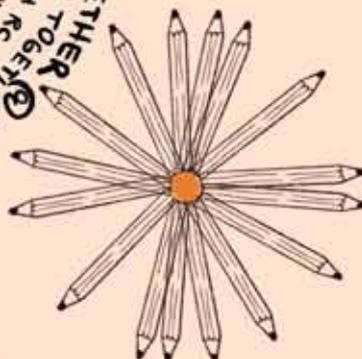
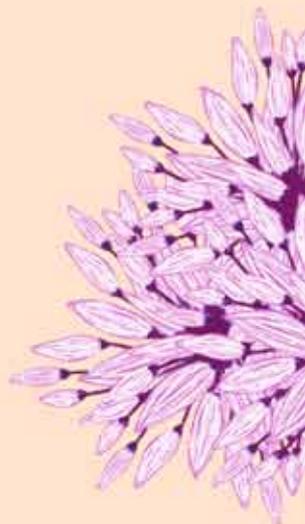
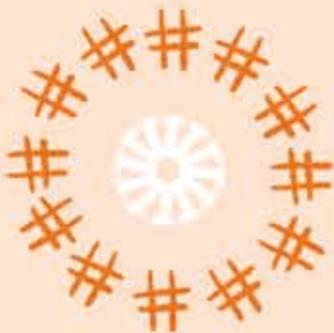


RC QUARTERLY SPRING / SUMMER 2020

ISSUE 56

# RCQ

ROBERT COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE



## THE PANDEMIC ISSUE



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This issue's cover is created by Kayansel Kaya RC L12 03, who also designed the cover for the previous RCQ, the Music issue.

Kayansel said she wanted the image to portray how we have been coping together as a community throughout the pandemic.



# RCQ

ROBERT COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Alumni Journal published periodically by the RC Development Office for approximately 10,000 members of the RC community: graduates, students, faculty, administration, parents and friends.

In its 157-year history, Robert College has lived through many turbulent times. 2020 proved to be one of them. This unique period is historical, and the RC Quarterly's 56<sup>th</sup> issue documents how RC moved to online education, how teachers, students, and the community at large adapted, and how alumni from various walks of life coped with the challenges thrown their way.

## In this issue



Among the many accomplished alumni at RC, health professionals occupied a special place in everyone's hearts. Their dedication and hard work at this time deserves a special mention.

The pandemic did not prevent much happy news from flowing in, including new job appointments, marriages, and babies!

As always, we would love to hear from you. If you have any comments or would like to share news, please write us at [alumni@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:alumni@robcol.k12.tr)

May the rest of 2020 be full of health and harmony! Happy reading!

The RCQ Team

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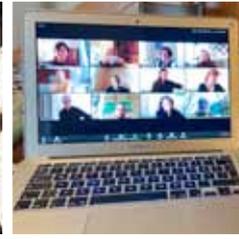
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Your feedback on the RCQ matters! Did you enjoy this issue? Write us at: [alumni@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:alumni@robcol.k12.tr)

## RC NEWS

- 4** Message from the Head of School
- 5** What's New with the Student Council?
- 6** A Special Send Off for the Class of 2020
  - 8** Excellence in Science Award
  - Washington, DC Trustee Reception
- 9** Agile Response Transforms JARC Event
  - Community Shares Lockdown Stories
- 10** Founders' Day Tradition Relaunched
  - Competition Highlights Student Artists
- 12** Installation Shows Art Doesn't Stop
  - Turkish Symposium Explores Women in Literature
- 13** 2020 Berker Fellows Announced
  - Seniors Perform The Bald Soprano

## GIFTS

- 14** Erdoğan Güları RC ENG 69 Tells Why He Is Giving Back to RC
- 15** ACG 69 Establishes Special Fund

## CIP

- 16** A Project in Muğla for the Love of Bees
- 17** Advisory Board Raises Social Awareness
  - Community Projects Move Online

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

- 18** Stimulating Discussions at Bizim Tepe

## RC IN THE UK

- 19** UK Alumni Meet with RC Head

## GRADS IN THE NEWS

- 20** Emre Turanlı RC 97 Appointed CEO of Shell & Turcas JV
- Nazan Somer Özelgin RC 81 Named Board Chair of MAPFRE Sigorta
- 21** Sevin Yeltekin RC 89 Appointed Dean of the Simon Business School
- Ege Argüden RC 09 is Part of Porsche's Design History

## COVER STORY

- Robert College Navigates the Pandemic **22**
- RC Alumni Help Interpret the Pandemic and the Post-Pandemic World **38**

## ONES TO WATCH

- Selin Gören RC 20 Inspires Her Peers To Take Action on the Climate Crisis **42**

## AROUND THE WORLD

- Seeing Seven Continents on Foot **44**

## ARTS

- Tamer Tamar RC 92 Opens Solo Exhibition in Tehran **48**
- Naz Beşcan RC 12 Explores Healing in Latest Exhibition

