

American Graffiti



CONNECTING
THROUGH
EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING

Volume 24
2023-2024



Pilsen
Chinatown
New Orleans



Northwestern
AMERICAN STUDIES



Letter from the Director

Last year was a great one for American Studies, and we expect more of the same this year!

We sent five more graduates out into the world, to begin graduate programs at UC Berkeley, Brown University, and Oxford University, and to begin careers in journalism and theater. Towards the end of spring quarter, they presented their brilliant theses on Asian American OnlyFans performers, how nineteenth century newspapers covered abortion, the counting of Asian Americans and Filipino Americans by the U.S. Census, early approaches to drug rehabilitation at a facility in Kentucky, and a cultural analysis of the “Harajuku Girls” who’ve performed in Gwen Stefani’s concerts and videos. In other words, just another superb group of budding intellectuals. No big deal. A special thanks to Professor Nicolette Bruner, who taught the thesis seminar and helped students bring their projects to a successful completion.

Another highlight of the year was our spring break trip to New Orleans, where we retraced Clint Smith’s footsteps, as described in his book, *How the Word Is Passed*. A group of about ten of us visited the Whitney Plantation, the Laura Plantation, the French Quarter, and the Mardi Gras Museum. We also caught up with former American Studies Director Kate Baldwin, who now teaches at Tulane, and gobbled up all the crawfish and vegetables we could at a boil hosted by Tulane graduate student Derek Wood, our expert host and tour guide. We were joined in New Orleans by Latino Studies and Black Studies majors, as part of our longstanding effort to build ties to those and other related programs on campus.

This year we’ve got more fun talks, alumni events, and field trips, all geared towards celebrating our fiftieth anniversary as a program! Beginning in January, everything we do will be oriented toward thinking about where we’ve been, where we are today, and where we want to go. While we’ll celebrate the whole year, we’ll have at least two special events: one tied to our senior symposium, where our thesis writers tell us about their long-term research projects, and then a big party one weekend next fall. Stay tuned for our messages about how you can be involved in celebrating with us!

Sincerely,

Geraldo Cadava

2023-24 CORE FACULTY AND STAFF



Geraldo L. Cadava

is an historian of the United States. He focuses on the history of Latinos in the United States and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Originally from Tucson, Arizona, he came to Northwestern after finishing his Ph.D. at Yale University.

He is the author of *The Hispanic Republican: The Shaping of an*

American Political Identity, from Nixon to Trump (New York: Ecco, 2020); and also *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Harvard University Press, 2013), about the Arizona-Sonora borderland since World War II. He is now working on a book about Latino history over the past 500 years, tentatively titled *A Thousand Bridges*, to be published by Crown in 2026.

Cadava is also a Contributing Writer at *The New Yorker*; co-Editor-in-Chief of the online magazine *Public Books*; host of the podcast *Writing Latinos*; and Principal Investigator for Northwestern's Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program.

At Northwestern, he teaches courses on Latino History, the American West, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, migration to and from Latin America, and other topics in U.S. history, including Watergate, the 2016 election, and the musical *Hamilton*.



Shana Bernstein

Shana Bernstein (Ph.D., Stanford, 2003) is an historian of the twentieth-century United States, with a particular interest in social reform movements, including civil rights and environmental health and justice. Her first book, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Oxford, 2011), reinterprets U.S. civil rights

activism by revealing its roots in the interracial efforts of Mexican, Jewish, African, and Japanese Americans in mid-century Los Angeles. It argues that the early Cold War facilitated, rather than derailed, some forms of activism. Bernstein has also written academic articles on the history of environmental health and civil rights, and has written essays for *The Washington Post*, CNN, *The Forward*, *Talking Points Memo*, *The Hill*, *Pacific Standard*, *American Prospect*, and the *Austin American Statesman*. She has received fellowships including from the Huntington Library and the Mellon Foundation and is a distinguished lecturer for the Organization of American Historians.

Bernstein is currently working on *Poison Fruit: The True Story of America's Toxic Farm System and the Rise of the California Strawberry*, which uses the history of strawberries as a lens for exploring the development of a toxic agricultural system that undermines the health of workers, consumers, and the environment. She teaches undergraduate courses on comparative race and ethnicity, immigration, and health and inequality.

