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Penn's 2026 Commencement Speaker and Other Honorary Degree Recipients

Vice President and University Secretary Medha Narvekar has announced that historian, bestselling author, and scholar Michael Beschloss will deliver the 2026 University of Pennsylvania Commencement address on Monday, May 18, at Franklin Field.

"I am extremely pleased that Michael Beschloss, one of our nation's most important historians, will be addressing the Class of 2026 at Commencement," said Penn President J. Larry Jameson. "In his highly successful, decades-long career as author and media contributor, Mr. Beschloss has pursued the study of leadership and educated us all on many important historical figures. His scholarly research, writing, and insights offer an indispensable source of knowledge for better understanding the past and appreciating how it shapes the present and future. As we celebrate our country's 250th anniversary of independence, we look forward to his perspectives and guidance for the centuries ahead."

The other 2026 Penn honorary degree recipients will be Carolyn Bertozzi, James Corner, Claudia Goldin, and Ann Hobson Pilot.

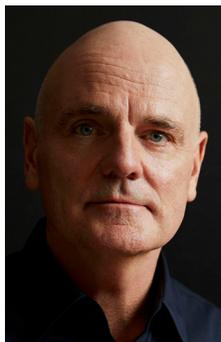
"We are excited to welcome five eminent individuals to this year's Commencement, including historian Michael Beschloss, who will present the keynote address to our graduates and guests," said Julie Platt, chair of the Trustee Honorary Degrees and Awards Committee. "Our honorary degree awardees have made stellar contributions to their respective fields—history, economics, music, science, and landscape architecture. We are thrilled to honor them as shining examples of the values that



Michael Beschloss



Carolyn Bertozzi



James Corner



Claudia Goldin



Ann Hobson Pilot

Penn holds dear, including curiosity, discovery, and the pursuit of a better future for all."

Event details, including how to view the event online, are available on Penn's [2026 Commencement page](#).

Additional Information About the Commencement Speaker and All Honorary Degree Recipients on Page 3

Horizons: A New Vision for the Future of Penn Arts & Sciences

The School of Arts & Sciences has released *SAS Horizons: Pathways for a Changing World*, a vision document that articulates the school's purpose and approach. In alignment with Penn's strategic framework *In Principle and Practice*, the new blueprint offers a focused set of priorities and actions. *Horizons* comes at a time of immense external pressure on institutions of higher learning. "Right now, we're facing a moment of significant change, both in society broadly and for higher education specifically," said Mark Trodden, Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences and the Thomas S. Gates, Jr. Professor of Physics & Astronomy. "We needed a clearly articulated, exciting, forward-looking update for the school that allows us to get going

and take on exciting challenges quickly."

From the start, Dean Trodden included in the process communities that care about and have a vested interest in Penn Arts & Sciences. Over the past six months, he met with every department and a number of special faculty committees. Dean Trodden also gathered input from undergraduates, graduate students, and staff, in addition to speaking extensively with alums. His intent: to create the space for deep, engaged discussions about the school's larger role at the University, within our communities, and beyond.

Those conversations helped clarify where the school is today and where it can go, along *(continued on page 2)*

Colleen O'Neill: Vice President for Finance and Treasurer

Colleen O'Neill has been named vice president for finance and treasurer of the University of Pennsylvania, effective April 13, 2026. The appointment was announced on February 26, 2026 by Executive Vice President Mark Dingfield, following a national search that attracted a highly competitive pool of candidates from a variety of backgrounds.



Colleen O'Neill

"Colleen brings a unique blend of strategic vision, analytical rigor, and operational expertise, as well as an ability to build trusted, collaborative partnerships," said Executive Vice President Dingfield. "Just as important, she has deep respect for Penn's academic mission and for the people who carry it forward every day. Her demonstrated financial judgment and steady, forward-thinking leadership will help us steward resources responsibly and sustain our capacity to advance Penn's priorities and ambitions."

As vice president for finance and treasurer, Ms. O'Neill will serve as the primary steward of the University's financial assets and lead key financial functions across Penn. She will also partner closely with Penn Medicine leadership in the management of its finances. Ms. O'Neill will have executive oversight of a broad portfolio of units critical to the effective stewardship of Penn's financial resources, including:

- The Comptroller's Office
- Finance and Treasury
- Financial Systems and Training
- Global Support Services
- Procurement Services
- The Office of Research Services
- The Office of Risk Management and Insurance, and
- Student Registration and Financial Services

Ms. O'Neill has served as chief operating and financial officer of the Wharton School since July 2023. In this capacity, she has led financial operations, strategic financial planning, facilities and operations, capital projects, information technology, human resources, and Wharton Research Data Services. Through *(continued on page 2)*

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From the Faculty Senate Office

The following is published in accordance with the Faculty Senate Rules. Among other purposes, the publication of SEC actions is intended to stimulate discussion among the constituencies and their representatives. Please communicate your comments to Patrick Walsh, executive assistant to the Senate Office, by email at senate@pobox.upenn.edu.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Financial Update and Budget Planning. Mark Dingfield, Executive Vice President, and Trevor Lewis, Interim Vice President for Finance & Treasurer and Vice President of the Office of Budget Planning & Analysis, presented an overview of Penn's financial position, internal and external factors influencing its finances, and future projections.

Update from the Division of Public Safety. Kathleen Shields Anderson, Vice President for the Division of Public Safety; Amy Gadsden, Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives; and Sean Burke, Associate General Counsel, discussed safety issues regarding international students on campus. Penn community members are encouraged to contact Penn Police at (215) 573-3333 if they feel uncomfortable or threatened by anyone who approaches them on campus.

Report from the Tri-Chairs. Faculty Senate Chair Kathy Brown announced that a second faculty-wide structured conversation will be held on March 26 with the goal of gaining a better understanding of shared challenges across schools. Attendance will not be kept, and all faculty (regardless of rank or track) are welcomed to participate by RSVPing to the Senate Office.

Reports from Constituencies. Professor Goli Mostoufi-Moab reported on behalf of the PSOM Department of Pediatrics, which is among the largest and most research-intensive pediatrics departments nationally. The department currently employs more than 600 faculty across all tracks. Its mission areas include accelerating discovery through research, advancing equity in children's health, and ensuring lifelong health for its patients. The department hosts 400 residents and fellows across 55 accredited programs, all of which emphasize physician-scientist and clinician-educator development.