## BOOKS

- Duygu Alptekin Gürsu RC 92 Pens Leadership Guide **49**
- Cem Behar RA 64 Examines 16<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Music
- Sargun Ali Tont RC ENG 56 ex Shares His Love of the Sea **50**
- Müge Mengü Hale RC 92 Debuts Children's Book
- Belma Ötüş Baskett ACG 50 Pens Book for Hemingway Lovers **51**
- Ayşe Odman Boztosun RC 90 Writes a Groundbreaking Novel

## ALUMNI NEWS 52

## FACULTY AND FRIENDS NEWS 57

## OBITUARIES 59

## FACULTY AND FRIENDS OBITUARIES 64

Message from the Head of School Adam Oliver

# An Extraordinary Community in Extraordinary Times

As Robert College's new Head of School, you expect a few surprises. I would, however, be disingenuous if I suggested I expected quite how my first year has turned out! Thinking back across the last twelve months, there is much I want to say about the dedication and character displayed by our faculty, staff and students, but before that I must comment on the incredible work carried out by all those employed in Turkey's health-care professions, so many of them RC alumni, who put their own health at risk every day to ensure that the rest of us remain healthy and well. I know that I speak for our entire community in thanking them all, especially those who are RC graduates and parents, for their selfless care.

In my title I chose the word "Community" over "school" with purpose: it is at moments of difficulty that human beings generally show their best qualities, and the last four months have been no exception. I have seen all the different groups that comprise RC working together to support each other. Great support from the Parent Teacher Association has helped the school's leaders to understand parental needs and be responsive to them. Our Board of Trustees, and our distinguished Trustee Emeritae, have been invaluable sounding boards and critical friends, helping us to find optimal routes of travel through a landscape lacking any maps. Leadership from the Student Council, both formal and informal, has also helped us to understand and support the experience of our most important community members, the present generation of students. Our teachers and staff have shown unwavering commitment to maintaining a distance learning experience characterized



Head of School Adam Oliver

by RC's usual high standards, and a business-as-usual approach that has enabled us to provide full coverage of our curriculum. Personally, I am deeply thankful to all these people, as well as RC's senior administrators and team leaders, for the work I see from them every day.

Despite the disruptions and difficulties brought about by the pandemic, the vibrant life of our school has continued. The medium has changed, but teachers have delivered digital lessons

that have been as compelling as they would be in the classroom. Initially, we felt that our comprehensive club offer would be hamstrung by the pandemic, but I have been pleased and surprised to see that many of our clubs have also adapted to run successfully online. Even our athletes have found ways to train at home, some of them sharing amusing or challenging videos of their workouts.

We have also continued to celebrate the creativity and excellence that characterize our school. To give just three examples, wonderful artwork was produced for the Demirkan Aşetey Art Competition, and published in a beautiful online catalog. New Feyyaz Berker Fellows will soon be appointed, continuing that strand of RC's legacy of excellence. RC's tradition of distinguished prose and poetry was honored and renewed by the entrants and winners of this year's Jane Page Awards for creative writing.

We head into September facing fresh uncertainties, yet I look forward with optimism. We will enter the next academic year with a full complement of faculty, including a group of highly enthusiastic new teachers from America and the international circuit, complementing strong local hires. We have proven our adaptability to remote learning, and though we hope to resume "normal service" in September, we will also have detailed plans in place to cope with all likely scenarios that might arise.

If Covid-19 is the challenge, then education is the cure. Through stimulating curiosity, encouraging creativity, and emphasizing connection, the RC community will continue to flourish.

# What's New with the Student Council?

The Student Council (SC) plays an important role in the lives of RC students. The RCQ asked SC advisor Colin Edmonds how the organization has evolved over the years.



The 2019 Student Council served throughout the 2019 calendar year



The 2020 Student Council took over in January

## How is the SC selected?

This is one of the most major changes over the years, with really positive results. Starting a couple years ago, the new council takes over during the second semester instead of the beginning of the year so that outgoing SC members (L12 students) can support the incoming members. Officer elections are done in person via paper ballots, emulating a “real” election. Class representative elections are done online. This new system means that Preps can join the SC in the January elections after having some experience at the school, and gives outgoing L12 members more time to focus on their college entrance needs in the second semester.

## How has the scope of the SC changed over the years?

Of course, old timers will recall that there used to be two SCs - Orta and Lise, so that is a major change in scope. Official duties of the SC included more community assistance up until a few years back. Projects were organized to help other schools

in need. Assistance was provided to clubs needing support. Over the last few years, SC also began producing clothing - particularly for Seniors, but also for the school in general. On the FAF front, there has been a pivot to professional bands as opposed to amateur bands and performers from other schools.

