

# Surgite

Vol. 8, No. 1, Spring 2016

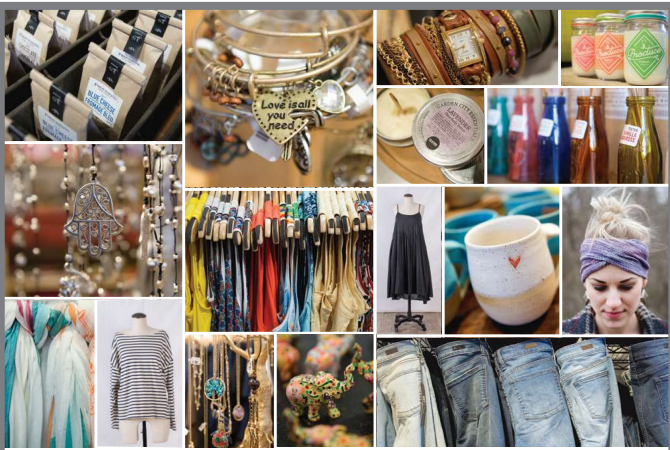
A Brock community magazine



**Lightstone reflects  
on the past decade**

**Brock on the cutting-edge  
of research into Zika virus**

**Cheechoo shares her  
residential school story**



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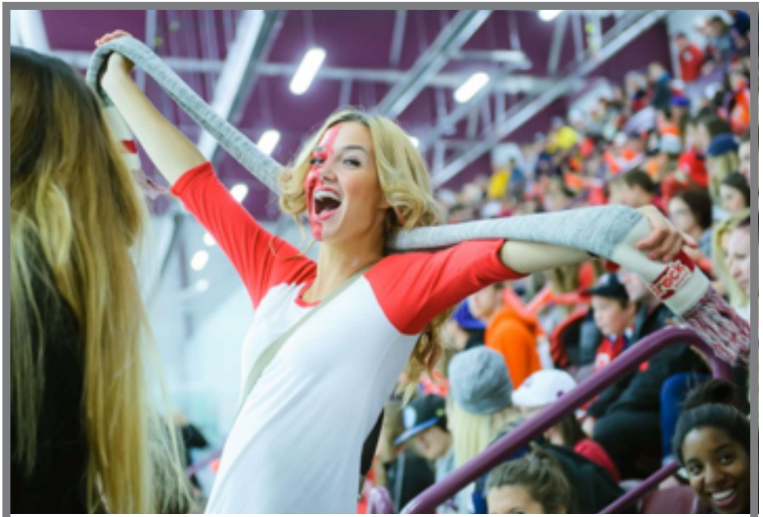
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## Surgite [brocku.ca/surgite](http://brocku.ca/surgite)

**Surgite/sur-gi-tay/Latin for "Push on"**  
**The inspiring last words of Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock**

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*Surgite* is published twice a year for the Brock University community.

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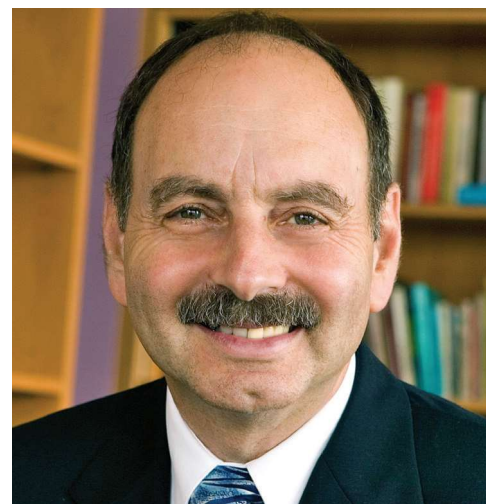
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### Dear alumni and friends of Brock,

On June 30, I will wrap up a significant chapter when I complete my second and final five-year term as President of Brock University.



Jack Lightstone

A decade is a major piece of anyone's life, so it's not surprising that in recent weeks I've found myself reflecting on a range of different memories that have stayed with me. Some of these mental snapshots are from big public events, like the opening ceremonies for new buildings that will benefit students for generations to come.

But my most cherished images recall personal interactions I have had with committed students and proud alumni.

The kaleidoscope of experiences from 10 years as president leaves an indelible stamp on a person, but I can tell you that none of those experiences have given me more gratification than being among Brock's students and alumni.

Not many people get to say they have accompanied thousands of proud graduates on one of the biggest days of their lives, but I have had the honour of overseeing more than 60 convocation events, and helped send some 34,000 freshly minted Brock alumni through our doors and on to the rest of their lives.

Brock University will forever hold an important place in my heart, and I will always be grateful to our alumni who have gone on to make their mark in the world, and in doing so, make a clear statement about the reputation and pride of Brock University.

I wish you all the very best.

Surgite!

Sincerely,



Jack Lightstone  
President and Vice-Chancellor (2006-2016)



Jamie Mandigo

## New Vice-Provost position created

Kinesiology Professor Jamie Mandigo has been announced as Brock University's first-ever Vice-Provost, Enrolment Management and International.

The new senior academic position, created and approved in late 2015, is responsible for leading the development of enrolment management, data management and international engagement. Mandigo commenced the role on May 1, appointed for a five-year term.

The new position includes oversight and leadership of the Registrar's Office, International Market Development, Brock International Services, ESL Services, and Institutional Analysis and Planning.

## Alum returns as Grad Studies Dean

A Brock alumnus is coming a long way home to become the University's new Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Jens Coorsen (BSc '86, MSc '89) will leave his position as Chair of Molecular Physiology in the School of Medicine at Australia's Western Sydney University, and return to his native Niagara to take up the Brock position.

The five-year term begins on July 1. Coorsen succeeds Michael Plyley, who will step down when his five-year term expires on June 30.

## MIWSFPA gets a new Director

Professor David Vivian, a scholar and scenographer, has been named the new Director of Brock University's Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts.

His appointment begins July 1 and runs for a three-year term. Currently chair of the Department of Dramatic Arts, Vivian has been with Brock since 2004.

He takes over from Professor Derek Knight.



Carol Merriam

## Merriam named Dean of Humanities

Latin Professor Carol Merriam was named the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities in March.

Merriam has been serving as Interim Dean of the Faculty since March 2015 and she will continue that appointment until June 30. On July 1 she begins a five-year term as Dean. A professor of Latin language and literature, Merriam is also an experienced academic administrator.



Curiosity Rover

## Schmidt continues Mars mission with NASA

The U.S. government's National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) re-selected Brock Associate Professor of Earth Sciences Mariek Schmidt as a member of its group of scientists working on the Curiosity Mars Rover mission.

Earlier this year, NASA announced the list of 28 researchers it selected to participate on the Mars Science Laboratory Project, which built and operates the Rover. Schmidt was a member of the previous group.

The Canadian Space Agency (CSA) funds Schmidt's participation in the mission.