Colleen O'Neill: Vice President for Finance and Treasurer

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careful expense management and revenue optimization, she facilitated the largest operating margin in Wharton's history, enabling transformational investments in capital projects and strategic priorities.

Beyond strengthening Wharton's financial position, Ms. O'Neill has driven major operational and strategic initiatives. She orchestrated the upcoming relocation of Wharton's San Francisco operations to the Cube in the city's Financial District, doubling the school's footprint and upgrading its facilities to maximize engagement with both Wharton and local communities. She also oversaw core investments in Wharton's technical systems and capabilities that enabled the launch of the Global WEMBA cohort, Wharton's first hybrid degree program.

Earlier in her tenure, Ms. O'Neill held several leadership roles at Wharton, including executive director of Wharton Customer Analytics and director of the Wharton Global Consulting Practicum.

Commending Ms. O'Neill on her appointment, Wharton Dean Erika James said, "Colleen has been an invaluable strategic partner on all financial matters, deftly managing the school's resources to enable us to make generational investments in faculty, students, and facilities that drive innovation and excellence. It should come as no surprise to see a talented Wharton graduate guiding the fiscal priorities of one of the world's most complex and influential institutions. I'm pleased to see her myriad skills and long-standing dedication recognized by her promotion into this important role."

"Philadelphia and Penn have shaped me in lasting ways, both professionally and personally," said Ms. O'Neill. "I'm deeply grateful to be part of this community and honored to step into a role with even greater responsibility in advancing our mission."

Ms. O'Neill holds an MBA from Wharton's Executive MBA program, as well as an MPA, MSED, and a BA in history, all from Penn.

From the Office of the Provost

2026-2027 Faculty Innovation Fund Call for Proposals

The Office of the Provost announces a call for proposals for the Faculty Innovation Fund, which provides financial support for innovative projects that enhance the recruitment, retention, career development, and well-being of Penn faculty. It is funded by the Office of the Provost and administered by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty.

The Faculty Innovation Fund advances Penn's strategic commitment to growing opportunity and strengthening affinity by supporting projects that:

- Improve the recruitment, retention, career progression, mentorship, leadership development, and/or well-being of Penn faculty;
- Promote collaboration across schools, disciplines, and/or departments; and
- Generate insights that can be used to improve Penn's faculty-related policies and practices.

Proposals must include a one-to-one match between the school and the Office of the Provost. The maximum award per grant is \$10,000.

Proposals are due by Friday, April 17, 2026.

Please see the complete [call for proposals](#) for more information. Questions can be addressed to [Colleen McEntee](#) in the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty.

Members of the University community are invited to bring topics for consideration to the

University Council Open Forum

Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 4 p.m.
Hall of Flags, Houston Hall

A PennCard is required to attend University Council meetings.

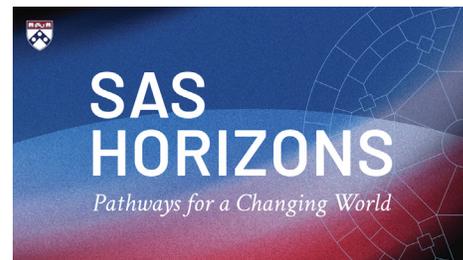
PennCard holders who want to be assured of speaking at Open Forum must submit a request to the Office of the University Secretary (ucouncil@pobox.upenn.edu) by 10 a.m. on Monday, March 16, 2026, briefly indicating the subject of the intended remarks. Speakers' statements are limited to three minutes and should be framed to present topics of general University interest and be directed to University Council as a body through the moderator, and not directed to an individual.

Those who have not submitted a timely request to the Office of the University Secretary will be permitted to speak at the discretion of the moderator of University Council if time remains after the registered speakers.

For the meeting format and guidelines for remarks, please consult the University Council website at <https://secretary.upenn.edu/univ-council/open-forum>.

The Office of the University Secretary can be contacted at ucouncil@pobox.upenn.edu or (215) 898-7005.

—Office of the University Secretary



A New Vision for the Future of Penn Arts & Sciences

(continued from page 1)

with solidifying a set of guiding principles and foundational commitments. Three overarching priorities—affirming the School of Arts & Sciences as Penn's intellectual core; cultivating human creativity, judgment, and inquiry; and educating for complexity—followed from there, along with a set of coordinating pathways for action. Work is already underway in many areas including climate change, democracy, human health and well-being, artificial intelligence, the humanities, and global engagement.

Together, the commitments and actions laid out in *Horizons* will help the school navigate a changing world with clarity and intention.

"Every one of us in higher ed is completely realistic about the obstacles in front of us in today's world," Dean Trodden said. "But you should not lose sight of what a remarkable position we're in. We may face challenges, but Penn Arts & Sciences is a truly wondrous place. We have an important role to play in solving these problems—and we now have a clear path to follow as we do so."

To read the full text of *SAS Horizons: Pathways for a Changing World*, visit <https://web.sas.upenn.edu/horizons/>.

Commencement 2026: Speaker and Honorary Degree Recipient Biographies

Michael Beschloss

Michael Beschloss is an award-winning historian, scholar of leadership, and author whose most recent book, *Presidents of War: The Epic Story, from 1807 to Modern Times*, was a *New York Times* bestseller published in 2018.

Mr. Beschloss's first book, *Kennedy and Roosevelt*, was published when he was 24 years old. Mr. Beschloss is also the author of *Presidential Courage*, *The Conquerors*, and *The Crisis Years*, among others, and he was the first to explore the private tapes made by President Lyndon Johnson. He chronicled them in two volumes, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963–1964*, and *Reaching for Glory: Lyndon Johnson's Secret White House Tapes, 1964–1965*.

Born in Chicago, Mr. Beschloss is an alumnus of Phillips Academy, Williams College, where he graduated with highest honors in political science, and the Harvard Business School, where he studied leadership. He serves as NBC News presidential historian and as a PBS contributor and has held appointments in history at the Smithsonian Institution, St. Antony's College (Oxford) and the Harvard Russian Research Center. Mr. Beschloss has served on the boards of the National Archives Foundation, the White House Historical Association, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, and the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

Mr. Beschloss has received honorary degrees from Lafayette College and Williams College and has received the National Archives Foundation's annual Records of Achievement Award, the Order of Lincoln from the State of Illinois, the Founders Award of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Ambassador Book Award, and the Harry S. Truman Public Service Award. In addition, he won an Emmy Award for his role in the 2004 Discovery Channel TV series *Decisions That Shook the World*, for which he served as chief scholar and host.

