

# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY



## SOCIOLOGICAL OUTLOOK

### FROM THE HEAD'S DESK



**Reuben A. Buford May**

Greetings from Lincoln Hall. I have just completed my first academic year as department head, and it is a very exciting time for Illinois sociology. I want to thank Tim Liao for his support during my transition into my new role. The faculty members and I have wasted little time in our efforts to build upon the foundation that Tim laid in his previous two years as my predecessor. I am optimistic that we will continue with our efforts to prepare our undergraduate and graduate students,

strengthen our curriculum, grow our faculty with the best young talent, and provide unparalleled opportunities for our students. In January 2023, we hosted a full day retreat to set department expectations for research, teaching, and service, and to outline departmental goals. We also had opportunities to continue building collective community. By all accounts we are off to a fantastic start. I have also had the opportunity to communicate directly with a number of our alumni and I am grateful for their continued supported. I look forward to speaking with more of you.

We have three new faculty members who will join us on campus this fall. Dr. Christina Kamis, a recent PhD in sociology at Duke University, joins us after completing a one-year research residence at the University of Wisconsin as a National Institutes of Health T32 postdoctoral fellow. Her research is in the specialization of health disparities. In fall 2022, we conducted a search for two junior faculty scholars with specializations in gender and sexualities. Dr. Brittney Miles, who received her PhD in sociology at the University of Cincinnati, and Dr. Stefan Vogler, who received his PhD in sociology from Northwestern University, will be joining us. We are excited about the arrival of our new colleagues and look forward to the ways in which they will strengthen our department.

Our graduate and undergraduate programs continue to thrive. In the fall, we will have seven new graduate students, three more than last year, join us to pursue their PhDs. As a new departmental initiative, we were able fund 14 current graduate

students with travel scholarships to support their travel to, and participation in, the American Sociological Associations annual meetings. The students will have an opportunity to present research, develop professional connections, and learn about the latest sociological research happening around the world. Their participation level far exceeds any that we have had in our last five years.

Our undergraduate students continue to take part in research experiences with faculty members. A number of our undergraduate students have presented research, and some have coauthored with faculty members and submitted research papers for publication in scholarly journals. I continue to be impressed with the working relationship among our undergraduate students and faculty members and the quality of hands-on experience our students receive. Our undergraduate program continues to attract wonderful students and in spring 2023 we had 243 majors and 253 minors. We are indebted to our undergraduate academic advisor, Reba Daniels, for continuing to provide outstanding leadership and service to our undergraduate program.

It is my honor to announce our Outstanding Alumni Award for 2022-2023. The recipient of this year's award is Dr. Chloe Bird (PhD, '92, sociology). Bird is the program director of the Center for Health Equity Research in the Department of Medicine at Tufts Medical Center. Congratulations to Dr. Bird. You will find more about her achievements elsewhere in the newsletter. We also want to thank all of the graduate and undergraduate alumni who submitted nominations. Thank you for bringing to our attention all of the wonderful work that our sociology alumni have been doing.

As I close, I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our faculty members, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and alumni who have supported our efforts. We are excited about the department's recent growth and optimistic about our future. As always, we enjoy hearing from our alumni so please feel free to send us a message and let us know how you are doing. You may send messages to [sociology@illinois.edu](mailto:sociology@illinois.edu).

**Reuben A. Buford May**  
*Department of Sociology head*

## Outstanding Alumni Award



**Dr. Chloe Bird** is one of the most outstanding PhD graduates from the department's PhD program over the decades. I joined the department in the summer of 1990. Chloe was still in the program then, and in 1992, she finished her dissertation titled, "Comparing women's representation in three health professions: Dentistry, medicine, and veterinary medicine," directed by Barbara Reskin, the 93rd ASA President, with Catherine Ross (a well-published mental health researcher), Joe Spaeth (a social organization scholar), and Ann Flood (now a medical sociologist in the Dartmouth Medical School).

Since her dissertation completion with honors in 1992, Bird has embarked on an extremely influential and impactful research career focusing on health and women's health, first serving as a postdoctoral fellow in the Health Institute, New England Medical Center and Harvard School of Public Health, before spending most of her career at RAND as a senior sociologist. She is now program director at Center for Health Equity Research, Tufts Medical Center.