## Libben wrapping up term as Vice-President, Research

Brock University's Vice-President Research announced he is wrapping up his term this summer. "I am very grateful for this and look forward to many more years of working here together with students and colleagues," said Professor Gary Libben. His five-year term as VPR officially ends on June 30. He will stay on for an additional month to ensure a smooth transition over the summer.

## GAME Program a big draw in its first term

Before the start button on the new GAME program has been pressed, it's already on pace for a high score. The video game program, a partnership between Brock University and Niagara College, had seven times the number of applicants than available spaces for the first term starting in September 2016. The program is one-of-a-kind in Canada — offering students the opportunity to earn a university degree and an advanced college diploma in four years.



Neil Lumsden

## Former CFL star signs with Brock

A Canadian Football Hall of Fame member with a long history of running successful sports teams and events has been named Brock University's new Director, Athletics and Recreation. Neil Lumsden, who won three Grey Cups as an Edmonton Eskimos player and another championship as the General Manager of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, started his tenure at Brock on Feb. 15.

## Brock partners with Weengushk Film Institute to offer program

A new partnership between Brock University and Weengushk Film Institute is opening doors for students studying on Manitoulin Island. Starting in September, Brock is offering a certificate in film production that will be taught at Weengushk. The eight-month program provides training and instruction taught by industry professionals.



Olivia Hubert

## Brock students honoured for volunteerism

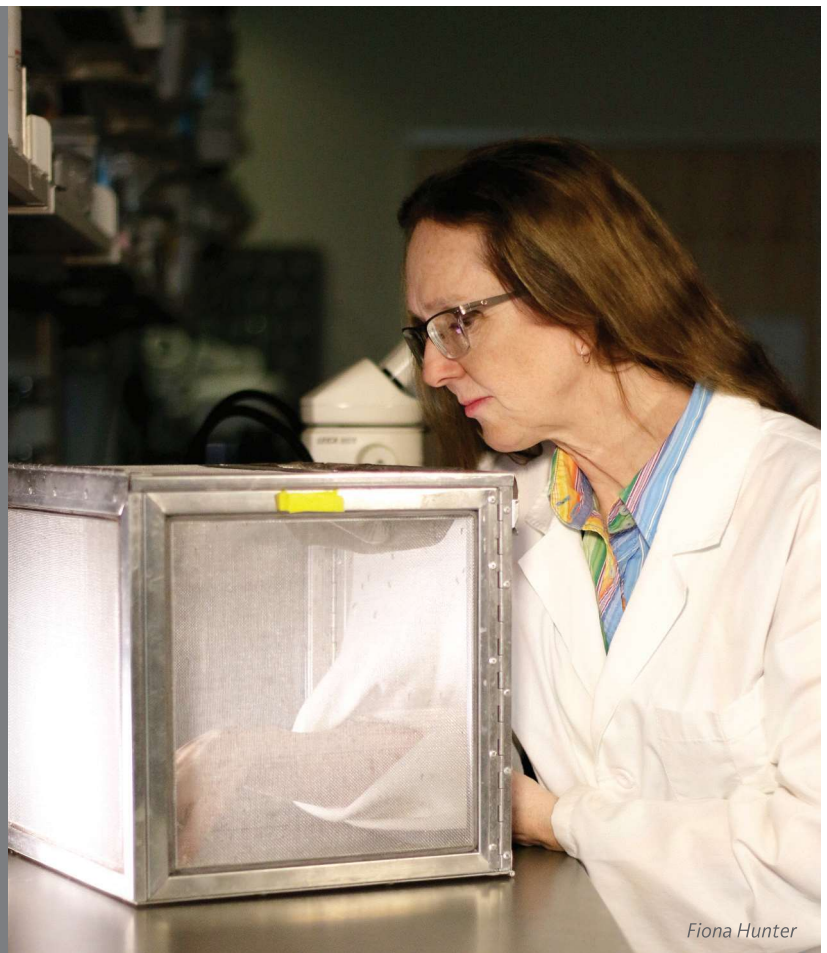
Brock University fourth-year nursing student Olivia Hubert was named the Mayor's Volunteer of the Year at a gala in St. Catharines in April. Hubert logged 525 volunteer hours during the school year and helped organize an event that raised more than \$22,000 for a bursary program for the DSBN Academy. First-year Brock student Yusuf BenHalim was also honoured during the volunteer recognition event. Along with high school student Kate Hou, BenHalim won the Margaret MacLennan Youth Volunteer Award. BenHalim, an 18-year-old environmental geo-science student, was honoured for his work with the non-profit youth organization Qamer Foundation.

For up-to-date information  
about Brock visit

**The Brock News**  
[brocku.ca/brocknews](http://brocku.ca/brocknews)

# Zeroing in on Zika

Brock's mosquito prof joins the global crusade



Fiona Hunter

By Erica Bajer

Fiona Hunter peers into the metallic mesh box where hundreds of mosquitoes buzz back and forth.

She rolls up the sleeve of her white lab coat and puts her arm into an opening on one side of the box – it's a sleeve designed to allow human arms to enter the trap to feed the blood-thirsty pests.

She watches them with a smile on her face, hoping they're hungry.

She wants them to bite her. After a few minutes, she's disappointed when they don't.

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Hunter's respect for the insects is written all over her face as she talks about her research at Brock University. Her smile only widens when the discussion moves from mosquitoes to her favourite biting bug – the black fly.

Hunter, a Brock professor and medical entomologist, has made studying biting insects her life's work.

First, she examined black flies in Algonquin Park and how they transmit bird malaria in waterfowl.

Then, when West Nile virus cropped up, the Public Health Agency of Canada asked her to start a mosquito surveillance program that she still runs at Brock.

Today, Hunter is on the cutting-edge of research into the Zika virus and how mosquitoes transmit it. She was part of a global summit in Brazil in March.

Hunter and her work on Zika has been the focus of massive media attention around the world. She has given interviews to everyone from CBC's The National to Discovery Channel's

Daily Planet along with local publications and international outlets. The interest in Zika is only rivaled by the intense media spotlight on her research during the emergence of West Nile virus.

"We are still working on West Nile. There are many questions yet to be answered about transmission," she says.