## What sort of activities is the SC involved in?

There are other events besides dances! For many years, the SC ran a New Year's raffle. The SC has always organized some kind of event for Teachers Day. For several years it was a major production in the theater: skits, humorous awards and recognitions. More recently the SC has hosted display quizzes of teacher baby pictures, and distribution of flowers and/or chocolate along with cards. For several years, the SC hosted Admin Forums where administrators answered students' questions. One year, the SC produced Teachers Live, a variation on Lise Live.

To improve student life in general, the SC has worked on projects such as lowering canteen prices in association with the Food Committee, promoting “green” initiatives by producing water bottles and posters, working to manage indoor cat problems through awareness campaigns, procuring a foosball table, and working to establish shuttle bus service for students in the morning in coordination with the Parents Association, among other projects.

As partners with the Administration, the SC officers review exam schedules and provide student opinion to the Academic Director before midterms and final exams.

In their role as student voice, the SC regularly conducts polls to gather feedback about student opinions and inform others about issues the students are concerned about. The SC also regularly makes school-wide announcements at weekly ceremonies.

# A Special Send Off for the Class of 2020



On their last day, seniors cover the school with hand-written banners. This year they still hung them by digitally placing witty slogans on photos of the buildings.

**Do you remember** the last weeks of your senior year? The festivities and special events, trees and flowers in full bloom, making memories outdoors with your friends before saying goodbye. These are all part of the tradition of being a Lise 12, and something that students look forward to during their years at RC. To make being a senior even more special, and to allow them to have some fun during a year that's full of university applications and studying for the university entrance exams, for the last five years, the RC administration has prepared a series of activities throughout the seniors' final year. Something special takes place once a month on their graduation year day (for this year's class, it was the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month). Previous activities have included pajama day, "köfte-ekmek" in the maze, and a competition on stationary bikes to see which section could cycle the furthest.

These activities culminate in the Senior Day – the last day in May when the Lise 12 students come to school. The



A special surprise was organized for Lise 12 students on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. In February, they had a race to see which section could cycle the furthest using stationary bikes in Marble Hall.

seniors post messages around campus and decorate Marble Hall. A ceremony is held in the Maze with speeches by teachers, advisors and students. In the theatre their baby photos and graduation photos are shown next to each other, and they watch the special senior film that their class has worked many months on.

The Class of '20 wasn't able to experience all these year-end festivities in person due to the coronavirus. However, on June 4, the school organized a special event that included messages from teachers and speeches from students. They still got to see their baby photos and have a virtual water battle. Although they weren't



The Class of '20 poses in the Forum at the beginning of the school year

able to have a picnic on the Plateau, it was nonetheless a very intimate ceremony. 300 students and faculty were invited to meet over Zoom. The event kicked off with speeches from Head of School Adam Oliver and Turkish Director Nilhan Çetinyamaç, who invited everyone to turn up the music and dance at the end of her speech, and many did! Level Dean Gül Soydan and Counsellor Selin Şen also had the chance to address the seniors.

Student Council President Sedef Kalkavan L11 described the graduating class as laidback in her speech: "What

is coming to an end is your high school life at Robert College, but your friendship and your mentorship is not going to end for us." Lise 12 student Ekin Akoğuz made a special wish: "From now on, may all moments of our lives be as good as the experiences we had here." Lise 12 student Azra Haseki eloquently underlined the strength of the bond among the senior class: "This isn't the Senior Day any of us dreamed of – we started off with an earthquake and we're ending with a pandemic. The world truly cannot handle us. But I think this has taught us one thing: to not put things off, to not leave

spending time with our friends and classmates to the future. We never know what the future's going to bring, especially not if that future is 2020. We don't know what's going to be possible and what's not. The only thing we do know, and the only thing we have any power over, is now. And right now, you've chosen to spend it with each other. To come together in this social gathering even when isolation makes it so hard. I think that's a testament to everything we've shared together. And it's a testament to the bonds that not even pandemic can break, and so I think graduation certainly can't."



The Senior Day was a unique celebration hosted online

# Excellence in Science Award

## Honors Lise 11 Student

**The 11<sup>th</sup> annual** Professor Seyhan Nurettin Ege ACG 49 Excellence in Science Award was announced on April 6, 2020. Normally presented during flag ceremony, this year's recipient, Zeynep Yaprak Önder L11, learned she was chosen through a video message from Head of School Adam Oliver. In the video, later shared with students and faculty, Mr. Oliver congratulated Yaprak and said, "This achievement is something that will stay with you for the rest of your life and also anchors you to a great part of the traditions of Robert College." The announcement of the award was made to students and faculty during Community Time on the same day by Science Department Head Stuart Arey.

Güneş Ege Akter ACG 52, who established the award in 2009 in her sister's name, also addressed Yaprak via a video message. "I congratulate

you on your diligence, your dedication, your discipline, your aptitude and enthusiasm for the sciences. This is a memorable event for you, taking place at an extraordinary time of a pandemic as we all navigate uncharted waters. It's the scientists and the science who will guide us through what I hope and pray will be a singular event in our lifetime," she said.