Mr. Beschloss will receive an honorary Doctor of Letters.

Carolyn Bertozzi

Carolyn Bertozzi is the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor of Chemistry and a professor of chemical and systems biology and radiology (by courtesy) at Stanford University, and an investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. She founded the field of bioorthogonal chemistry, for which she shared the 2022 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Dr. Bertozzi's research interests span the disciplines of chemistry and biology with an emphasis on developing new therapeutic modalities that target disease-related glycobiology. Her group has invented targeted enzyme therapeutics for immune oncology, Lysosome Targeting Chimeras (LYTACs) for extracellular targeted protein degradation, antibody-lectin chimeras (AbLecs) for therapeutic applications, and site-specific bioconjugation methods for synthesis of next-gen antibody-drug conjugates. Dr. Bertozzi's lab has also developed glycoproteomics technologies for disease biomarker discovery, point-of-care diagnostics for tuberculosis, and ultrasensitive antibody detection methods that are being used to diagnose early onset diabetes and viral infections. Her academic work has launched 12 co-founded biotechnology companies.

Dr. Bertozzi has been recognized with many honors and awards. She is an elected member of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Inventors, and American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In addition to the Nobel Prize, she received the Welch Award in Chemistry, Heineken Prize for Biochemistry and Biophysics, Lemelson-MIT Prize, and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Dr. Bertozzi joined the UC Berkeley faculty in 1996. In June 2015, she joined the faculty at Stanford University coincident with the launch of Stanford's Sarafan ChEM-H Institute.

Dr. Bertozzi will receive an honorary Doctor of Sciences.

James Corner

James Corner is a world-renowned landscape architect, urban designer, educator, and author who has revolutionized the concept of public spaces, bringing people together to enjoy them in cities around the world. He is best known for creating New York's High Line, a once-abandoned elevated railway that he transformed into an urban promenade and garden. Drawing some eight million visitors each year, the High Line has inspired a global trend of repurposing infrastructure. Some of Mr. Corner's other projects include Seattle's Central Waterfront; San Francisco's Presidio Tunneltops; Chicago's Navy Pier; and Hong Kong's Victoria Dockside.

Mr. Corner is the founding partner of Field Operations, a global design studio based in New York City, devoted to the design of dynamic urban public spaces and environments. His work has been recognized with the prestigious International Federation of Landscape Architects' Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe Award for Excellence (2024); the ASLA National Design Medal (2023); the Richard Neutra Award for Design Excellence (2023); the American Academy of Arts & Letters Award in Architecture (2011); and the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award (2010), among many others. A distinguished theorist and writer, Mr. Corner's seminal books include *The High Line: Foreseen/Unforeseen*; *The Landscape Imagination*; and *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*. His work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Royal Society of Art, London; and the Venice Biennale.

Mr. Corner is a professor emeritus of landscape architecture and urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design, where he served on the faculty beginning in 1990, and as professor and chairman from 2000–2013. He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Mr. Corner will receive an honorary Doctor of Arts.

Claudia Goldin

Claudia Goldin is the Samuel W. Morris University Professor and Henry Lee Professor of Economics at Harvard University. She was awarded the 2023 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences "for having advanced our understanding of women's labour market outcomes." An economic historian and a labor economist, Dr. Goldin was the director of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Development of the American Economy program from 1989 to 2017 and is currently co-director of the NBER Gender in the Economy group. Most of Dr. Goldin's research interprets the present through the lens of the past and explores the origins of issues of current concern including economic inequality, the role of technological change, women's rights, the gender gap in earnings, immigration, and higher education. She is the author of many books including: *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women*, *The Race Between Education and Technology*, and *Career & Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity*.

Dr. Goldin was the President of the American Economic Association and of the Economic History Association. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Philosophical Society, and a fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the Society of Labor Economists. Dr. Goldin received the Erwin Plein Nemmers Prize in Economics in 2020 and the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in 2019. She enjoys teaching students at all levels and has received many teaching awards. Originally from the Bronx, Dr. Goldin received her BA from Cornell University and her PhD from the University of Chicago. She is an outdoor enthusiast and a bird-watcher.

Dr. Goldin will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws.

Ann Hobson Pilot

Ann Hobson Pilot is an internationally renowned harpist who played with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) for 40 years. A Philadelphia native, Ms. Pilot studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music before joining the BSO in 1969 and becoming its principal harpist in 1980. She was the BSO's first Black principal player, and the first female Black principal at any major orchestra.

Ms. Pilot has performed with many American orchestras as soloist, as well as with orchestras in Europe, New Zealand, South Africa, and Argentina. In 1997, she traveled to South Africa to record a video documentary, *A Musical Journey*, sponsored by the Museum of Afro-American History and public radio station WGBH. While in South Africa, Ms. Pilot performed with the National Symphony Orchestra. Her recordings include both solo and ensemble performances.

The story of Ms. Pilot's life and her contributions is told in *A Harpist's Legacy: Ann Hobson Pilot and the Sound of Change*, a documentary that has aired on PBS stations nationwide.

A longtime teacher and mentor, Ms. Pilot retired from the faculties of Boston University and The New England Conservatory of Music, where she taught from 1973 to 2013. She retired in 2021 as the Director of the Young Artists Harp Program for the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. Among her many awards, Ms. Pilot received the prestigious Gold Baton from the League of American Orchestras in 2016.

After retiring from the BSO in 2009, Ms. Pilot returned to the stage as a soloist, opening the seasons of the BSO and Carnegie Hall with the premiere of "On Willows and Birches, Concerto for Harp and Orchestra," written for her by legendary composer John Williams, who received an honorary degree from Penn in 2021.

Ms. Pilot will receive an honorary Doctor of Music.

Honors & Other Things

Timour Baslan: Damon Runyon-Rachleff Innovation Award

Timour Baslan, an assistant professor of biomedical sciences in Penn Vet, has received support from the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation for pioneering innovative approaches to discovering novel cancer therapies.