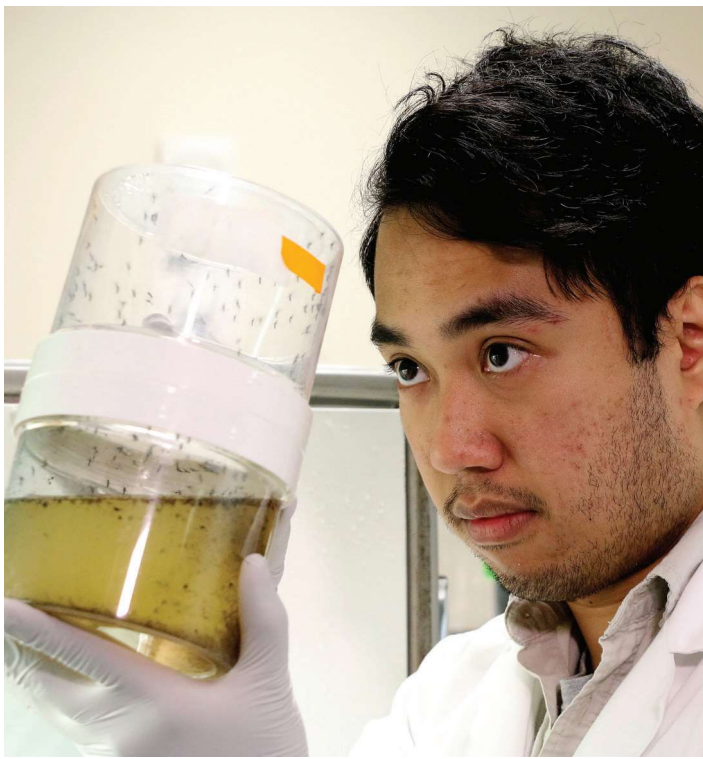
Hunter's labs at Brock also look at invasive species – catching millions and millions of bugs in a giant H-vac and sifting through them - along with work on Lyme disease, spread by black-legged ticks, and Blue Tongue disease, transmitted by biting midges.

"Different students have different interests and I don't want everybody having to do the same thing," she says. "It's more exciting when we have more things to talk about."

Hunter hasn't lost her excitement and fascination with blood-sucking bugs in the 25 years since she was a student working in the lab of her mentor, the late Dr. Klaus Rothfels from the University of Toronto.

He was the person who introduced her to the research possibilities of biting insects. With him, she worked with black flies and, to this day, they hold a special place in her heart.

**Watch the video**  
**[brocku.ca/brocknews](http://brocku.ca/brocknews)**



Grad student Darrell Agbulos (BSc '14) examines mosquito larvae.

She was so interested in the work and his approach that she signed on to do a master's in botany so she could continue working with him. She went on to do a PhD in biology. Rothfels wasn't the first teacher to influence Hunter's career trajectory.

It was in the Grade 4/5 Hamilton classroom of Linda Smith (now Spratt) that Hunter first felt the pull of biology. She loved helping care for the critters kept at the back of the class. She figured out early that she wanted to work with animals and went on to do her undergraduate degree in zoology.

There was only one hitch. Hunter is allergic to most animals.

**“When I was first doing this work, there weren't really any diseases of medical or veterinary importance that were being transmitted in Canada.”**

**Fiona Hunter**

Studying black fly chromosomes and investigating how different species were related to one another helped her find her calling.

“You can ask some really incredible questions using insects,” she says.

She grins when she talks about the biting flies she studied for years during trips to Algonquin Park.

“When I was first doing this work, there weren't really any diseases of medical or veterinary importance that were being transmitted in Canada.”

Continued on page 8

# Advanced lab leads the way

By Erica Bajer

The Zika virus has been around for decades but is only now emerging as a public health crisis.

Scientists around the Americas have turned their attention to the virus, which is causing wide-spread fear following an outbreak in Brazil.

Brock University's CL3 lab, the only one with an insectary at a Canadian university, has been sent two strains of Zika, one from an outbreak in Thailand in 2013 and the other a sample from Puerto Rico's outbreak in 2016.

Zika has gained notoriety, since moving from Africa and French Polynesia to South America. In Brazil, the virus has caused a public health emergency and is being linked to an increase in Guillain-Barré syndrome as well as a surge in the number of babies born with microcephaly – an abnormal smallness of the head.

“We will compare the strains to one another in terms of how mosquitoes can transmit them or not,” says Brock professor and medical entomologist Fiona Hunter, of the work taking place in her lab.

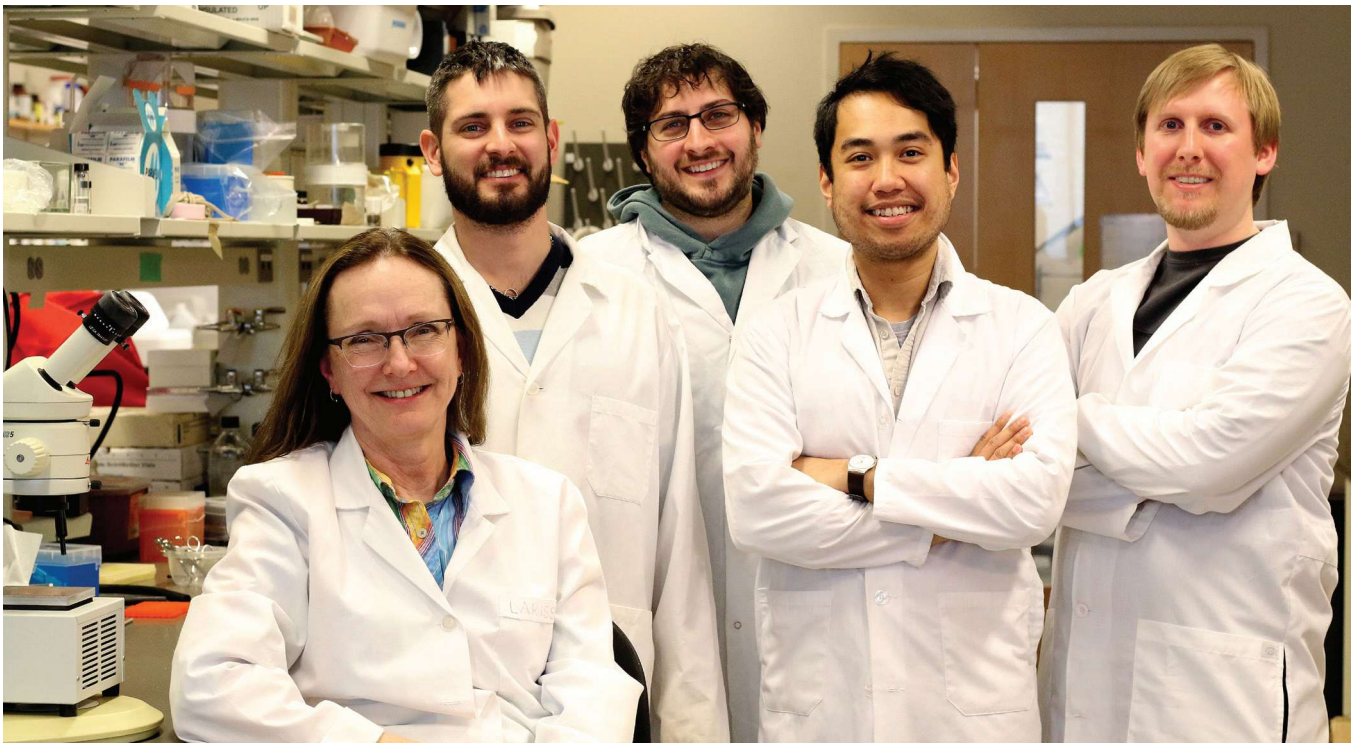
“The whole crux is to see whether or not local mosquitoes can become infected and transmit it.”