Video messages were also prepared by Seyhan Nurettin Ege's classmate Ayfer Neyzi ACG 49, her former students Emine Yeğen ACG 70 and Güniz Büyüktür ACG 60, and Hümeysra Güçük who is a relative of the Ege sisters. Şevval Akkaya L12, the 2019 recipient of the award, said in her video message, "[The award] encouraged me to follow my passion in science more. Also it proved to me that I was on the right track to follow my dreams of becoming a great scientist in the future."



Zeynep Yaprak Önder L11, the 2020 Excellence in Science Award recipient

The award is given each year to a female Lise 11 student who shows outstanding dedication to the sciences.

## Washington, DC Trustee Reception

**The Trustees** of Robert College hosted a cocktail reception for alumni living in the Washington, DC area on February 20, 2020 at 1789 Restaurant in Georgetown. Attendees included a diverse group of alumni, from the 1960s to recent years, who were pleased to meet RC's Head of School Adam Oliver.

Trustee Robert Malley introduced the Head of School and welcomed him to Washington, DC. Mr. Oliver then presented a brief summary of the current status of the school and answered questions. It was an enjoyable opportunity for alumni from a variety of years to meet and share memories.



Alumni from six decades met at the RC Trustee Reception in Washington, DC on February 20, 2020

# Agile Response Transforms JARC Event

**Junior Achievement** of Robert College (JARC) was one of the first groups to move their activities online following the school closure in March. Mensis, a summit with leaders in business, civil society and academia, took place on April 26.

The original event was scheduled to take place on campus on March 14, with attendees coming from other schools around Istanbul. "All of our preparations were going well, and we were excited about hosting Mensis," explains JARC secretary Ayşe Edil Evcı L10. "Three days before the event, we learned that we wouldn't be able to hold it because of Covid-19 precautions. We were disappointed to have an event that we put a lot of effort into be canceled due to reasons we couldn't control. Then we saw the quarantine as an opportunity to host Mensis online."



The Junior Achievement of Robert College team

With renewed enthusiasm, the Junior Achievement members contacted the speakers, workshop facilitators and students who had registered. This was the first time all of the club members had to deal with a crisis, and prepare an online event which had different aspects and different challenges. In the end they were able to reach a broader audience, with 40 schools from around Turkey attending.

The program included seven speakers and two workshops. The participants enjoyed the influential speakers from civil society, academia and the business world - Aslı Pasinli, Burak Küntay, Reha Abi, Doğa Can Coşar, Mehmet İnhan RC 76, Ahmet Onur, and Gülşah Güray - as well as engaging workshops with Mert Serim and Reflect Studio.

# Community Shares Lockdown Stories

**On May 1**, the RC Social Entrepreneurship Club (RC SEC) organized an open mic event for people to share their experiences during quarantine. Lise 9 student Soykan Çağan Baş, who organized and facilitated the event, explains:

"Amid social-distancing, the school experience became all about online lessons. Although all of us had opportunities to participate in many online events, as RC SEC, we realized that they lacked interaction.

RC SEC has always played a leading role in organizing events where people could build connections with others, so we thought of adapting our culture to an online environment. While organizing Lockdown Stories, we



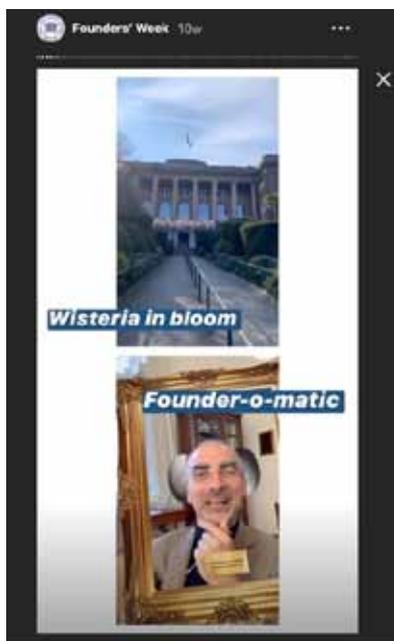
were influenced by Moth Stories (live storytelling events) and from the times when our ancestors gathered around the fire and told each other stories. RC is a diverse community, so we wanted to create a similar experience by creating a variety among our storytellers.

During the event, we heard from people who were struggling to adapt to a new routine away from their friends, people who discovered new hobbies, and people who were seeing this time as an opportunity to enjoy the moment. Through Lockdown Stories we not only told each other our stories, but in this safe environment, we also had the chance to show empathy towards each other."

# Founders' Day Tradition Relunched

**Founders' Day**, together with Charter Day, were long-standing traditions when the boys and girls were on separate campuses. This year, RC re-launched the event as a week-long celebration of the school's heritage called Founder's Week.