She has published three books, including her first-authored Cambridge University Press book, *Gender and Health: The Effects of Constrained Choices and Social Policies*. By my incomplete count, in addition to over 10 book chapters, she has published over 70 peer-reviewed journal papers, most in some influential health and medical journals including *American Journal of Epidemiology*, *American Journal of Public Health*, and *Social Science & Medicine*, among others. In addition, Chloe served as a senior advisor on detail to the NIH Office for Research on Women's Health (via the Intergovernmental Personnel Act - IPA) in 2016-2017. She has also written extensively for the public. Many of her commentaries have appeared in places like Newsweek and Ms. Magazine along with reports published via RAND regarding the Return on Investment for Increasing Funding for Research on Women's Health.

Dr. Bird's research has been supported by major NIH grants. She was principal investigator on nine NIH-funded grants. She has led research on determinants of psychological distress and depression as well as allostatic load, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, health behaviors, HIV, and obesity. She has also published extensively with the Women's Health Initiative Trial, assessing the determinants of women's health in midlife and beyond. She currently leads a project, funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, engaging stakeholders in exploring policy approaches to reduce severe maternal morbidity and maternal mortality for persons with MediCal covered births. She is a co-investigator (CoI) on a team lead by another of her mentees examining the impact of interventions by quality-of-care collaboratives on maternal health outcomes across states; she is also a CoI on a study examining barriers to prenatal dental care in low-income urban women with dental coverage through New York's Medicaid plan.

Because of the reach and impact of her research and her hugely significant public outreach, Dr. Bird was elected as a fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science and a fellow of the American Association of Health Behavior, both in 2015. In 2020, she received the William Foote Whyte career award from American Sociological Association Section on Sociological Practice and in 2021, she was recognized by the American Sociological Association with the Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology.

With this kind of high impactful academic research and public service, I cannot think of a more fitting PhD alum for this award.

**Tim Liao**  
professor of sociology, emeritus

# DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

## NEW FACES



**Christina Kamis** received her PhD in sociology from Duke University and spent the last year as a postdoctoral trainee in the Center for Demography of Health and Aging at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is broadly interested in life course and aging, mental health, and demography. Her recent work examining the relationship between early life experiences and life course mental health has been published in the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Social Science and Medicine*, and *Society and Mental Health*. She is very excited about joining the faculty at Illinois and can't wait for the semester to begin!



**Brittney Miles** is a Black feminist scholar who interrogates how intersections of identities are negotiated across institutions and inscribed onto the body. Her scholarship centers Black girlhood, specifically related to (a)sexualities, dis/ability, embodiment, and beauty. She uses interdisciplinary qualitative methods to prioritize the critical subjectivities of Black women and girls. Through her experiences growing up in the Cabrini Green neighborhood of Chicago, she learned to ask sociological questions about Black life and culture. She received her PhD in sociology from the University of Cincinnati. Outside of research, she loves television shows and movies and wrote her undergraduate comprehensive exam on all the Batman films—her favorite is *Batman* (1989).



**Stefan Vogler** is a sociologist who studies sexuality, gender, law, and knowledge. His research seeks to understand encounters between sexualized and gendered subjects and state and legal institutions. Dr. Vogler's work has been recognized by the American Sociological Association, the Law & Society Association, and the American Council of Learned Societies, with his book, *Sorting Sexualities: Expertise and the Politics of Legal Classification*, recently winning both the ASA Sociology of Sexualities and Sociology of Law Distinguished Book Awards. Prior to joining the University of Illinois, Stefan was a research scientist at NORC and earned his PhD from Northwestern University.