Hunter travelled to Brazil earlier this year to take part in a one-day conference of experts working to learn more about the virus and its transmission. Hunter says Zika has been around since 1947 in Africa, but over time has clearly mutated and become a greater risk to human health.

“I teach a medical and veterinary entomology class and I would never have talked about Zika in the past because it was thought to just have mild flu-like symptoms and then people would get better,” she says.

In April, Hunter and her team of grad students infected their first batch of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, the species that is widely believed to be the main vector for Zika in Brazil. Unlike most Ontarians, the researchers were anxiously awaiting the arrival of local mosquitoes so they could introduce the virus into those species to see if they can transmit Zika.

“If you listen to the news, you are going to hear over and over again that we are safe here because we don't have this one particular mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, that is supposed to be the major vector of Zika,” Hunter says. “That's perfectly true, we don't have *Aedes aegypti* but we have 67 other species of mosquito in Ontario and it just seems irresponsible to say that we're not at risk of local, homegrown transmission, when we don't know.”



Fiona Hunter, left, with students Bryan Giordano (BSc '12), Jason Causarano (BSc '13), Darrell Agbulos (BSc '14) and Adam Jewiss-Gaines, who are working alongside her to study Zika virus at Brock University.

Her research with black flies was fascinating work that nobody really cared about. And more importantly, it was work there wasn't much funding for.

Hunter was working at Brock for several years when the West Nile virus emerged. For that, there was funding.

"We've really switched over primarily to mosquitoes since then," she says. "It's because of the threat to human health and also the funding opportunities. You can't actually train the next generation of biologists without funding and this way I'm able to support quite a large lab."

For Hunter, whose parents both taught, teaching is a joy that rivals research.

"I try to be passionate about what I'm teaching and show them how exciting things can be," she says. "I also try to show them that it's not necessary to memorize stuff, that memorization and regurgitation is completely useless because so-called facts change over time."

She says if she still relied on what she learned during her undergrad, she'd be way out of date.

"University is for expanding your horizons and learning how to learn so that going forward you'll always be able to figure things out," she says. "You'll know how to think for yourself and where to find current information."

Hunter's grad students – Jason Causarano, Adam Jewiss-Gaines, Bryan Giordano and Darrell Agbulos - are with her on the front-lines of Zika research. They say having her as a mentor has changed the course of their careers.

Causarano says taking Hunter's medical and veterinary entomology class re-directed his interest from environmental pests including zebra mussels to mosquitoes and biting insects.

"My interest has shifted to public health and insects," he says.

Hunter's teaching style empowered him to pursue his interests in the lab.

Hunter intends to bring in three undergraduate students to work in her lab this summer along with two students from Brazil.

She wants to give as many students as possible the opportunity to explore the options their education affords them.

"Those students who come in with a set career path are doing themselves a disservice," Hunter says. "If they open up and explore different avenues, they just might find that thing that excites them more than anything else."

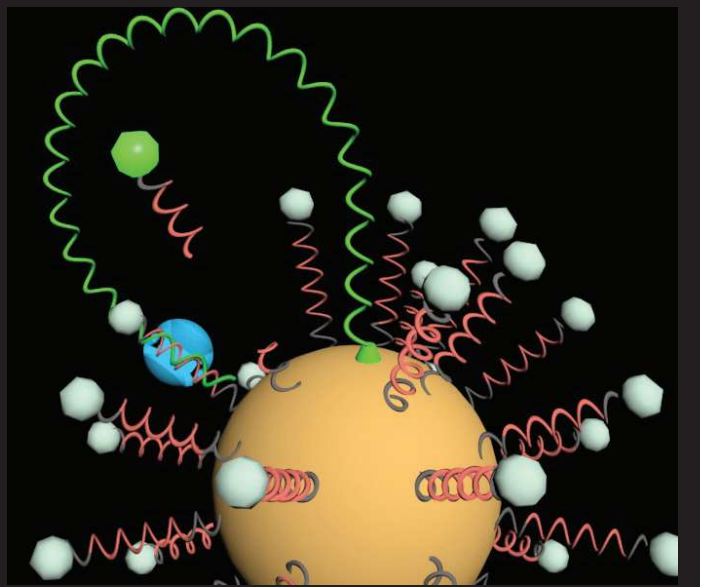
*Erica Bajer is a writer/editor in Brock's Office of Marketing and Communications.*



Fiona Hunter looks at insects in one of her lab's mosquito-feeding boxes.



# Microscopic robots can detect disease



By Cathy Majtenyi

The ultimate science fiction story: a robot smaller than the size of a pin head blasts its way into a patient's bloodstream to battle a dreaded disease.

Brock University researcher Feng Li chuckles at the imagery and then gets excited. He points to a drawing of what looks like a sun with many squiggly rays sticking out.

"This one cannot fix disease, but the idea is somehow similar."

Li is referring to a "nanomachine" – a nano-sized robot – his research team created that has the potential to detect diseases in a blood sample within 30 minutes.

The three-dimensional, microscopic robot consists of a 20-nanometre particle made out of gold.

Short and long strands of DNA are attached to the gold particle. DNA is the main component of chromosomes and carries genetic information for all cells. But here DNA molecules are used as building blocks to construct and operate the nanomachine.

The long DNA strands contain the genetic sequences of whatever specific disease is being tested for, while the short DNA strands carry fluorescent signal reporters.

The robot is then dropped into serum extracted from human blood. If biomarkers for the specific disease are present in the serum, the machine turns on; if the sample is disease-free, the robot remains off.

Once turned on by disease biomarkers, the nanomachine automatically uses its long DNA strands to slice the short DNA strands, activating the fluorescent signals.

The serum sample will then glow.

Li and his team used their nanomachine to detect tuberculosis, a potentially fatal, infectious lung disease that causes havoc in some parts of the world.

"We tested our nanomachine using a fragment of tuberculosis DNA in the test-tube," Li, Assistant Professor of chemistry, explains. "We mixed this DNA fragment into the human serum obtained from healthy donors to mimic a TB patient sample. We then added our specifically designed nanomachine into this

serum sample and measured the fluorescence generated from the nanomachine."

"The nanomachine was able to successfully detect TB in the human serum sample," says Li.

Li explains that, unlike conventional diagnostic testing methods that require sophisticated equipment, highly trained personnel and at least a day to get results, the 3D nanomachine technique can be used in most clinics and labs, with results in as little as half an hour.

"We wanted something to be simple," he says. "The design is complicated, but the way you use it is extremely simple. All you need is to mix things together and wait to see the fluorescent signal."

Graduate student Xiaolong Yang is the lead author of the team's recent paper, published earlier this year in the journal *ACS Nano*.

"If one day the 3D nanomachine technique is applied to real clinical service for primary-stage patients' disease diagnostic, it will save thousands of lives," he says.

"Also, this technique is full of potential for replacing the old-fashioned, time-consuming and labour-intensive diagnostic technique in the future medical community. This is a very simple tool, but it could highly impact future medical care."