Founders' Day originated on the Bebek campus in 1888, the 25<sup>th</sup> year of Robert College, and was always held on March 23 - Christopher Robert's birthday. The girls followed suit with the first Charter Day held in 1908, to mark the day that ACG received their charter to be an independent school from the Legislature of Massachusetts. Charter Day also coincided with the March 10 birthday of Mary Mills Patrick, the long-time visionary President of ACG. When the schools merged in 1971, the tradition was discontinued.



Special filters of wisteria blooming on Gould Hall and RC founders were available on Instagram

This year, the Development Office revived the celebration as a way to remind the community of the rich heritage of the school and the ideals for which it stands. Originally planned with several activities around campus, the celebration went virtual after the campus closed.

The week kicked off on March 23, which coincided with another milestone in the history of the school - the day that classes began online. Through the school's social media accounts historic photos were shared. In addition, visitors could play with fun filters which turned them into school founders and showed the wisteria blooming on the front of Gould Hall. The week finished off with a quiz on the history of the school.

# Competition Highlights Student Artists

The winners of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition were announced on Wednesday, April 29 in an online ceremony attended by members of the RC community including contestants, RC art faculty and members of the Class of RC 76 who support the competition in memory of their classmate each year. "The generosity of the class during the last 18 years for this annual event has enabled many RC students to demonstrate their artistic voice through public exhibition and identified, annually, a group of extraordinary young artists, rewarding them for their endeavor," said Art Department Head Merrill Hope-Brown.

Unable to display the works and hold the award ceremony in the Suna Kırış Hall foyer this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, the event was recreated online in the hope that art



The winning works were featured in a catalog, which included all the submissions to this year's Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition

would provide the students a way to heal, grow, and reflect in this time of self-isolation. Students submitted digital versions of their artwork, and 21 finalists were selected out of nearly 70 pieces. The first prize went to Mir Mengi Petekkaya L11 for his photobook, "Some People and Some Other Stuff". Bora Mert Volkan L12 received second prize for his work "Abstract". Ayşe Akçaylı L9 came in third with her piece "The World Moves on a Woman's Hips".

This year's judges are visual arts professionals in the areas of curatorial work, education, and professional production. The panel included Sibel Horada RC 98, Yasemin Bihter Adalı RC 02 and Bora Fer RC L12 03, who himself was a winner of this competition as a young student.

Held since 2002, the Demirkan Aşetey RC 76 Art Competition is supported by the Class of '76 in honor of their classmate who was an art enthusiast.



# CİLT SAĞLIĞI BİRLİĞİ VEET PURE SERİSİNİ ÖNERİYOR

**Hipoalerjenik  
Formül\***



**YENİ**

\*Alerjik reaksiyon riskini minimize etmek için özel olarak formüle edilmiştir.

# Installation Shows Art Doesn't Stop

## Designing assignments

for students during the pandemic required RC art teachers to get creative. Photography teacher Narciso Argüelles was determined to give his students a meaningful and rich experience through engaging projects. This included a photo installation on campus that was also displayed at the Hardesty Art Center AHHA in Tulsa, Oklahoma, called Art Doesn't Stop.

When asked why he decided to prepare this exhibition, Argüelles, who normally lives in Oklahoma but came to teach at RC for the spring semester, said, "My original idea was to have a physical exhibition in Oklahoma City in a gallery that was part of a university. But when everything locked down and we could no longer do this, I instead decided to exhibit the students' photos on campus at RC and find a gallery in Oklahoma to host it virtually. I have exhibited at AHHA several times and consider them friends of mine."



Students' self-portraits depicting their mood during isolation were displayed on campus and on website of the Hardesty Art Center AHHA in Tulsa, Oklahoma

Students were asked to photograph self-portraits depicting their mood during their time of isolation. "It was a way for the photo students to stay engaged and to help them deal with their isolation, almost like therapy," the photography teacher said. They emailed the images to Argüelles who printed them in the photo room using transparency film for inkjet printers,

and displayed them on the windows in the hallway between Mitchell and Gould, creating a stained glass effect. A video of the works was prepared and presented on the AHHA website as a virtual exhibition. The students also included some of the photos in a publication that showcased their work throughout the year.

## Turkish Symposium

# Explores Women in Literature



Attendees of this year's Turkish Culture and Literature Symposium

The theme of women in literature was explored during the 15th Annual Turkish Culture and Literature Symposium, hosted by the Robert College Turkish Language and Literature on March 7, 2020.

The opening speech was made by Prof. Dr. Jale Parla ACG 64, esteemed comparative literature professor and literary critic. This year's symposium speakers were Neslihan Cangöz whose talk was titled "An Evaluation on

Feminist Works from World Literature", Senem Timuroğlu who spoke about "A Study on Feminist Works from the Ottoman Empire until the 1970s", and Ezgi Hamzaçebi who discussed "After the 80s and About Recent Feminist Works in Turkish Literature Review".

They were followed by panel speakers Müge İplikçi, Sinem Sal and Figen Şakacı who discussed the topic "As Long as Women Write".