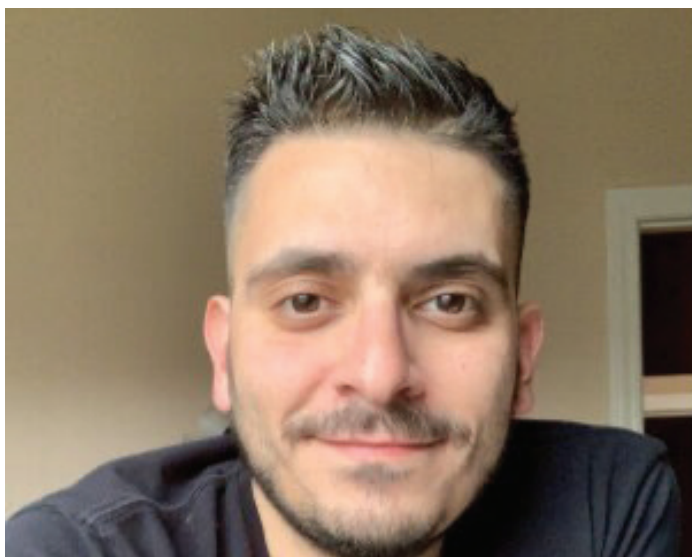
## FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS



**Jose Atilés**, assistant professor of sociology, has received a Critical Book Lab Award from the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory. Professor Atilés was also selected for the Latinx Criminology 2023 Scholar Spotlight.



**Tim Liao** has been awarded emeritus professor. Liao will continue to conduct research with his College of Agriculture, Consumer & Environmental Sciences colleague Angela Lyons. Their research is funded by the Chancellor's Call to Action to Address Racism and Social Injustice Research Program.



**Ghassan Moussawi**, associate professor of sociology, has been elected to serve as chair-elect (three-year term begins in 2023) of the American Sociological Association, Race, Gender, and Class Section. Moussawi also received the 2023 Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



**Kevin Leicht**, with Mary L. Fennell published, *The New Dark Age: American Professions in Decline*, Routledge. Leicht, with Scott T. Fitzgerald, also published the third edition of their book, *Middle Class Meltdown in America: Causes, Consequences, and Remedies*. New York: Routledge.

## STUDENT AWARDS

*We would like to recognize the excellence displayed by our students this year.*

### UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

#### **Husna Hussaini and Lissette Gamez – Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award**

*This Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award recognizes outstanding achievement in a sociology student's research and writing abilities.*

#### **Alyssa Prisby - Highest GPA Award**

*This award acknowledges the senior in sociology who has attained the highest overall grade point average.*

#### **Husna Hussaini - Outstanding Senior in Sociology Award**

*This award is given to a senior who demonstrates involvement with the community, leadership achievements, academic success, and a dedication to sociology.*

#### **Lissette Gamez - Student Engagement Award**

*The Student Engagement Award highlights a student in sociology who has been active in the University of Illinois and/or Champaign-Urbana community. This student stands out for their activism and leadership within the community.*

### GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

#### **Asha Sawhney - Beslow Graduate Paper Award**

*The Beslow Graduate Paper Award is for a relevant paper on any sociological subject/area.*

#### **Miguel Avalos - Humanities Research Institute Graduate Student Fellowship**

*This fellowship is awarded by the Humanities Research Institute to enable advanced graduate students to develop their dissertations or research projects and to participate in the year's activities, including the yearlong interdisciplinary Fellows Seminar and other related programming.*

#### **Asha Sawhney and Jose Atilas - McPhail Collaborative Research Paper Award**

*This research paper award is given to a graduate student and faculty advisor jointly developing and submitting a paper for publication.*