2023-24 CORE FACULTY AND STAFF



Nicolette Bruner

(Ph.D. in English Language and Literature, University of Michigan; JD, University of Michigan Law School) is Assistant Professor of Instruction at the Center for Legal Studies and the Program in American Studies. Prior to joining Northwestern's faculty, she was a postdoctoral fellow with the Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge at the University of Chicago and taught in the Department of English at Western Kentucky University.

Bruner's research explores how the law shapes the way humans understand and interact with the nonhuman entities and systems around them. Her current book project, *Thing People: Living with Corporations and Other Nonhumans*, examines how the legal doctrine of corporate personhood offers a framework for articulating the rights and responsibilities of other nonhuman entities, including animals, plants, rivers, and robots. She also teaches and works in American literature, corporate law and policy, jurisprudence, and the environmental humanities.



Robert Orsi

(Ph.D. Philosophy, Yale University) is the first holder of the Grace Craddock Nagle Chair in Catholic Studies. Professor Orsi studies American religious history and contemporary practice; American Catholicism in both historical and ethnographic perspective; and he is widely recognized also for his work on theory and method for the study of religion. In 2002-2003, he was president of the American Academy of Religion. Professor Orsi has held fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Fulbright Foundation. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2010 he received the E. Leroy Hall Award for Teaching Excellence, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Northwestern University, the highest recognition for teaching offered by WCAS.

2023-2024 Core Faculty and Staff continued



Ivy Wilson

(Ph.D., Yale University) teaches courses on the comparative literatures of the black diaspora and U.S. literary studies with a particular emphasis on African American culture. His book, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2011), interrogates how the figurations and tropes of blackness were used to produce the social equations that regulated the cultural meanings of U.S. citizenship and traces how African American intellectuals manipulated the field of aesthetics as a means to enter into political discourse about the forms of subjectivity and national belonging. Along with recent articles in *ESQ*, *Arizona Quarterly*, and *PMLA*, his other work in U.S. literary studies includes two forthcoming edited books on the nineteenth-century poets James Monroe Whitfield and Albery Allson Whitman. His current research interests focus on the solubility of nationalism in relationship to theories of the diaspora, global economies of culture, and circuits of the super-national and sub-national.



Tom Burke

Senior Program Administrator in American Studies. Tom Burke has a BA from Union College, an MFA in creative writing from UMass Amherst and a diploma from Evanston Township High School. He has previously worked in the Chinua Achebe Center at Bard College, the Summer Literary Seminars in Russia and Kenya, and Words without Borders. Tom sometimes teaches creative writing, and his first novel, *Eastbound into the Cosmos*, was published in 2019 (MadHat Press). www.tsburke.com



Julie Lavin

Program Assistant. Julie received a BA from University of Kansas in Journalism and has worked in a variety of nonprofits in the Chicagoland area including the Evanston Community Foundation and the Chicago Botanic Garden.

CLASS OF 2023



Maddie Brown

*How the Imagination of
Nineteenth-Century
Newspapers Made Abortion
Gothic*

Advisor: Julia Stern
(English)

Maddie is at Oxford University for a Master's in Women's, Gender, and Queer History where she is researching Nineteenth-century abortion.



Dori-Taylor Carter

*How Filipinx American and
Asian American Community
Organizers Mobilize the 2020
Census*

Advisor: Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz
(Sociology)

Dori is working on her Ph.D. at UC Berkeley researching panethnicity, census racial categories, and social movements.



Alex Chun

*Interactive Intimacy: Tracing how
Queer Asian/American Only Fans
Performers Negotiate their
Manufactured Identities*

Advisor: Steven Thrasher (Journalism)
and Raymond San Diego (Asian
American Studies)

Currently at Brown University, Alex is working on his Ph.D. in American Studies.

Class of 2023 continued



Sunnie Eraso

STAR a Thesis on Ornamentalism as Theory and Performance Practice Around Gwen Stefani's Harajuku Girls

Advisor: Cristal Chanelle Truscott (Communications)

Staying in Chicago, Sunny will pursue a career in theatrical/TV/film performance, directing, and new work development. Other plans include further advancement opportunities for STAR, in New York, Chicago, and beyond!