RC's Turkish department teachers said about the event, "It was a pleasure for us to host these speakers at Robert College in a manner befitting the significance of International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8." Following their individual talks, the guest speakers also answered questions from the attendees.

## 2020 Berker Fellows Announced

Since its founding in 2008 through a gift by Feyyaz Berker RC ENG 46, the Berker Fellowship has been recognizing students who demonstrate integrity and maturity, have a strong sense of social responsibility, contribute to the community, have a positive spirit and are involved in school activities. The new members of the Berker Fellowship were announced at the closing ceremony on June 19, 2020 by graduating Berker Fellow Berfu Ege Söbe L12. The students who have been honored with this role are Giray Yılmaz L11, Ege Turan L10, Bensu Coşgun L10, İdil Çenberci L10, Anya Kamalı L9, Onat Ergin L9 and Tuna Sağdan L9. Each year, new Fellows are chosen from Lise 9-11 students so they can continue to be a leading example for other RC students.

“Being a Berker Fellow is really special to me because the people you’re working with are really unique and talented, and



The Berker Fellows serve as exemplary leaders in the school community

are trying to positively influence their environment and be uplifting to Robert College,” says Sedef Kalkavan L11, who

became a Berker Fellow in 2019. Lise 11 student Gökercan Göker who became a Berker Fellow the same year said, “The existence of the Feyyaz Berker Fellowship depicts the value given to character at Robert College.”

Every year a sum of money is drawn from the Berker Fellowship fund, and the students decide how the money will be used for the benefit of the school or community at large. The Berker Fellows are currently supporting an initiative to create a website where students can share supplies such as lab coats, calculators and books.

Past projects include installing water fountains around campus to reduce the use of plastics, putting up electronic sign boards in high traffic areas for announcements and other information, and organizing study sessions for students who need academic assistance.

## Seniors Perform The Bald Soprano

One of the highlights of the year is the play put on by the RC Theatre Company Seniors, which is staged early in the second semester. This year the veteran RC actors put on an energized, devilish performance of Eugene Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano* on February 20 and 21, 2020, in Bingham 1. In *The Bald Soprano*, first performed in 1950, Ionesco played with topics ranging from language imprecision and memory to classism and conformity. The play can be especially challenging for actors as it is chock full of non sequiturs, circumlocution and ultimately nonsensical language. Lines rarely have a clear motivation behind them, and characters often behave unpredictably.

Audiences especially loved the odd exchange between the characters Mr. Martin (Selis Yaltkaya) and Mrs. Martin (Aylin Manav), a husband and wife who do not recognize each other at first, but through an exhaustingly



Lise 12 students Gizem Doğan, Aylin Manav, Selis Yaltkaya and Azra Haseki in a scene from *The Bald Soprano*

long deductive process, realize they are married. The refractory maid, Mary (Zeynep Soydan), and her taunting of the chauvinistic and entirely incapable Mr. Smith (Gizem Doğan) and his repressed wife, Mrs. Smith (Azra Haseki) brought welcome discomfort to the play whenever it seemed like things might get “normal”.

Especially off-kilter and riotous was a segment where the fireman (İsmet Mert Küçük) told stories, including an “experimental fable” where the fireman barked out sounds randomly. Overall, the cast was lauded for its timing, physical expressiveness and explosive finish.

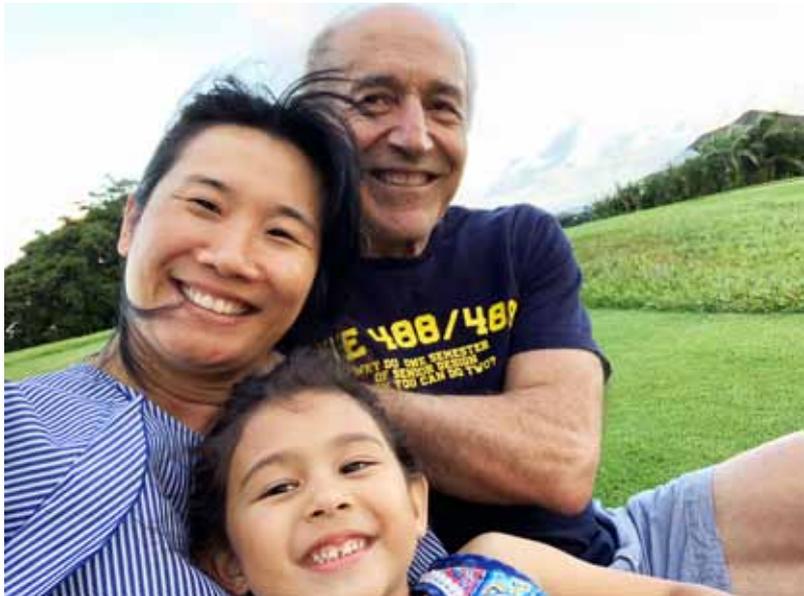
## Erdoğan Güları RC ENG 69 Tells Why He Is Giving Back to RC

**Erdoğan Güları** knows what it means to receive a life-changing education. Born in a small village in Erzincan, he had the opportunity to study at Robert Academy thanks to donors who provided him a scholarship throughout his high school and engineering school years. Today he is the Donald L. Katz Collegiate Professor of Chemical Engineering at the University of Michigan and a researcher in the areas of biotechnology, energy and environment.