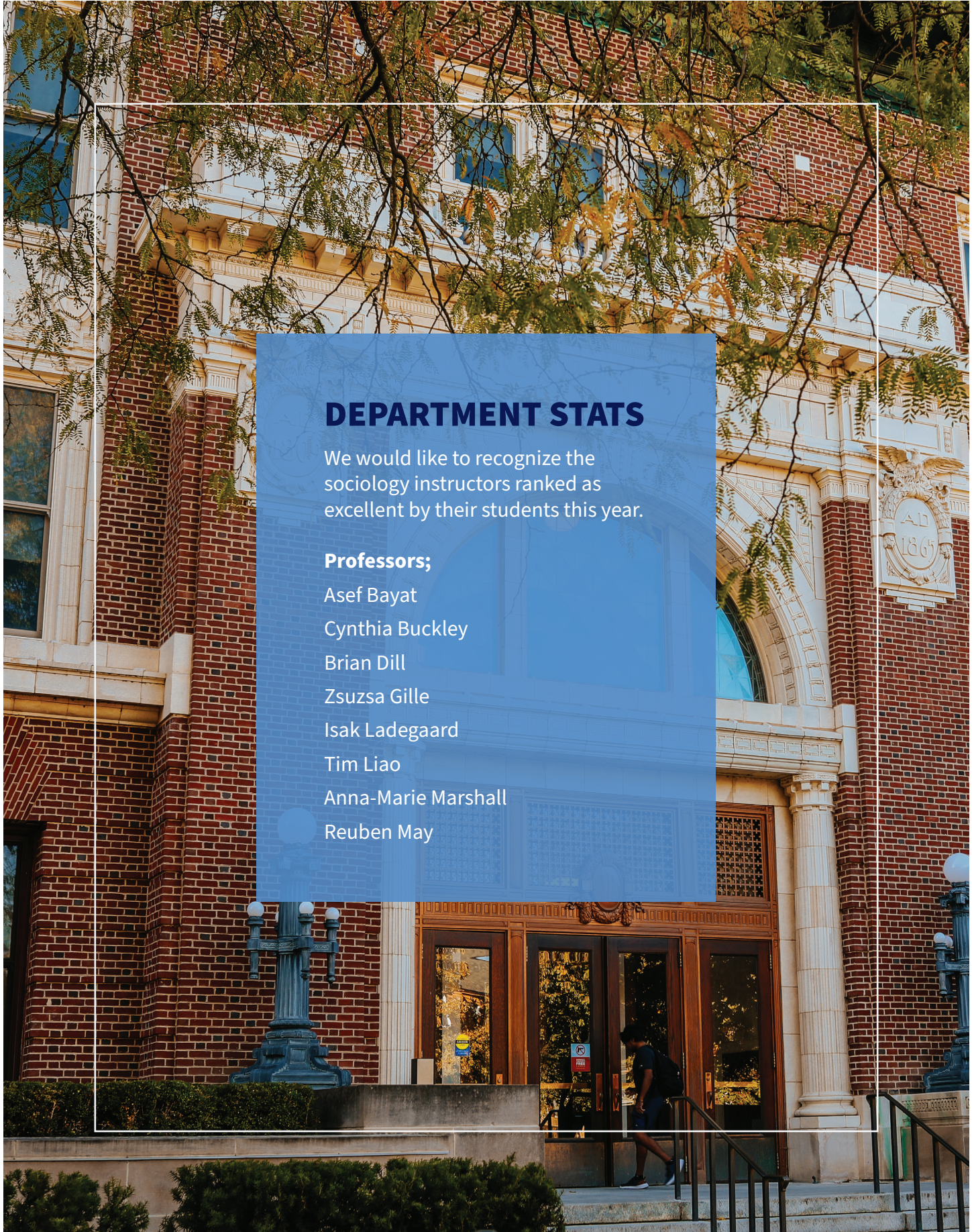
#### **Miguel Avalos – Vivian Lin Thurston Fellowship, Fall 2022**

*This fellowship is awarded each year to recognize the outstanding performance of a graduate student in the sociology department who has demonstrated excellence in research, teaching, and service.*

#### **Adam 'Musa' Hamideh, Umair Rasheed - Bastian Award, Academic Year 2022-23**

#### **Seray, Brican-Afsin, Justin Holmes - Bastian Award, Summer 2023**

*The Bastian Dissertation Fellowship in Sociology supports especially promising graduate students whose area of concentration is transnational studies or whose dissertation research is substantively transnational.*



## DEPARTMENT STATS

We would like to recognize the sociology instructors ranked as excellent by their students this year.