Dr. Baslan investigates the genetic and biological underpinnings of cancer, with a focus on a class of mutations known as copy number alterations. By integrating advanced sequencing technologies, computational analytics, and experimental cancer models, Dr. Baslan seeks to develop new strategies for early detection and therapeutic targeting. In his previous work, Dr. Baslan identified patterns by which the most aggressive cancers develop. His current work seeks to further expand the scientific understanding of how cancer genomes evolve in breast and pancreatic cancers, as well as in acute leukemias and sarcomas.

In 2024, the Forbeck Foundation named Dr. Baslan a Forbeck Scholar, making him part of a cohort of exceptionally accomplished, early-career cancer researchers. He also received the 2023 Tri-Institutional Breakout Prize for Junior Investigators, awarded by faculty from the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Rockefeller University, and Weill Cornell Medicine, and the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) NEXTGEN Star award.

The Damon Runyon-Rachleff Innovation Award supports early-career scientists who are pursuing high-risk, high-reward ideas with the potential to transform the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of cancer. The award is intended for projects in the early stages of investigation with the potential for significant impact in the cancer field.

Amanda Bettencourt: Fulbright Specialist Award

Penn Nursing's Amanda Bettencourt, an assistant professor in the department of family and community health, recently received a Fulbright Specialist Program award at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, where she has partnered with local faculty and health leaders to design and evaluate the implementation of advanced practice nursing (APRN) roles. While there, she conducted hospital site visits and led seminars for health system stakeholders, using her expertise in implementation science to shape future research and student training regarding the impact of APRNs on patient outcomes.

"My hope for this project is to create lasting partnerships between myself and other Penn Nursing colleagues and the UC Chile School of Nursing to shape the advanced practice nursing role and its implementation for maximum impact," said Dr. Bettencourt. "During my visit, I saw firsthand the significant impact that APRNs can have on patient outcomes, including mortality, and I welcome the opportunity to share my implementation science expertise and what we have learned from training decades of APRN

leaders at Penn Nursing to help make that happen."

The Fulbright Specialist program aims to exchange knowledge and establish partnerships that benefit participants, institutions, and communities in the U.S. and overseas through a variety of educational and training activities focused in public/global health. Dr. Bettencourt is one of over 400 U.S. award recipients who share expertise with host institutions abroad through the Fulbright Specialist Program each year. Recipients of Fulbright Specialist awards are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, their demonstrated leadership in their field, and their potential to foster long-term cooperation between institutions in the U.S. and abroad.

"The Fulbright Award is a gamechanger in creating an opportunity for international and cross-sector local leaders to come together and build a coalition around this important cause, and I am incredibly grateful for their support of this project, both for myself and the people of Chile," Dr. Bettencourt added.

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to build lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. It is funded through an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions, corporations, and foundations around the world also provide direct and indirect support to the program, which operates in over 160 countries worldwide.

Since its establishment in 1946, the Fulbright Program has given more than 400,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists, and scientists the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

Penn Engineering Awards 2025 Y-Prize to CarboWells

CarboWells has received the top award in the 2026 Y-Prize, Penn's annual innovation competition that challenges students to imagine powerful real-world applications for emerging technologies invented at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Y-Prize invites interdisciplinary teams from across Penn to compete by developing compelling business plans built around early-stage technologies from Penn Engineering researchers. The competition, now in its second decade, is jointly sponsored by the William and Phyllis Mack Institute for Innovation Management, Penn Engineering, Venture Lab, and the Penn Center for Innovation, and is designed to cultivate entrepreneurial thinking, collaboration and commercial strategy among students.

This year's competition revolved around a cutting-edge material: 3D-printed, carbon-capturing concrete structures, a breakthrough approach to construction materials that can both

form strong, self-supporting geometries and actively capture and store carbon dioxide, a critical step in addressing the environmental footprint of global building practices.

Developed by Shu Yang, the Joseph Bordogna Professor and chair of materials science and engineering, and colleagues in her lab, this technology combines advanced 3D printing with sustainable concrete formulations to create geometries that maximize carbon dioxide absorption without sacrificing strength or durability. Students were tasked with conceiving novel commercial or social applications for this sustainable construction material, imagining how it could reshape the way we build for the future while helping mitigate climate change.

After rigorous rounds of proposal submissions, expert review, and finalist pitches, CarboWells emerged as this year's top honoree, earning the team the \$15,000 Y-Prize grand award to turn their idea into reality. The team included Yash Iyer, W'29; Ronith Lahoti, CBE'29, C'29; Bhuranyu Mahajan, W'29; Yuki Qian, MSE'29, C'29; and Ali Altan Yilmaz, MSE'29, C'29.

With an estimated two million abandoned oil wells across the United States—including roughly 350,000 in Pennsylvania—aging infrastructure poses a significant environmental threat, as deteriorating concrete plugs can crack over time, allowing methane and other harmful gases to leak into soil and contaminate groundwater. While governments have committed billions of dollars to remediation, traditional plugging materials remain vulnerable to degradation.

"CarboWells is a 3D-printed, carbon-capturing concrete oil well-plugging service," said Mr. Lahoti. "We replace ordinary Portland cement with Dr. Yang's advanced cementitious technology to deliver higher strength, greater longevity and significantly lower gas permeability, reducing long-term remediation costs for the industry."

The team's plug incorporates diatomaceous earth, a naturally porous material that absorbs carbon dioxide; as CO₂ reacts within the concrete, it strengthens the structure over time. Inspired by pressure-distributing patterns found in nature, the team's internal design further resists cracking, resulting in a longer-lasting, more secure seal for aging wells that reduces the risk of future leakage.

"Penn Engineering taught me to think like a problem solver, not just someone who finds answers," said Mr. Lahoti. "Courses like CBE 1600 pushed me to see challenges at every scale, from large industrial systems to nanoscale innovations, and that mindset shaped how we approached Y-Prize. The support of faculty mentors like Dr. Osuji and Dr. Grundy was instrumental in refining our idea, and the collaborative spaces in Amy Gutmann Hall gave us a place to build, test, and iterate. Penn Engineering didn't just strengthen my technical skills; it made me a more entrepreneurial leader."

In addition to the winning team, the 2026 Y-Prize Grand Finale featured three exceptional groups who presented bold visions for applying the carbon-capturing concrete technology:

- Aeronyx—3D-printed TPMS concrete modules that replace plastic packing in scrubbers while integrating carbon capture to boost

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longevity and lower maintenance costs. The team included Sarah Ling, M&T'29; Pritika Kharkwal, W'29; Roy Kim, MSE'29; Richard Zhu, M&T'29; and Ajay Panday, M&T'29.