Eva Herscowitz

"I'm a junkie": Countercultural Writing, Protest Culture, and the Development of a Dissident Identity at the Lexington Narcotic Farm

Advisor: Michael Allen (History)

Eva is working as an Investigative Reporting Fellow at the *Post and Courier* in Charleston, South Carolina.



The students had numerous opportunities to immerse themselves in the history of New Orleans during our spring break trip.

CURRENT MAJORS

Class of 2024



Armaan Ajani

Armaan (he/him/his) is a SESP third-year double majoring in social policy and American Studies and minoring in economics. He hopes to study educational inequality within the United States, the role of race in creating these disparities, and the long-term effects of such disparities on standard of living and the economy.



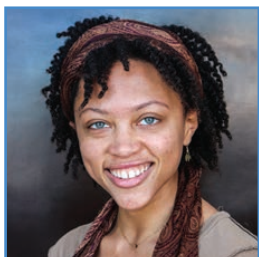
Olivia Alexander

Olivia is an American Studies and journalism double major from Little Rock, Arkansas. Her research interests are in K-12 education, religious communities and media agenda setting in the U.S. She is a Peer Adviser for Wildcat Welcome, an editor at *The Daily Northwestern*, and is a member of Canterbury Northwestern, the Episcopal Campus Ministry.



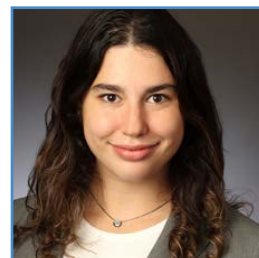
Jane Clarke

Jane is an American Studies and history double major and political science minor. Her interests are focused on Americans' interaction with the world, American exceptionalism, and social movements. She is a Leopold Fellow with the Chabreja Center for Historical Studies, a consultant at *The Writing Place*, and a supervisor at ARTica Studios.



Jordan Muhammad

Jordan is an American Studies and theatre double major in the Civic Engagement Certificate Program. His focus is studying how systems of oppression can be dismantled and replaced by looking at domestic and foreign case studies. He is a Tour Guide, Peer Adviser and member of Fossil Free NU, DefaultVegNU, University Christian Ministry, SOLR, BMP, and the Books.



Isabel Podolsky

Isabel is an American Studies major pursuing additional study in economics and data science. She is exploring interdisciplinary approaches to urban spaces in theory and practice, focusing on housing, community, and economic development. She is involved with NU Model UN, Office of Undergraduate Research, and Delta Sigma Pi Business Fraternity.



Lauren Walcott

Lauren is a social policy and American Studies double-major pursuing a certificate in civic engagement. She hopes to study education inequality and community building. Aside from academics, she is an organizer for DefaultVegNU, a member of Christians on campus, NU Archery Club.



Emily Zou

Emily is interested in learning about technology through the humanities and the humanities through technology. She's always on the lookout for humans that 1) are thinking about similar questions and 2) are willing to humor her.

Student Advisory Board (SAB) Representatives for 2023-2024 Mariam Adesiji, Vivian Bui, Jane Clarke and Isabel Podolsky

Class of 2025



Mariam Adesiji

Mariam is a first-year American Studies major planning to double major in sociology or legal studies and minor in dance. She is interested in exploring immigration, mass incarceration, and/or U.S. foreign policy towards Africa. Outside of class, Mariam is a dancer with Boomshaka—a drum, dance, and rhythm group at NU.



Garrison Guzzeau

Garrison is from Massachusetts. His interests include the intersections of American history, politics, and art of the 20th and 21st centuries. He competes as a member of Northwestern's Sailing Team. In his free time, he also enjoys being outdoors and watching the Red Sox.



Audrey Bannister

Audrey is an American Studies major with hopes to study history and French as well. Originally from Dublin, Ohio. On campus, she is involved in the comedy student group, the *Blackout*, in addition to being an athlete on the varsity cross country team.



Mary Childs Hall

Mary is double majoring in American Studies and journalism with a business institutions minor. She is interested in exploring the relationship between the American political system and the media, the interaction between the U.S. and global market economies and the role religion plays in America.