The next step in the research, says Li, is to incorporate DNA strands that can capture specific micro ribonucleic acid, or microRNA, onto the nanomachine. MicroRNA "is a very important biomarker for cancer. We want to use the nanomachine to detect cancer by means of detecting circulating microRNA in human serum."

The researchers are also exploring ways to commercialize their nanomachine so that the machine can be used easily for disease screening.

*Cathy Majtenyi is the Research Communications and Media Relations Specialist in the Office of Research Services.*



Ryan Pallotta

## Distinguished alumnus honoured

By Erin Court

After working alongside superstars Demi Lovato, Faith Hill and Sean Mendez, alumnus Ryan Pallotta (BSM '09) is still humbled by his own achievements.

The accomplished music video director has worked hard to gain momentum in the film industry. As the 2016 Brock University Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus, Pallotta will return to campus and accept the award during Homecoming weekend September 16 and 17.

Pallotta, who lives and works in Los Angeles, says he doesn't believe there is one particular project that got him where he is today.

"A thousand little things all added up to one big thing," he says.

Taking risks along the way has helped him towards his goals. Pallotta moved to LA on a whim after connecting with people who could mentor him in film and inspire him to develop his reel.

His drive to succeed in film meant long hours on set and hard work moving heavy film and photography equipment. To show his commitment to the industry, he paid his own way to assist a celebrity film director and photographer on set in Puerto Rico for actor Colin Farrell. He wanted to work alongside one of his mentors.

Currently signed with Ridley Scott Associates and Black Dog Films, Pallotta hopes to continue his trajectory of growth and become a film director.

"I'm currently working on virtual reality films and 360-degree

video clips which allow me to learn more about the technical features of film. These new technologies allow me to experiment and develop professionally," says Pallotta.

As a lifelong learner, Pallotta wishes he had taken more time while studying at Brock to learn from his professors and appreciate his time as a student.

If he could go back, he'd tell himself: "Put yourself out there, do your research and ask for advice from your professors and career mentors."

"I didn't realize how much perspective they would provide me until much later."

The Distinguished Alumni Award honours Brock graduates who have earned prominence as a result of their exceptional professional achievements.

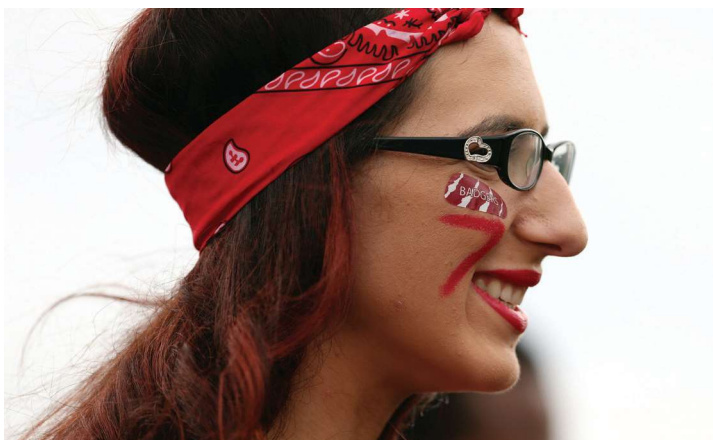
Pallotta will receive his award during Homecoming celebrations on Saturday, Sept. 17 along with winners from Brock's Faculties.

The Alumni Recognition Reception takes place at 4 p.m. in the Ian Beddis Gymnasium. Pallotta will speak at the event and participate in other Homecoming events.

Whether you cross the stage in June, or did it 50 years ago, there's plenty to do at Homecoming. The weekend is filled with reunions, awards, varsity sporting events, receptions and parties.

As part of the 2016 celebrations, Brock's incoming President and Vice-Chancellor Wendy Cukier (BA '77) will be introduced.

*Erin Court is the Communications Officer for Development and Alumni Relations.*



## 2016 Faculty Distinguished Graduate Awards

### Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

Brenda Herchmer (B.RLS '86)

### Faculty of Business

Jason Sparaga (BBA '93)

### Faculty of Education

Dino Miele (BA '04; Med '10)

### Faculty of Humanities

Leonard Kirk (BA '89)

### Faculty of Mathematics and Science

David Grimes (BSc '75)

### Faculty of Social Sciences

Anne Sutherland Boal (BA '75)



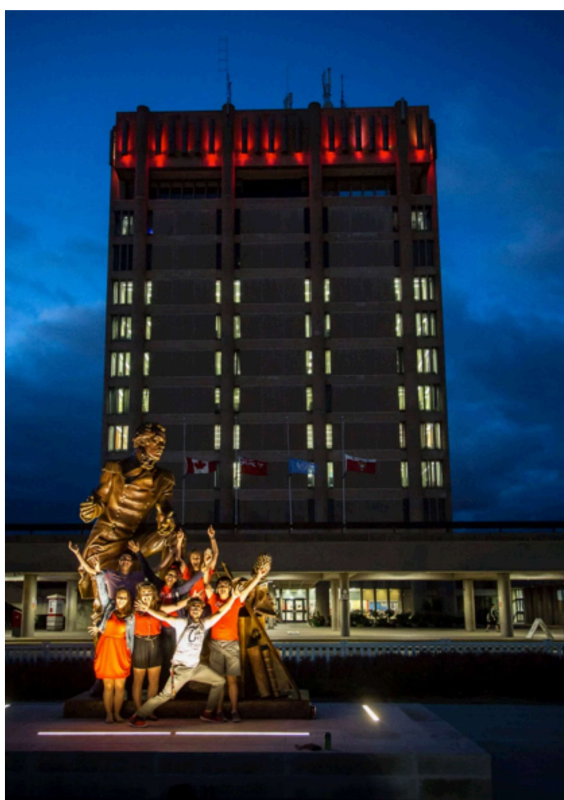
2016

# Homecoming

Sept. 16 to 17

Update your email address online to stay connected and informed as events are planned.

[brocku.ca/alumni](http://brocku.ca/alumni)



**Brock**  
UNIVERSITY  
Alumni Association

The Brock University Alumni Association invites you back to campus. The weekend is filled with class and faculty reunions, awards, varsity sporting events, receptions and parties to help you remember and relive the best years of your life.

### Alumni Recognition Reception

Saturday, September 17

4 p.m.

Ian Beddis Gymnasium

### Red Dinner

Saturday, September 17

5 p.m.

In front of Schmon Tower

For details on reunion events and to register visit

[brocku.ca/alumni](http://brocku.ca/alumni)



*An era of growth: In 2009, Jack Lightstone announced plans for what would become the Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex.*

# Ten years later, the change agent reflects on growth

By Kevin Cavanagh

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When Jack Lightstone reported for work in 2006 as Brock's new president, the University was starkly different from what he'll hand over June 30, when he leaves the corner office after a decade of remarkable growth.

Lightstone came with eyes wide open. In his previous life as Provost at Montreal's Concordia University, he worked closely with the president on big files and tough issues. The top job is a full menu of demands, from happily conferring degrees on beaming graduates, to the pain of approving steps to erase a seven-figure budget deficit.