- HAVEN—A customizable concrete wave-energy dissipator that protects shorelines while fostering ecological growth. The team included Neha Bachu, MEAM'29, C'29; Andrew Luo, M&T'29; Varun Sridhar, M&T'29; and Shiven Taneja, M&T'29.
- Lattica—Carbon-capturing, 3D-printed façade panels for sustainable construction envelopes in data centers. The team included Dhairya Ameria, GEng'27; Melissa Liu, W'26, C'26; and Vicky Zolotar, MSE'26.

Each of this year's teams showcased how technology and creative student entrepreneurship from Penn Engineering can be reframed into vibrant commercial and social innovations.

Surbhi Goel: 2026 Sloan Research Fellow

Surbhi Goel, the Magerman Term Assistant Professor of Computer and Information Science (CIS) in Penn Engineering, has been named a

2026 Sloan Research Fellow, one of 126 early-career scholars across the United States and Canada selected. Sloan Research Fellowships are among the most competitive and esteemed awards available to rising scientists and scholars and are widely recognized as indicators of scientific creativity, impact and future leadership.



Surbhi Goel

Awarded annually since 1955 by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the fellowships support fundamental research by early-career faculty across chemistry, computer science, economics, mathematics, neuroscience and physics. Each fellow receives a two-year, \$75,000 award that may be used flexibly to advance their research.

"We are thrilled to see Surbhi recognized with this well-deserved honor," says Zachary Ives, the Adani President's Distinguished Professor and chair of CIS. "The Sloan Fellowship reflects not only her outstanding research accomplishments to date, but also her potential to shape the future of theoretical computer science and machine learning."

Dr. Goel is affiliated with the Theory Group, the ASSET Center on Safe, Explainable and Trustworthy AI Systems, and the Warren Center for Network and Data Sciences. Her work lies at the intersection of theoretical computer science and machine learning, with a focus on developing theoretical foundations for modern learning paradigms.

"My main research goal is to make AI systems trustworthy by developing the mathematical foundations to explain and predict their failures, provide guarantees that they remain reliable under novel conditions, and ensure that they can collaborate safely with humans," said

Dr. Goel. "This fellowship gives me the freedom to pursue this ambitious, long-horizon foundational work, and to build a research community at Penn focused on making AI not just powerful, but provably reliable and safe."

The Sloan Research Fellowships recognize early-career scholars whose creativity, innovation and research accomplishments distinguish them as leaders in their fields. More than 1,000 researchers are nominated each year by their scientific peers, and winners are selected by independent panels of senior scholars based on their research excellence and potential for future impact.

Louise Moncla: Ann Palmenberg Junior Investigator Award

Louise Moncla, an assistant professor of pathobiology in Penn Vet, has been recognized by the American Society for Virology for her contributions to understanding viral evolution and transmission with the Ann Palmenberg Junior Investigator Award.

Dr. Moncla leads a research program focused on how zoonotic viruses emerge and spread at the animal-human interface, with a current emphasis on highly pathogenic H5Nx avian influenza viruses. These avian viruses circulate naturally in wild migratory birds but are establishing persistent circulation in domestic poultry, increasing the risk of sporadic, potentially severe human infections. By combining computational analyses with genomic data and virologic validation, Dr. Moncla's lab seeks to uncover the ecological and evolutionary mechanisms driving viral emergence and transmission, aiming to improve surveillance, predictive modeling, and outbreak prevention strategies.

The Ann Palmenberg Junior Investigator Award recognizes Dr. Moncla's scholarship and growing influence in the field of virology. She also received the 2025 Zoetis Award for Veterinary Research Excellence. In 2024, the Pew Charitable Trusts named Dr. Moncla a Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences.

Samuel Parry: Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine Lifetime Achievement Award

Samuel Parry, the Franklin Payne Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Perelman School of Medicine and the department's vice chair for faculty affairs, has been awarded the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM)'s 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award.

The award honors "individuals who have made lasting, significant contributions to the field of maternal fetal medicine through research, education, leadership, and clinical excellence" according to SMFM. Sindhu K. Srinivas, president of the SMFM and a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Penn, gave the award to Dr. Parry at the annual SMFM Pregnancy Meeting in Las Vegas from February

8-13. Dr. Parry is the 37th recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Across decades of service to maternal-fetal medicine, Sam Parry has embodied the very best of academic medicine: rigorous scholarship, thoughtful leadership, and a deep commitment to improving outcomes for pregnant patients without ever seeking credit," Dr. Srinivas said. "His research has advanced the field in meaningful, lasting ways, shaping how clinicians think, how trainees learn, and how care is delivered. I'm incredibly grateful for his support as a fellow physician over the last 25 years. This award is extremely well deserved."

"Sam is a dynamic faculty leader, passionate mentor, and attentive clinician who has been a key member of our department since day one," said Elizabeth A. Howell, chair of the department of obstetrics and gynecology. "We are very proud of him and are thankful for his contributions to the department and our field."

Internationally recognized for his scientific impact, Dr. Parry has led a highly successful NIH-funded research program at Penn that is focused on viral infections and placental function, as well as the causes and prevention of preterm birth. He began a clinical fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine at Penn in 1994 and has worked at Penn ever since. Dr. Parry directs a March of Dimes-funded Prematurity Research Center and serves as a principal investigator in the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units (MFMU) network, contributing to pivotal studies that have shaped evidence-based clinical practice in obstetrics.

Beyond his scientific and clinical achievements, Dr. Parry has mentored scores of trainees and early-career investigators, fostering a culture defined by excellence, curiosity, and collaboration. As a former recipient of SMFM research support, he has been a driving force behind efforts to broaden SMFM's impact on the next generation and to cultivate a strong, sustainable pipeline of future physician-scientists.

Dr. Parry is also a member of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Gynecological and Obstetrical Society, the Philadelphia Perinatal Society, and the Society for Reproductive Investigation. He serves on the board of directors of the Foundation for SMFM.