Vivian Bui

Vivian is an American Studies and English Literature double major with a minor in legal studies. She is interested in studying U.S. immigration and wants to understand how colonization has contributed to mass migration. She is involved in Mock Trial and with Arch Scholars programs. She also volunteers in Chicago teaching ESL and helping immigrants prepare for the Naturalization interview and test.



Liliana Jurado

Liliana is an American Studies and religious studies double major from NJ. Her research interest are American civil religion and counter-cultural movements, feelings of American-ness in culturally distinct US territories, and artistic narratives about American life and the American Dream. She works for *AccessibleNU*.

Class of 2025



Jessica Ma

Jessica is an American Studies and journalism double major with a political science minor from Belmont, California. She is interested in exploring the role of media in social movements, the interactions between communities of color, and the aesthetics of the American Dream from the perspective of marginalized voices. She competes for the NU Mock Trial team, writes for *The Daily Northwestern*, and is involved with *Supplies For Dreams*.



Ben Meyer

Ben is a sophomore/junior pursuing majoring in political science and American Studies. His research interests focus on the emergence of America as a unique political phenomenon and southern ethnolinguistic studies. In addition to his academic pursuits, Ben serves as the recruitment chair for Northwestern Rugby.



Elliot Oppenheim

Elliot is an American Studies and communication studies double major from Washington, DC. His research interests include Yiddish theater, patterns of immigration and assimilation, and online community building. He is a member of the Northwestern Marching Band, *North by Northwestern*, and is Production Manager for Spectrum Theatre Ensemble.



Kara Peeler

Kara is an American Studies and journalism double major from Maryland. She hopes to study the ways that religion and religious institutions affect marginalized communities. Outside of the classroom, she writes for *The Daily Northwestern*, works as a copy editor, and is a volunteer for the NU Thrift Store.



Camilla Pelliccia

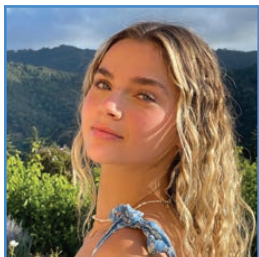
Camilla is interested in African American History, labor history, gender studies, and political and social movements. Her focus is systems of economic and racial oppression and inequality in America—the ways in which these systems have come to exist, historical moments of defiance against them, and theories/strategies for overhauling them.



Gracie Schecter

Gracie is from LA and an American Studies and social policy double major with a minor in global health studies. She is a research assistant for the School of Education and social policy helping the lead researchers investigate math instruction across elementary grades. She is interested in examining educational policy specifically in her hometown.

Class of 2025 continued



Ellie Solomon

Ellie is an American Studies major and a business institutions minor. She is interested in the intersection of American religious communities and voting patterns. Ellie plays on the Women's Club Lacrosse team and is involved with Dance Marathon.



Mia Xia

Mia is a social policy and American Studies double major with a minor in data science and a certificate in civic engagement. She's studying political participation and civic engagement within BIPOC communities. Mia is involved with the Institute for Policy Research, Associated Student Government, the Northwestern Undergraduate Law Journal, and *Supplies for Dreams*.

**In January we kick off
our 50th Anniversary!
Stay tuned for opportunities
to join in the celebrations!**



Vivian Bui and
Mia Xia enjoying
beignets in The
French Quarter.

We had perfect
weather for our
year end picnic
in June at Clark
Street Beach.



Class of 2026



Téa Bartlett

Téa is an American Studies major with minors in legal studies and gender and sexuality studies from California. Her focus is centered on how the law allows for the policing of gender and sexuality. She is a member of the Mock Trial team, a competitive archer with Chicago's North Side Archery Club, teaches young girls STEM with *Full STEAM Forward*, and is an intern for *FREEST*, a non-profit promoting anti-human trafficking education.



Simon Carr

Simon is a journalism and American Studies double major. He's interested in trust-based interstate economic systems and, in general, theorizing a world without nations or borders. Simon works on campus with *The Daily Northwestern* and the Northwestern Undergraduate Law Journal. He also enjoys reading, designing sound, and playing tennis.