### **Professors;**

Asef Bayat

Cynthia Buckley

Brian Dill

Zsuzsa Gille

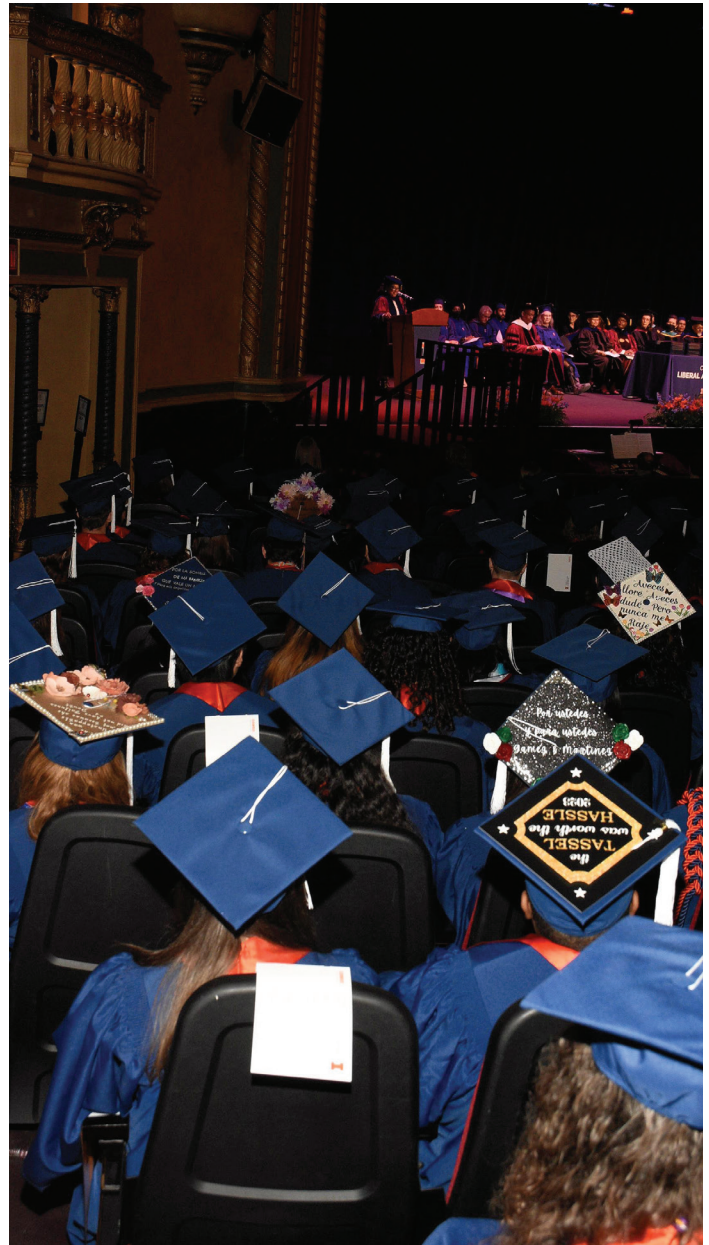
Isak Ladegaard

Tim Liao

Anna-Marie Marshall

Reuben May

# CLASS OF 2023





**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

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# Invest in the Future



**Joseph Baldwin**  
Director of  
Development

When you give to the department, you make an impact on the future of our students and faculty. We are grateful to so many of you who continue to generously invest in us and ensure our excellence in teaching, learning, research, and outreach. If you are interested in giving opportunities, please contact our director of development, Joseph Baldwin, who can be reached at [jbbaldw2@illinois.edu](mailto:jbbaldw2@illinois.edu) or (217) 300-5967. Gifts can be made outright or through options such as a gift from your will/estate, appreciated stock, and home/farmland donations.

There are many ways to give and direct your donations to sociology

at Illinois. If you are interested in establishing a focused endowment or want more information about donating, please contact Joseph Baldwin.

Our website, [sociology.illinois.edu](http://sociology.illinois.edu), is a great place to see updates on everything going on at the department. Please also feel free to reach out to our office via email at: [sociology@illinois.edu](mailto:sociology@illinois.edu).

**Gifts can easily be made online at [sociology.illinois.edu/giving](http://sociology.illinois.edu/giving)**

Or, if you would prefer send your donation by mail, please send it to:

**Department of Sociology**

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