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) is a professional organization that represents more than 6,000 physicians, researchers, nurses, and other specialists who are dedicated to improving outcomes for high-risk pregnancies. Founded in 1977, SMFM promotes excellence in clinical care, advances cutting-edge research in maternal-fetal health, and supports education and advocacy initiatives aimed at making pregnancies healthier worldwide. Through its annual pregnancy meeting, clinical guidelines, research awards, and public health leadership, SMFM serves as a central resource



Samuel Parry



Louise Moncla

(continued on page 7)

**Division of Public Safety
University of Pennsylvania Police Department Crime Report**

About the Crime Report: Below are the crimes against persons and/or crimes against property from the campus report for **February 16-22, 2026**. The crime reports are available at: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/sections/crimes>. Prior weeks' reports are also online. –Eds.

This summary is prepared by the Division of Public Safety (DPS) and contains all criminal incidents reported and made known to the Penn Police, including those reported to the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) that occurred within our patrol zone, for the dates of **February 16-**

22, 2026. The Penn Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30th Street to 43rd Street in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police.

In this effort to provide you with a thorough and accurate report on public safety concerns, we hope that your increased awareness will lessen the opportunity for crime. For any concerns or suggestions regarding this report, please call DPS at (215) 898-7297. You can view the daily crime log on the [DPS website](#).

Penn Police Patrol Zone

Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30th Street to 43rd Street

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	Description
<i>Assault</i>	02/17/26	3:04 PM	51 N 39th St	Patient made threats toward hospital staff
	02/19/26	3:55 PM	3800 Spruce St	Unknown offender verbally threatened complainant
	02/20/26	9:33 PM	34th & Walnut Sts	Report of an assault by a motorist after a verbal altercation
	02/20/26	11:07 PM	240 S 40th St	Verbal domestic assault reported inside complainant's place of work; offender left the area
<i>Auto Theft</i>	02/21/26	8:50 AM	3700 Chestnut St	Domestic assault; offender fled the area
	02/17/26	7:00 PM	4000 Spruce St	Theft of a parked motor vehicle from highway
<i>Bike Theft</i>	02/17/26	9:44 PM	215 S 39th St	Theft of secured bicycle from bike rack
<i>Burglary</i>	02/20/26	6:18 AM	3939 Chestnut St	Burglary in progress reported by witness/Arrest
	02/22/26	10:05 AM	20 S 40th St	Attempted burglary
<i>Other Offense</i>	02/16/26	5:23 PM	200 S 38th St	Domestic disturbance
<i>Retail Theft</i>	02/18/26	2:36 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol
	02/19/26	8:36 AM	4001 Walnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods
	02/21/26	1:21 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol; offender fled the area
<i>Theft from Building</i>	02/16/26	11:00 AM	3025 Walnut St	Sound equipment stolen from a secured location
<i>Theft Other</i>	02/20/26	5:40 PM	3720 Chestnut St	Pickpocketing
<i>Vandalism</i>	02/18/26	12:41 PM	3901 Locust Walk	Graffiti discovered on exterior wall by Penn security personnel

Philadelphia Police 18th District

Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18th District: 11 incidents were reported for **February 16-22, 2026** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	
<i>Aggravated Assault/Arrest</i>	02/19/26	10:15 PM	4507 Chester Ave	
<i>Aggravated Assault</i>	02/21/26	8:13 PM	4600 Blk Chestnut St	
<i>Assault</i>	02/17/26	11:24 AM	4116 Spruce St	
	02/18/26	12:45 AM	200 Blk S 33rd St	
	02/18/26	8:30 AM	4200 Blk Woodland Ave	
	02/19/26	8:26 PM	3744 Spruce St	
	02/20/26	11:38 PM	240 S 40th St	
	02/22/26	1:03 AM	132 S 48th St	
	02/22/26	9:54 PM	1334 S Melville St	
	<i>Rape</i>	02/16/26	9:37 AM	4200 Blk Baltimore Ave
		02/21/26	8:50 AM	3700 Blk Chestnut St

The Division of Public Safety offers resources and support to the Penn community. DPS has developed a few helpful risk reduction strategies outlined below. Know that it is *never* the fault of the person impacted (victim/survivor) by crime.

- See something concerning? Connect with Penn Public Safety 24/7 at (215) 573-3333.
- Worried about a friend's or colleague's mental or physical health? Get 24/7 connection to appropriate resources at (215) 898-HELP (4357).
- Seeking support after experiencing a crime? Call Special Services (support and advocacy resources) at (215) 898-4481 or email an advocate at specialservices@publicsafety.upenn.edu.
- Use the [Walking Escort](#) and [Riding](#) services available to you free of charge.
- Take a moment to update your cell phone information for the [UPennAlert Emergency Notification System](#).
- Download the [Penn Guardian App](#), which can help police better find your location when you call in an emergency.
- Access free [self-empowerment and defense courses](#) through Penn DPS.
- Stay alert and reduce distractions. (Using cell phones, ear buds, etc. may limit your awareness.)
- Orient yourself to your surroundings. (Identify your location, nearby exits, etc.)
- Keep your valuables out of sight and only carry necessary documents.

Honors & Other Things

(continued from page 5)

for clinicians caring for pregnant patients with complex medical needs.

Andy Tan: 2026 Fellow of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco

Annenberg School for Communication associate professor Andy Tan has been elected a 2026 fellow of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT).

SRNT fellows are selected for outstanding research contributions to nicotine and tobacco research, as well as for their dedication to advancing the field through leadership, mentoring, and the development of policy or practice regarding tobacco and nicotine products.

Dr. Tan directs the Health Communication & Equity Lab at Annenberg. His research examines the impact of marketing, media, and public health messaging on health behaviors and outcomes among diverse populations, including young adults, socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations. He has been published widely in peer-reviewed journals, and his scholarship and work have been cited in major news outlets, including CNN, *The Wall Street Journal*, and NBC News.

In March 2025, Dr. Tan testified before the Philadelphia City Council Committees on Public Safety and Public Health and Human Services on restricting youth access to nicotine and tobacco products.

The new class of SRNT fellows will be recognized at the SRNT 32nd Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland from March 4-7.

The Society for Research on Nicotine & Tobacco (SRNT) is the only professional association dedicated exclusively to the support of researchers, academics, treatment professionals, government employees, and the many others working across disciplines in the field of nicotine and tobacco research. With members in more than 40 countries, SRNT has a global reach.