When all is said and done, some key metrics suggest how Brock transformed during Lightstone's tenure. Consider:

- More than \$200 million in new construction, much of it world-class research space or award-winning design.
- Total enrolment rose by more than 1,400.
- Graduate programs up from 27 to 49 — a jump of 76 per cent.
- Full-time faculty increased by nearly 10 per cent.

When he first arrived, Lightstone spent time asking people on and off campus about key concerns. Many academics felt Brock lacked the kind of facilities needed to fulfill its academic mission

as a research-intensive university. Out in the streets, Brock was often shrugged off as an aloof Ivory Tower, indifferent to its host communities. Perceptions about Brock often focused on the nuisance factor of students living in residential neighbourhoods.

"There was a feeling that while Brock was in Niagara, it was not really involved in any serious ways in the life of Niagara," he said recently. "That may have been a gross exaggeration, because there have always been individuals from the University connected to the community. But even if it was an exaggeration, it was still the narrative."

The new President also told the Board and Senate that Brock was living over an abyss of structural deficit: The costs of running the place were higher than its revenues, a danger masked by several years of surplus from the enrolment double cohort.

Change started coming. Over the next decade, campus infrastructure would be radically updated and Brock would become a more visible, outward-looking community partner.

Lightstone visited municipal council meetings and helped write economic development plans for the Niagara Region.

Brock rented space in struggling urban settings to incubate new businesses. Student and staff volunteerism increased. The Niagara Community Observatory was created to research local issues.

As for buildings, the list of projects from Lightstone's watch speaks for itself. The \$120-million Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex helps attract and retain leading researchers and strengthens Brock's ability to attract graduate students. The \$45-million Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts is a triumph of teaching excellence as well as a coup of design and renewal in downtown St. Catharines.

Other projects include the Welch Hall extension (\$8.5-million), the International Building (\$14-million), Guernsey Market (\$9-million), Matheson Learning Commons (\$2-million) and a \$22-million expansion of the Goodman School of Business whose construction begins this summer.

"The amount and nature and quality of space was the most burning issue that people brought to my attention at the time," Lightstone recalls. "Brock had decided in 1999 to become much more involved in research and graduate studies, and had hired a number of new faculty with the expectation that they'd have significant research careers.

"Plus the school of fine and performing arts sorely lacked the type of purpose-built space that it needed for teaching."

Desiring buildings is one thing, paying for them is another. Realizing that Brock needed support not only from the community but from government, Lightstone introduced a new emphasis on dedicated government relations staff, to inform politicians and policy-makers about the legitimate needs for, and community benefits of, these new facilities.

In retrospect, he acknowledges these were all pieces of an ambitious game plan.

"When you look at that list, pretty much all of the activity of my presidency has been around those issues. And I think we've made considerable headway. Is our work done? Absolutely not. But I think we've made major progress as an institution."

As of July 1, Lightstone will begin an administrative leave before returning to re-immersing himself in his research as a historian and anthropologist in religion.

He says it's too soon to know what he feels best about, looking back at the past decade. Then he pauses before concluding the thought.

"Some of these things of which the University ought to be proud are in bricks and mortar, but many other things are not reflected in bricks and mortar.

"I really, truly believe that we offer one of the best student experiences for a mid-sized university in Canada, and I think one of the keys to that is how we've embraced a whole range of opportunities in experiential learning, from highly formalized to much less formalized."

*Kevin Cavanagh is Brock's Director of Communications and Public Affairs.*



*Jack Lightstone cuts the ribbon during the grand opening of the MIWSFPA.*



*Wendy Cukier*

## Cukier is first alum and first woman named to top Brock job

By Kevin Cavanagh

When Jack Lightstone steps down as Brock President, his successor will be the first Brock graduate and the first woman to hold the University's highest office.

Wendy Cukier was announced in December as Brock's next President and Vice-Chancellor, following a year-long search. She begins her presidency on Sept. 6.

A renowned researcher, scholar and social justice advocate, Cukier is currently Ryerson University's Vice-President Research and Innovation.

Cukier received her BA in History and English from Brock ('77), her Master's in History and an MBA from University of Toronto, and her PhD in Management Science from York University. She also has honorary degrees from Laval University and Concordia University.

"It's like coming home," Cukier said after her appointment was announced. "We will build on Brock's strengths, expand its partnerships and enhance its reputation, its reach and its impact."

At Ryerson, Cukier helped grow research funding by 50 per cent over the past five years, and in her previous role as Associate Dean of the Ted Rogers School of Management, she led the launch of the MBA and successful AACSB accreditation.

Her community and academic work has been widely recognized, and her awards include the Governor-General's Meritorious Cross, one of Canada's highest civilian honours.



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06

# The many roles of a President

Scenes from a decade: Throughout his time as President, Jack Lightstone was a tireless ambassador for the University, attending countless events on and off campus to promote Brock and connect with the community.



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# Financial awards help students realize their dreams

By Erin Court

Every year, Student Awards and Financial Aid at Brock University help students achieve their goals of attending university and earning a degree.

Determined to be successful recipients, these students work hard volunteering in their communities, applying themselves academically and dedicating time researching the best scholarships, awards and bursaries available.

As a recipient of the Bertha and Bernard Harrison Scholarship in Social Science, current first-year student Mahra Fortune made the decision to attend Brock after participating in campus tours and speaking with recruitment staff.

"The generous contribution made by Brock's donors will be applied towards my first-year tuition and will assist in funding my university education. It's incredibly rewarding to have your hard work recognized," says Fortune.

The generosity of Brock donors, alumni, employees and community members has contributed to advanced research, an enhanced student learning experience, the expansion of our facilities and the creation of new student awards and bursaries.



**Thank you to The Joyce Foundation for their \$2.5-million gift to support student bursaries at Brock University.**



**This generous gift will fund undergraduate tuition for students in financial need. We are extremely grateful for this support, which will help our students achieve their academic goals.**



# Goodman expansion is serious business

By Kevin Cavanagh and Erica Bajer

The \$22-million expansion of Brock University's Goodman School of Business is expected to start this summer. It's a transformation that will increase the footprint of the prestigious business school on Brock's campus and give a boost to its recruitment efforts.

"The expansion is student-focused with leading-edge education space," says Barry Wright, Goodman's Interim Dean. "Business education is growing across Canada and we have outpaced most other business schools in growth."

That popularity is a driving force behind the expansion.

"The programs offered by the Goodman School of Business are in high demand with students, to the point that the existing building isn't meeting our needs," says Brock President Jack Lightstone. "This expansion will expand our capacity and is going to reflect the quality of education Brock University students are getting."

**"We will have everything we would have had in a new building with the added bonus of keeping our central location on campus."**

**Barry Wright**

With +VG Architects and Cooper Construction Limited selected as the architect and construction manager, respectively, the design phase is now almost complete.

Using an innovative blend of new construction and major

upgrades of existing space, the project will grow Goodman from its current 50,237 sq. ft. to more than 77,000 sq. ft.