Earlier this year, Güları became a member of the Board Chair Scholarship Circle. He has also pledged to establish an endowed scholarship. Erdoğan Güları told the RCQ why he decided to support his alma mater in this way.

“I was born in a small village in Erzincan and grew up as the son of a high school mathematics and science teacher whose income was barely enough to support his family. I certainly could not have attended Robert Academy and the School of Engineering if it were not for the scholarships given to me by the school.

“In my mind getting admitted to Robert Academy with a scholarship has been the most important contributor to my professional successes. Robert Academy not only gave me an excellent education, but most



Erdoğan Güları RC ENG 69 and his wife Ning with their daughter

importantly broadened my horizons. I had classmates from different backgrounds, outstanding teachers, and opportunities to participate in a variety of sports.

“For these reasons, my wife Ning and I are happy that we are able to give back and help another promising student from a financially poor background have the chance to benefit from the educational opportunities offered by Robert College.

“My father was a teacher, and I have been a professor for 42 years. I

strongly believe that the best way we can impact the future of Turkey is by providing an outstanding education to new generations. I feel it is especially important to educate young girls from less developed parts of Anatolia, so that they can break the shackles put on them by poverty and a male-dominated society.”

As a Board Chair Scholarship Circle member, Erdoğan Güları’s \$30,000 annual gift covers a residential student’s tuition, board and additional expenses throughout the student’s time at RC.

# ACG 69 Establishes Special Fund

By Neşecan Çakmak Balkan ACG 69

2019 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our graduation from ACG. We celebrated it with a series of fun activities and were delighted to all be together at our alma mater after so many years. As soon as the celebration preparations started, a few of us began discussing the possibility of establishing a scholarship fund to crown this special occasion. We knew that establishing a scholarship may be difficult, so we consulted with the Development Office. We learned that many students face financial difficulties beyond tuition while they are at RC such as purchasing laptops, attending field trips or even going home during breaks. The more we heard these stories, the more eager we became to create a supplemental education fund, and we found out from the Development Office that we could donate for a cause of our preference under the heading “Special Projects.”

What a great idea! After considering some possibilities we came up with the idea of a *kumbara*, that is, piggybank. We invited our friends to donate whatever they wished, to the “ACG 69 Kumbara,” and thus create a fund that would be used for supplemental educational expenses for students who need them. Without delay, we sent a comprehensive message to our ACG 69 WhatsApp group and explained our proposal. We required a reasonable minimum donation amount but also expressed our hope that the individual donations would be much higher than that. We wrote: “The sky is the limit!”



ACG 69 celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> reunion on campus

The response from our friends was immediate and quite positive. Everybody in our class understood the importance of supporting education, and everybody appreciated the quality education we had received from our alma mater. This was the moment to give back. There were some constructive questions and suggestions which helped us shape certain aspects of the project. We tried very hard to offer transparency and accountability. The donations would be deposited directly into the Robert College bank account under the heading of ACG 69 Kumbara; none of us would know how much each person donated, and the funds would be channeled to supplemental educational causes. The Development

Office would give us a summary of how the funds were used at the end of 2020.

The donations started to pour in. Every few days we would announce the total amount so far. At one point one of our classmates decided to anonymously contribute on behalf of a deceased friend. When we announced this thoughtful gesture, many other friends sent in donations in the name of other friends we had lost. We were all so glad to see the class spirit growing stronger each day and for a good cause. In the end, we managed to put together quite a substantial sum. Many of us think this project was the highlight of our fiftieth year celebrations.

# A Project in Muğla for the Love of Bees

A unique project focusing on the importance of the ecological cycle and how it is protected by honeybees and other pollinators brought together RC students and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Zorlar Köyü, Muğla during the last weekend in October 2019.

The first step in the Arı Aşkına (For the Love of Bees) project was the designing of a card game about bees, by art teacher Maria Sezer and fellow artists. The game helped RC students learn about the anatomy and life cycle of bees prior to going to Muğla. RC students played this game with the middle schoolers in Muğla to increase their awareness and appreciation of nature. Participants visited an apiary and attended workshops given by a local beekeeper to learn how beeswax is used for various products. They also made seed bombs which were later launched into a field to become flowers for the bees.

RC students stayed with the local students' families, which was a great



Students learn about bees through a game designed by art teacher Maria Sezer

way for them to experience a different way of life. Most of the host families were involved in beekeeping, so the RC students were able to observe what the children of these families knew about bees.

