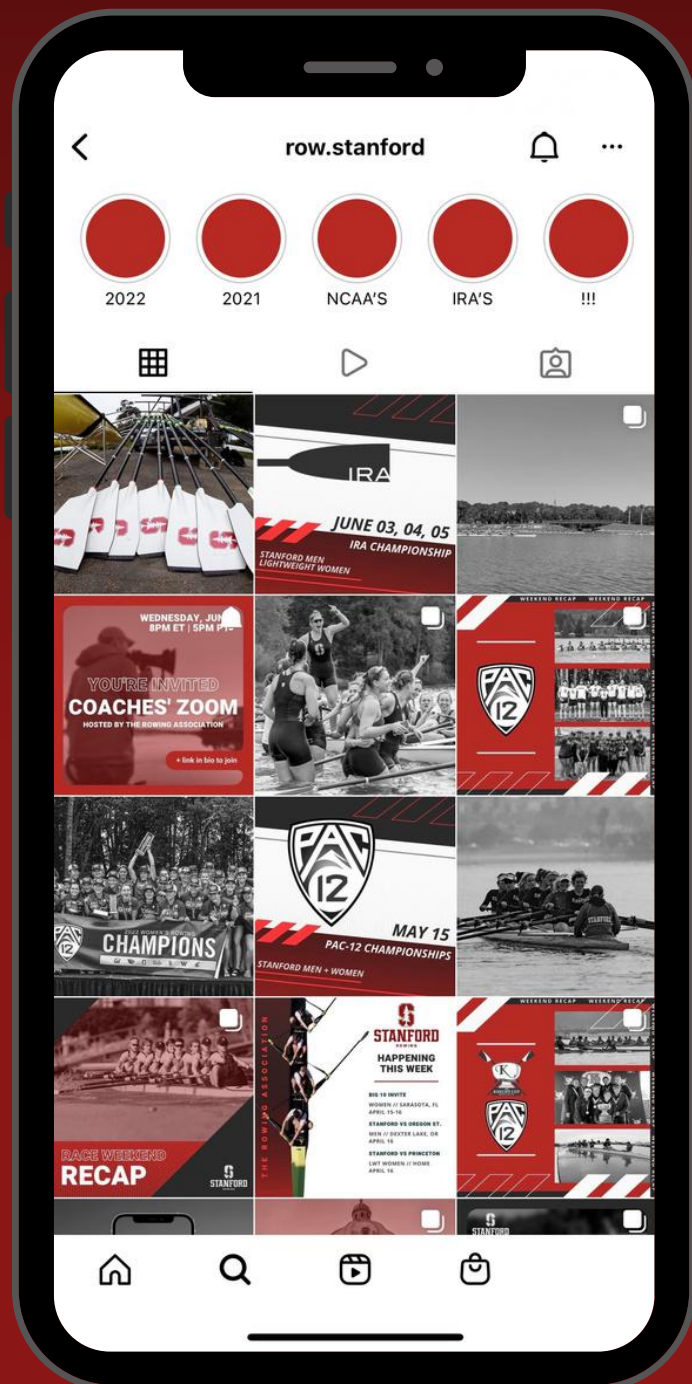
All Right Now Rowing Association  
(The Rowing Association)  
Tax ID 85-3570682

***Thank You for your continued support of Stanford Rowing!***

*Jordan Reist '20 | Membership Chair | jordanreist@gmail.com*

# MORE FROM THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

*Follow and Subscribe to stay up-to-date with exclusive content*



 @ROW.STANFORD

 @ROWSTANFORD

 STANFORD ROWING ASSOCIATION

 HELLO@STANFORDROWING.ORG

 WWW.THEROWINGASSOCIATION.COM

Connect with us! We'd love to hear from you. Follow us on social media and join to our email and mailing list to receive exclusive content and become part of The Rowing Association community.

**[Click here to subscribe!](#)**

## SHARE YOUR STORY

*As a member of The Rowing Association community, you have the opportunity to connect with other rowers who share a passion for the sport and a commitment to excellence. You also have access to a wealth of knowledge and experience, as well as opportunities to learn from and be inspired by some of the best rowers in the world.*

Sharing your story with The Rowing Association community is a great way to inspire other rowers, and foster a sense of commonality within the rowing community. We want to hear from you! Reach out to us for the chance to be featured in future communications from The Rowing Association.

***Email [hello@stanfordrowing.org](mailto:hello@stanfordrowing.org) for more details.***

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## THE ROWING ASSOCIATION

Christine Cavallo ('17)

Isabella Garcia-Camargo ('20)

Austin Hack ('14)

Ally Hinson ('19)

Sabrina Kolker ('03)

Kaitlyn Kynast ('22)

Dave Lewis ('62)

Steve Munn ('85)

Jordan Reist ('20)

Juan Sabater (Law '90)

Chris Stanek ('93)

Amanda So ('15)

McKayla Taaffe ('16)

Abby Tarquinio ('21)

Chierika "Coco" Ukogu ('14)

Jennie Whitcomb ('85)