Besides delivering modern facilities and technology, the initiative will also give the University a new landmark that reinforces the Isaac Brock Plaza area as the vibrant heart of campus.

The end result will have a big impact on the experience for Goodman's 2,900 undergrads and 520 graduate students, says Wright.

"This is about giving Goodman students a better advantage in launching their careers," says Wright. "Yes, the architecture will be beautiful, but importantly this project brings a new generation of teaching and learning facilities that are truly state-of-the-art."

Some of the major amenities will include:

- a new, expanded Bloomberg research lab;
- six new classrooms, including flexible classrooms;
- five dedicated interview rooms with the fixtures and technology to support prospective employers as they meet students; and
- a new, larger boardroom to accommodate Faculty planning sessions, meetings with supporters from off-campus, etc.

"We will have everything we would have had in a new building with the added bonus of keeping our central location on campus," Wright says.

The most visually defining feature will be the two-storey glass "engagement atrium" at the west end of the complex. Serving as both a work/meeting space for students, and a venue for Goodman events or presentations, the atrium will be a striking foyer looking out on the iconic sculpture of Maj. Gen. Sir Isaac Brock.

Taro Hall's nine current classrooms will be extensively renovated with new floors, ceilings, furniture, accessibility, lighting and





Artist's renderings of the Goodman School of Business expansion. Top: a bird's eye view of the campus transformation. Inset: the planned engagement atrium.

technology, and all existing offices and spaces will either be renovated or refreshed with new flooring and fixtures.

MBA student Neil Bourque, (BBA '14) has spent the last five years studying business at Brock.

"I've seen the school grow from the Faculty of Business to the Goodman School of Business," he says.

The transformation of the business school will build on Goodman's identity and reputation for current and future students, he says.

"It's going to change the landscape of the school and it will definitely change how proud we are of it," he says. "It says to students 'We are investing in our students and we want to provide them with the best tools we can.'"

Bourque, president of the Graduate Business Council, had input in the design and helped give a student's perspective on space and technology.

He said the advanced technology being put into the classrooms, improved use of space and expanded footprint will add to the Goodman experience.

Ken Klassen, (BAdmin '87) a Business Operations Professor who is the Project Lead for the Goodman project, says the first stage will be completing all new construction by Spring 2017.

That will allow staff and students to vacate the current Taro Hall in scheduled phases, as the original facility is reconfigured and modernized.

Klassen said the schedule will be planned to minimize the impact of construction activity on daily activities. The completion date for the entire project is summer 2018.

The University has raised about 85 per cent of the project's cost, and is undertaking a donor campaign to raise the remaining \$3 million.

So far the project has received \$10 million from the Ontario government, as well as generous support from The Goodman Family Foundation; BMO; KPMG; Wormald, Masse Keen and Lopinski LLP; Cooper Wealth Management; and from the Co-op Accounting Class of 1984, the first-ever graduates of what has become one of Brock's most successful and sought-after programs.

For more information on how to donate to the Goodman School of Business project, please contact Jana Boniferro at [jboniferro@brocku.ca](mailto:jboniferro@brocku.ca) or 905-688-5550 x5902.

*Kevin Cavanagh is Brock's Director of Communications and Public Affairs. Erica Bajer is a writer/editor in Brock's Office of Marketing and Communications.*

# Cheechoo uses her voice to empower



Shirley Cheechoo

By Erica Bajer

Shirley Cheechoo grew up believing her voice didn't matter. It was a message literally beaten into her during her years at residential schools.

Ripped from her family and physically, sexually and emotionally abused, Cheechoo was forced to be "more white."

At 63, her life is coming full circle – from growing up at the mercy of a school system aimed at dehumanizing and marginalizing First Nations people to being named Chancellor of Brock University, an institution committed to forwarding Indigenous issues and education.

Cheechoo was installed as Brock's eighth Chancellor during fall convocation Oct. 17. She is the first woman and first Indigenous person to fill the ceremonial leadership role. To her, it's confirmation that her voice is indeed important. That she is worth listening to.

"An opportunity such as being chancellor tells me 'You have a voice that needs to be heard,'" she says. "Getting to be honoured as Chancellor of Brock University is a step towards my healing."

The path to healing is one she's been on since Grade 8. It's endless and riddled with roadblocks.

"My life was not easy," Cheechoo told graduates during an inspirational and emotional address at Brock's fall Convocation ceremony. "I have struggled and overcome so many obstacles and every day I forge ahead."

At the age of six, the proud Cree girl spoke her native tongue and lived with her family in Moose Factory near James Bay.

But, an idyllic childhood safe in the arms of her loving parents was not to be. She was native and native children were taken from their homes and placed in residential schools. Schools that taught them through shame and condemnation how to shed their Indigenous ways and be "more white." This was often done

through systematic cruelty and abuse.

Like so many Indigenous children in Canada, Cheechoo didn't escape the residential school system unscathed. To this day, she is dealing with the trauma she suffered during her seven years in residential schools.

"I was sexually, emotionally and physically abused," Cheechoo says, her words coming out slow and sad as if they are hard to voice.

**"They were moving students around so that they could break down the family."**

**Shirley Cheechoo**

Cheechoo was ripped from her parents' care and put into Moose Factory Indian Residential School (later called Bishop Horden Hall) near her home before being moved to Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford and then Shingwauk Indian Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie.

"They were moving students around so that they could break down the family."

Four of her siblings were also taken from their parents and put in the residential school system. The kids did not get to stay together.

She remembers how hard it was when the family was reunited, the awkwardness of getting to know each other again, the relief to be back together and the inevitable moment when they were once again separated.

"There's a lot of things you block out," Cheechoo says. "That's how you learn to survive."

Cheechoo was good at hiding her emotional scars. She knew how to shut down. Shut off.

Then at 18 she met her mentor, the late Tom Peltier, through the Manitou Arts Foundation he founded to introduce Indigenous youth to the arts.

Art brought her back to life.

"I connected to the theatre the most because it kind of tapped into my inner self," she says. "I was so messed up back then that it helped me heal."

Growing up in residential schools, Cheechoo and the other students were forced to turn their backs on their Indigenous roots. They were told to abandon their languages, traditions and spiritual beliefs.

"I was being told that I had to be a white person," she says. But, when she was out of the schools she realized that wasn't possible. "I did not fit in the white world."

She found herself by portraying others on stage.

"Acting was a healing place for me. I could play a character and that helped me break from my own shell. It broke the barrier. Playing characters helped me open up."

Cheechoo has won international acclaim for stage work and films shaped by her First Nations background, including honours at the Sundance Film Festival and the American Indian Film Festival.

Her 2013 film *Moose River Crossing* examines the scars left on several characters who — like Cheechoo herself — are survivors of the residential school system.

The work she is most proud of is her one-woman show *Path With No Moccasins*, an autobiographical play she wrote about growing up in residential schools and the effects of racial discrimination on her life.