Planning an Event? Email *Almanac*

If you or your department are mounting an exhibit, orchestrating a concert, planning a play, or showing a film, let *Almanac* know so it can be included in the monthly AT PENN calendar! *Almanac*'s monthly AT PENN calendar is the only all-inclusive calendar of Penn events on campus. A free listing in the AT PENN increases visibility and attendance.

Email us at almanac@upenn.edu with your event details. For more information, visit <https://almanac.upenn.edu/deadlines-for-submitting-at-penn-information>.

Update

March AT PENN

FITNESS AND LEARNING

4 *Penn Parental Wellness Coalition Coffee Break*; learn about the mission of the Penn Parents Wellness Coalition, connect with other parents and caregivers, share resources and ask questions; 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; Penn Women's Center (Parental Wellness Coalition).

RPA Data Science Workshop: R; research peer advisors at CURF will lead a series of data science workshops to learn essential coding skills for modeling, data analysis, and visualization; this session will focus on R, a common statistical analysis package used in the natural and social sciences; 5:30 p.m.; room F60, Huntsman Hall (Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships).

Penn Libraries

Various locations. Info: <https://www.library.upenn.edu/events>.

4 *Ask Us About Podcasting*; learn about podcasting and the resources available through the Vitale Media Lab at the Penn Libraries; 3-5 p.m.; the ARCH.

5 *Learn How to CAD and 3D Print Your Own Keycaps Online*; learn how to make custom 3D printed keycaps to make your own fidget keychains or customize your keyboard; 3 p.m.; online webinar.

READINGS & SIGNINGS

4 *Is God for Revolution? Affect, Youth and Islam in Post-2011 Egypt*; Nareman Amin, Michigan State University; 12:30 p.m.; room 250, PCPSE (Middle East Center).

Corrections at Work: A Call for Institutional Accountability; TaLisa Carter, American University; 5:30 p.m.; 2nd floor conference room, Penn Bookstore (Penn Bookstore).

TALKS

3 *Design Optimization of Porous Electrodes for Ultra-Fast Charging*; Hanyu Li, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; 10:15 a.m.; Wu & Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (Mechanical Engineering & Applied Science).

Regulating Out-of-Network Hospital Payments: Disagreement Payoffs, Negotiated Prices, and Access; Elena Prager, University of Rochester; noon; auditorium, Colonial Penn Center; register: <https://ldi.upenn.edu/events/research-seminar-with-clena-prager-phd/> (Leonard Davis Institute).

Toward Sustainable Data Centers for Artificial Intelligence; Benjamin Lee, electrical & systems engineering and computer & information science; noon; room 414, Gutmann Hall (Penn AI).

4 *America's Divides: A Political Lunch Series*; Bob Inglis, republicEn.org; noon; room 205, Colledge Hall; register: <https://tinyurl.com/inglis-talk-mar-4> (Paideia Program).

Black Resistance and Black Powder: Gunpowder and Medical Resistance in the Black Atlantic; Adia Eshe Cullors, New York University; noon; room 105, McNeil Center (McNeil Center for Early American Studies).

Improving Generative AI at Inference Time: Alignment, Reasoning, & Efficiency; Amrit Singh Bedi, University of Central Florida; noon; room 414, Gutmann Hall (AI-Enabled Systems: Safe, Explainable, and Trustworthy Center).

Contested Taiwan: Sovereignty Social Movements, and Party Formation; Lev Nachman, National Taiwan University; 12:15 p.m.; room 418, PCPSE (Center for the Study of Contemporary China).

Towards AI Partners: Socially Intelligent Agents that Augment Human Abilities; Ruta Desai, Fundamental AI Research, Meta; 3 p.m.; room 307, Levine Hall (GRASP Lab).

The Rise of Kleptocrats? Corruption— and Anti-Corruption—In An Age of Disruption; Philip Nichols, legal studies & business ethics; Casey Michel, Human Rights Foundation; Dani Schulkin, New York University; 5 p.m.; Perry World House and online webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/pwh-talk-mar-4> (Perry World House).

5 *In Situ Probe of Structure and Dynamics at Metal Electrode/Electrolyte Interface: Interfacial Structure, Electro-induction Effect, and Hot Electron Transfer*; Tianquan (Tim) Lian, Vagelos Institute of Energy Science and Technology; 10:30 a.m.; Wu & Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (Materials Science & Engineering).

Advancing Precision Medicine with Precision Journey; Hanwen Xu, University of Washington; room 13, Skirkanich Hall (Bioengineering).

Optimization Challenges in Physics-Informed Neural Networks; Paris Perdikaris, mechanical engineering & applied mechanics; noon; room 414, Gutmann Hall, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/98220304722> (IDEAS Center, PennAI, Statistics & Data Science).

Economics

In-person events in various locations. Info: <https://economics.sas.upenn.edu/events>.

4 *Population Aging and Industry Labor Supply*; Jack Dunbar, economics; noon; room 200, PCPSE.

This is an update to the [March AT PENN calendar](#), which is online now. To submit events for future AT PENN calendars or weekly updates, email almanac@upenn.edu.

Almanac

3910 Chestnut Street, 2nd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
Phone: (215) 898-5274 or 5275
Email: almanac@upenn.edu
URL: www.upenn.edu/almanac

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Penn's ENIAC, the World's First Electronic Computer, Turns 80

Computing now powers nearly every facet of modern life and industry. And the birthplace of the modern computer was not in Silicon Valley but at the University of Pennsylvania.

This new era of human problem-solving was launched in 1946, when Penn scientists J. Presper Eckert and John Mauchly built ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), the world's first general-purpose, electronic, programmable computer.

One of ENIAC's most revolutionary contributions was its ability to be reprogrammed to solve complex numerical problems. Specifically, what set it apart from other machines of the time was that it could be rewired to perform different calculations rather than being fixed for a single task. ENIAC could execute "conditional branches"—operations that allowed it to switch between different calculations based on intermediate results. In other words, ENIAC could perform "if this, then that" operations.

Earlier machines were sophisticated but limited, relying on clunky gears and rotating shafts that had to physically mesh to perform a calculation. This reliance on the physical world limited their speed.

ENIAC, however, harnessed the flow of electrons. Using more than 17,000 vacuum tubes as near-instant switches, it was able to perform calculations far faster than mechanical relays, accelerating the development of the hydrogen bomb (known as the "Super") and ushering in the digital age.