Psippi Haendel

Psippi is an American Studies major hoping to minor in environmental policy and culture. Originally from LA, Psippi is interested in the history of the American West, historic preservation and restoration, and how historic structures are able to further certain narratives in museum settings. She works part-time at a local elementary school.



Jordyn Howard

Jordyn is from GA, majoring in American Studies and psychology, minoring in legal studies. She is a member of Black Pre-Law Association and the Black Mentorship Program and Mock Trial. She is interested in the development of social activism throughout history alongside the development of social media, focusing on how marginalized communities have fought for rights.



Alaina Parr

Alaina is an American Studies and social policy double major from Pittsburgh, PA. She is interested in studying the role of religion in American social movements specifically within communities of color. She is on the Women's Club Ultimate Frisbee team and is a member of the ballet club Eight Counts Ballet Company.



Melanie Tapia

Melanie is an Evans Scholar from Chicago pursuing a double major in American Studies and environmental policy and culture along with a minor in business institutions. She is the Deputy of Northwestern's Sustainability Committee through ASG and also serves as the Co-chair of Resource Management. She is also an active member in Kesem and a Peer Advisor.



Talia Winiarsky

Talia is majoring in American Studies with a Spanish minor. She is a lifelong New Yorker and loves learning about her city. Outside of class, she writes for the *Daily Northwestern*, is involved in Hillel, and is an incoming Leopold Fellow. She enjoys running, Greek salads, and reading Sally Rooney and James Baldwin novels.

2023 AWARDS

American Studies Program Awards

■ Carl Smith Prize for Outstanding Student Essay in American Studies

Maddie Brown

How the Imagination of Nineteenth-Century Newspapers Made Abortion Gothic

Dori-Taylor Carter

How Filipinx and Asian American Community Organizers Mobilize the 2020 Census

■ Jay Rosen American Studies Scholarship

Vivian Bui



Homecoming breakfast kicked off Fall Quarter where many alumni joined Professor Cadava to connect and catch up.

Other Noteworthy Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

■ Findlay Fellow for Graduate Study in the UK – Fellow with the Center for Civic Engagement working with the NU Votes Program

Maddie Brown

■ Northwestern's first Victory Congressional Intern recipient

Dori-Taylor Carter

■ Hearst Foundation Scholarship – Leopold Fellow with Prof. Deborah Cohen granted by the History Department

Jane Clarke

■ Northwestern Summer Internship Grant Program

(Raskin for Congress Fellow)

Lauren Walcott

■ Fellowship for Raskin for Congress in Washington D.C. Fellowship at Carnegie Mellon University Junior Summer Institute in Public Policy and International Affairs

Lauren Walcott

■ Leopold Fellow with Professor Kathleen Belew

(project "Home, at the End of the World")

Talia Winiarsky

■ Phi Beta Kappa

Maddie Brown (Centennial Prize)

Dori-Taylor Carter

ALUMNI EVENTS

- By sharing their post-Northwestern career paths, American Studies alumni offer current majors networking opportunities and conversations about how the major nurtures curiosity and skills that students carry with them after graduation. This past year, we heard from Alumni Sarah Lipton-Lubet and Joshua Levin.



Joshua Levin

Joshua is a Staff Attorney in the Criminal Legal System & Policing Project at the ACLU of Illinois. He represents individuals and community organizations in civil rights cases that seek transformational changes to policing in Illinois. In particular, he fights to end the deep-rooted racism, brutality, and lack of accountability in the Chicago Police Department. Prior to joining the ACLU, Joshua was a litigation associate at Jenner & Block, where he represented clients in trial and appellate courts, in matters involving complex issues of statutory and constitutional law. Joshua clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. He received his JD from Yale Law School in 2015 and his BA in American Studies and history from Northwestern University in 2012.



Sarah Lipton-Lubet

American Studies Majors had a unique opportunity to hear from American Studies alum, Sarah Lipton-Lubet (class of 2002).