Cheechoo plans to write another autobiographical work, this time about the pain and trauma of reliving the childhood abuse. In the months leading up to her testimony in front of an adjudicator in February 2014, all of her old wounds reopened. Cheechoo had nightmares and flashbacks. She developed

an ulcer. She had to revisit the abuse as part of the Indian Residential Schools Adjudication Secretariat's independent assessment process — an out-of-court compensation procedure for people who were sexually or physically harmed in residential schools.

"It was a horrible experience, I might as well have been raped again," she recalls.

"Now there are days when I can't move forward, something will happen and it takes me back to the hearing."

Today Cheechoo lives on Manitoulin Island with her husband of 37 years, Dr. Blake Debassige. She has a son Nano and five-year-old granddaughter Nako. She is executive director at Weengushk Film Institute on Manitoulin, a not-for-profit film and television-centred training centre that helps Indigenous and at-risk youths develop career skills or return to school. This pursuit also helps Cheechoo face her past and the future.

She welcomes her new role at Brock and has challenged the University to be a leader in Indigenous education. She pointed to recommendations out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report that speak of the need for increased education about First Nations history, including information about residential schools and the legacy left behind.

"I took this position to make a difference and I worked hard to move beyond old racial wounds."

She says racism against Indigenous people continues to be a serious problem in Canada.

Cheechoo is looking to the students at Brock to be the leaders who change things for the better.

"I want the students to walk away and not ignore the challenges we face in this country like poverty, unemployment and racism."

*Erica Bajer is a writer/editor in Brock's Office of Marketing and Communications.*



*Shirley Cheechoo and her siblings from left: Linda Wesley Rickard, Una Cheechoo, Bentley Cheechoo, sister-in law Jane Cheechoo, Shirley Cheechoo and Greta Cheechoo.*



Nicolina Lanni

By Erica Bajer

It was the people and their stories that captivated Nicolina Lanni.

What they lost. What they found. How they connected. In her first feature documentary film *Lost & Found*, the Brock University grad shares the stories of Japanese people who survived a devastating tsunami and the beachcombers half a world away who helped pick up the pieces.

"It's about people and very personal, human stories," says Lanni (BA '05). "It was so clearly such a beautiful story and once it was in front of us, there was no way we were not going to tell it."

An estimated 25-million tonnes of wreckage from Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami is drifting across the Pacific Ocean, often washing up on North America's shores. Filming took Lanni and her creative partner John Choi to Alaska, Washington, British Columbia and Japan.

**"Our film really focuses on the specific stories of friendship and these really unlikely relationships forged in the aftermath."**

**Nicolina Lanni**

Lanni says the debris is more than just trash, it's remnants of the lives of the 20,000 people lost to the waves and the loved ones they left behind.

The film follows the stories of beachcombers, scientists and government officials coming together to collect all that was

## Documentary maker's love of storytelling began at Brock

lost, and reunite the items with their rightful owners in Japan.

"We didn't really focus on the disaster or the aftermath," Lanni says. "Our film really focuses on the specific stories of friendship and these really unlikely relationships forged in the aftermath."

One of the friendships the film explores is between Alaskans David and Yumi Baxter and a woman they met in Japan after finding a yellow buoy wash up in Alaska. Sakiko Miura lost everything in the tsunami including the restaurant she ran with her late husband Keigo.

The Baxters reunited Miura with a buoy with the character for Kei (short for Keigo) painted on it, which used to hang outside of her restaurant in a coastal town called Minamisanriku.

"The fact that the Kei buoy came back makes me think that my husband's soul is in it," Miura says in the documentary. The meaning of objects and our connection to them is explored throughout *Lost & Found*.

The filmmakers made links that will last a lifetime, Choi says.

"The people in our film are all incredibly close to us still. It's a family," he says. "*Lost & Found* is really about taking that leap of faith and the unlikeliness of people coming together from around the world and connecting."

Lanni says the work she did while making the film is drawn from her experiences at Brock, where she studied theatre and women's studies.

It was at Brock that she started interviewing people and storytelling as part of a form of verbatim theatre called Collective Creation - when a group comes together, writes, collaborates and performs. She did it in Africa after graduation. "We would go into a town, talk to people and create a show and perform it for the community," she says.

After working in journalism for a time, Lanni switched to filmmaking and works as a director and producer in film and broadcast television including programming for The History Channel, Discovery Channel and Shaw Media.

*Lost & Found* was commissioned by Shaw Communications alongside NHK Enterprises in Japan and SBS in Australia. Lanni says they also received the Hot Docs Shaw Completion Fund and the film had its theatrical premier at the Hot Docs Bloor Cinema in March for the fifth anniversary of the tsunami.

For more information on the film and where to see it visit [www.lostandfoundthefilm.ca](http://www.lostandfoundthefilm.ca)

Lanni and Choi, who have a company called Frank Films, are currently working on a documentary about sinkholes.

*Erica Bajer is a writer/editor in Brock's Office of Marketing and Communications.*



**Abdul R Rahimi**

MBA candidate ('16)

Pharmaceutical manager in UK  
who chose Goodman to do his MBA

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# The last word

Chris Critelli



Jan. 20, 2016: Chris Critelli holds the trophy that has been named *The Critelli Cup* in her honour.

I was 17 when I tried out for my first basketball team. In cut-off jean shorts, my brother's Brock Summer League t-shirt, work socks and my new \$3 pair of PF Flyers, I had no idea that my life would change on that basketball court.

I never could have dreamed that tryout would lead me to the Olympics, a professional team and a career that this year culminated in one of the greatest honours of my life — my name forever engraved on a championship cup.

It's overwhelming to think about.

I'll never forget the look on Jack Donohue's face, the head coach of Team Canada, when I walked on to his court looking like a vagabond waif.

That day, he told me I was terrible at basketball. He followed up by saying I was one of the best athletes he'd seen and asked me if I wanted to learn the game.

I responded with a huge grin and nodded.

He said, "Chris, one day you will be one of the best basketball players in the country, maybe even the world."

Two short years later and I was at the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in Montreal. I was walking on air. The feeling is impossible to describe. I remember Pierre Elliot Trudeau waving at us. The Queen of England was sitting beside him.

The roar of the fans reached a crescendo as Canada entered the venue, the last country to march in.

Forty years later — more than 33 of them at Brock — and an honour rivaling the Olympics came my way.

Having the Ontario University Athletics Women's Basketball Championship Trophy named *The Critelli Cup* left me feeling overwhelmed and humbled. I was absolutely blown away when I found out it was happening. It is truly one of the most prestigious honours I have ever received.

After the career I've had, both on and off the court, I know that anything is possible.

I tell my players to dream big and be willing to work hard. Even if your dreams don't come true, people will admire you for your work ethic and passion.



Chris Critelli takes a shot during Team Canada's 1979 game against Brazil during the Pan American Games.

## Critelli's name a winner

The most prestigious trophy in Ontario university women's basketball was renamed to honour a Brock University and Canadian basketball legend.

The Ontario University Athletics championship trophy is now called the *Critelli Cup* in recognition of Brock's Assistant Athletic Director Chris Critelli. The 59-year-old former Olympian calls it an "amazing honour."

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