Although ENIAC, which celebrated its 80th anniversary in February, no longer operates, four of its original 40 nine-foot-tall panels are on display at Penn Engineering's Moore School Building—the site where modern computing began.

ENIAC grew from a collaboration between Dr. Eckert, a Penn alumnus and engineer who solved the technical challenges of vacuum tube reliability, and Dr. Mauchly, a physicist and professor in the Moore School of Electrical Engineering (now part of Penn Engineering) who envisioned a shift from slow mechanical parts to high-speed electronics to solve the U.S. Army's backlog of complex ballistics calculations.

Programming this flexibility required what historians have described as a "physical hack" of the hardware, and the work fell to six pioneering women: Frances Bilas Spence, Jean Jennings Bartik, Ruth Lichterman Teitelbaum, Betty Snyder Holberton, Kay McNulty Mauchly Antonelli, and Marlyn Wescoff Meltzer. As the first digital-age programmers, they translated logic into electronic signals for ENIAC to interpret.

Before ENIAC could compute, it required a massive physical input.

One major test case involved the "Super." Scientists at Los Alamos provided one million IBM punch cards, which were fed into a card reader. The reader converted the holes in the paper into electrical pulses, which ENIAC interpreted as numbers that it then loaded into one of its 20 accumulators—its equivalent of short-term memory.

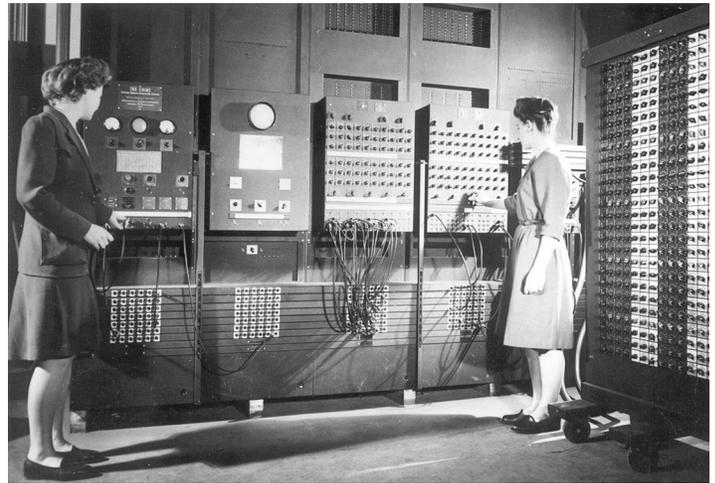
Because ENIAC lacked internal program storage, the programmers had to configure each computation manually. They stood between the machine's 30-ton panels, rewiring plugboards and setting switches to route electric signals (pulses). They then "patched" the accumulators together with heavy cables, manually routing the flow of pulses—for example, from a multiplier to an accumulator and finally to a card puncher—to solve an equation.

Unlike earlier machines built for a single mathematical task, ENIAC was a blank slate. Its general-purpose design allowed it to contribute to diverse scientific fields, ranging from cosmic-ray and thermonuclear ignition research to wind-tunnel design and random-number studies.

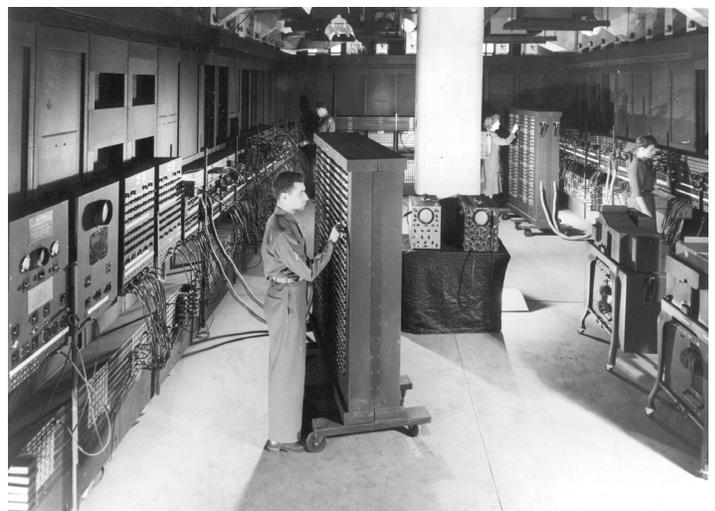
Over eight decades, the purpose of this technology has migrated far from ENIAC's wartime role. What began as a tool for calculating projectile trajectories, decoding secret messages, and modeling explosions has evolved into handheld and wearable devices, wireless networks, and artificial intelligence—technologies capable of aiding human well-being in ways the ENIAC's creators could scarcely have conceived.

Yet, the core concept remains unchanged: the power of the electronic decision. Every time a smartphone filters a spam call or an AI model suggests a workflow optimization solution, it has a lineage traceable back to the Moore School Building, where an electronic machine was first taught to think and choose.

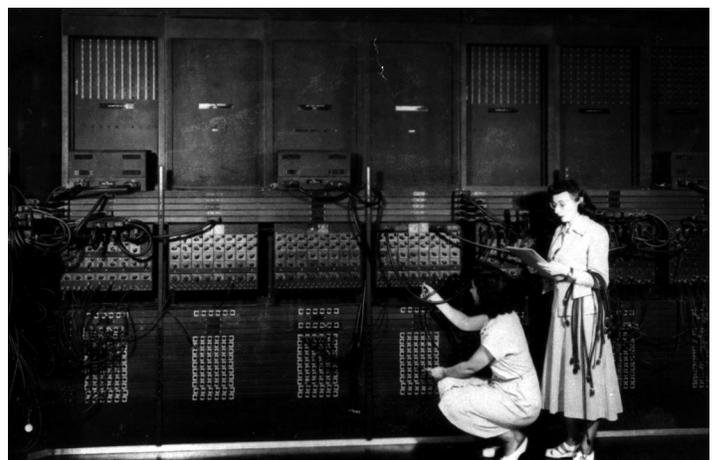
Adapted from a [Penn Today article](#) by Nathi Magubane, February 11, 2026.



Jean Bartik (left) and Frances Spence operating ENIAC's main control panel.



An ENIAC programmer in 1946.



Ruth Lichterman Teitelbaum (left) and Marlyn Wescoff Meltzer.

Photographs Courtesy of University of Pennsylvania. Archives.