For the better part of the last two decades, Sarah has been an advocate for reproductive freedom, gender equity and progressive change. Most recently, she served as Vice President for Reproductive Health and Rights at the National Partnership for Women & Families, where she led a skilled team in designing and implementing a bold vision for advancing access to abortion through legislative and regulatory advocacy, public education and culture change. Previously, through roles at the American Civil Liberties Union, Center for Reproductive Rights, Natural Resources Defense Council and Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, Sarah worked to advance the rights of pregnant workers, push back against religious refusals, and promote government accountability. Working against the right-wing takeover of the courts has been a cornerstone of her career.

Sarah graduated summa cum laude from Northwestern University with a BA in American Studies and earned her JD from Yale Law School. She clerked for the Honorable Nancy Gertner of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts and the Honorable Richard Paez of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

CURRICULUM 2023-24

Seminars for Majors

Fall	<i>Beginnings and Endings</i> Nicolette Bruner (Legal Studies and American Studies)
Winter	<i>Living in Apocalyptic Times</i> Robert Orsi (Religion)
Spring	<i>Beyond the U.S.: America and the Otherworldly</i> Ivy Wilson (English and American Studies)
Fall/ Winter	<i>Senior Seminar</i> Shana Bernstein (Legal Studies and American Studies)

Other Courses Include:

<i>Histories of Violence</i> Professor Kathleen Belew (History)
<i>Contemporary Issues in Asian American Communities</i> Professor Helen Cho (Asian American Studies)
<i>Black Religions</i> Professor KB Dennis Meade (Black Studies)
<i>American Novel</i> Professor Bill Savage (English)
<i>The Chicago Way: Urban Spaces and American Values</i> Professor Bill Savage (English)

<i>Language in Asian America</i> Professor Shalini Shankar (Anthropology and Asian American Studies)
<i>Religion, Media and American Culture</i> Professor Sarah McFarland Taylor (Religious Studies)
<i>Sex and the American Empire: Journalism and Frames of War</i> Professor Steven Thrasher (Journalism)

American Studies Winter 2024

Histories of Violence
Professor Kathleen Belew (History)
M, W 9:30-10:50am
HIST 300-0-22

AMERICAN NOVEL: DEFINING AMERICA POST 1870
Professor Bill Savage (English)
T, Th 3:00-5:00pm
AMER ST 300-0-3
ENGLISH 370-0-20

PRESS AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
Professor Michaela Kleber
M, W 9:30-10:50am
AMER ST 310-0-2
HIST 300-0-22

American Studies Fall 2023

History of the American Family
Professor Michaela Kleber
AMER ST 310-0-40
HIST 260-0-22
T, Th 11:00am-12:20pm

American Studies Fall 2023

SEX & AMERICAN EMPIRE: JOURNALISM AND FRAMES
Professor Steven Thrasher
AMER ST 310-0-40
HIST 218-0-1
M, W 11:00-1:30am

Northwestern American Studies

INTRO TO CRITICAL MIXED RACE STUDIES
Professor Nitasha Sharma (African American Studies)
M, W 2-3:30PM
AMER ST 310-0-70
ASIAN_AM 251-0-1
AF_AM ST 251-0-20

Northwestern American Studies

LATINO HISTORY
AMER ST 310-0-40
LATINO 218-0-1
HIST 218-0-2
M, W 11:00-1:30am

AMERICAN STUDIES IN ACTION

For the first time since COVID, the American Studies Majors were able to participate in an experiential trip outside of Chicago.



In the past students have had the opportunity to travel to Washington, DC for an inauguration, to Memphis, TN and to Springfield.

This year, in following the footsteps of One Book One Northwestern author, Clint Smith, the students went to New Orleans. Mr. Smith went to the city to do research on his book *How the Word is Passed* and our students were able to go to many of the same sites Mr. Smith visited to experience things first hand.



The group visited the Whitney Plantation, Laura Plantation, Cemetery No. 1, along with tours of historical sites in the city itself. They were also treated to an authentic crawfish boil, a live concert, along with many other authentic foods and experiences.



It was a memorable time for all and we were thrilled to share the experience with the students.

Northwestern | American Studies

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**Northwestern University
Program in American Studies**

1880 Campus Drive
Kresge Centennial Hall 5-530
Evanston, IL 60208-2245

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SAVE THE DATE

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 4, 2024**

**for our
50th anniversary
evening celebration!**