The experience was rewarding for all the participants, as described by RC students:

*"This project made me acquire another perspective about life itself. I believe it was mainly due to the fact that we stayed with families. I was fascinated by how hardworking and determined those kids were. They all had their own goals and they worked very hard for them."* - Tuna Sağdan L9

*"I have seen how more information can cause more interest, thus more environmental-consciousness, which is one of the main aims of this CIP Project. If it were not for our explanation of bees, their parts, growth, and ecological effect, the children would not have been so inspired and engaged while we went into the bee farm. Although some of their relatives were already beekeepers the extra knowledge and enthusiasm that we have tried to give to them made them more conscious and interested both about the bees and nature in general."* - Ege Turan L10



Safety first! Suited up students learn about life inside a beehive.

# Advisory Board Raises Social Awareness

By the 2019-20 Community Involvement Program (CIP) Advisory Board Team

**The CIP Advisory Board** was formed in 2011, and is an integral part of RC's CIP program, collaborating with the CIP Office on program development, facilitating leadership training, organizing events, and increasing the visibility of CIP at RC and beyond. Composed of L11 students who have been exemplary leaders in two or more CIP projects, the Advisory Board empowers students to take ownership and expand the impact of the Community Involvement Program.

This year we organized several events that focused on creating awareness about social issues and different communities around us. On December 5, 2019, we celebrated International Volunteer Day by inviting representatives of various NGOs to share their stories and aims, and also organized interactive workshops such as honey tasting, upcycling, and an installation about bees. On March 9, we worked together with the CIP Office to carry out several events regarding



The 2019-2020 CIP Advisory Board members celebrate Women's Day at RC. From L to R: İlayda Koca, Cansu Birsen, Pelin Tiryaki, Beste Kuruefe, Zeynep Yılmaz, İpek Naz Öbek, all Lise 11 students.

International Women's Day. We had an open mic event at the RC Commons and faculty to talk about an issue or memory that they have experienced regarding women's rights, gender inequality, or gender stereotypes. In the Student Council booth in the Commons canteen, we created a small, cozy room called "A Room of One's Own", where people could share their memories, thoughts, or experiences about this day, and leave with a gift of chocolate (thanks to the RC Student Council). During the lunch break,

we held a forum where we discussed gender stereotypes in advertisements and media. We also designed posters about breaking gender stereotypes and hung them on the promo boards around school.

Throughout this year, our "behind the scenes" view of CIPs has expanded our perspectives and approach to CIPs. We've also strengthened our collaboration and planning skills and have become an excellent supportive cooperative team.

## Community Projects Move Online

**The pandemic** instigated the transformation of CIPs into online projects. From March to mid-June, 23 RC students took part in three such projects, working with over 70 students from five schools in Istanbul.

With young people under 20 quarantined for quite a while in Turkey, there was a critical need for fitness and sports. The students running the Sports and Healthy Life CIP project developed an online program to get middle school students to build their muscles as well as English language skills. RC students met online three days a week with participants to discuss healthy eating and lifestyle

habits. These discussions were followed by workout videos in English that the students did together. The participants learned basic workout sequences that they can continue to practice through the summer and beyond.

With the initial uncertainty around the Turkish high school entrance exam (LGS), a group of RC students started supporting 8<sup>th</sup> graders who were preparing for the exam without the benefit of face-to-face instruction. From April until mid-June, 11 RC students met twice a week with over fifty 8<sup>th</sup> graders to help them prepare for the LGS.

BU Paws, a CIP that has been running with Boğaziçi University Dog Sanctuary for many years, switched their focus from caring for dogs in the shelter to developing content for the organization's website. RC students interviewed experts on animal care and protection issues, creating videos to share on the BU Paws website. "We addressed topics such as first aid for injured animals, the conditions of animal shelters, and appropriate communication with animals," says project leader Zeynep Yaprak Önder L11. These videos will be shared with schools and the community at large on their Instagram account @rcbupaws

# Stimulating Discussions at Bizim Tepe

The Robert College Alumni Association hosted a variety of events for alumni to get together, both in person and online.

## RKMD Talks

### Before the Last Iceberg Melts

Climate change has become a climate crisis. The change is so rapid that it threatens human existence and future generations. Renowned climate scientist Prof. Dr. Levent Kurnaz discussed this problem with sustainability consultant Gülin Yücel RC 88. Climate Activists Selin Gören L12 (see p. 42) and Atlas Sarrafoğlu joined the discussion as well.



### Well Women Visit

On Women's Day, March 8, obstetrics and gynecology professor Prof. Dr. Başak Baksu RC 88 and Pulmonary Specialist Dr. Elif Altuğ RC 88 reviewed ways to maintain wellness for women. Questions covered in the session included "What are the preventive and periodic examinations that women are recommended to have throughout their lives starting from adolescence?" and "What is the complementary role of mental health and mindfulness?"



### Confessions of a Healing Addict

Editor of Mundi Kitap, Özlem Alkan Karakuş RC 87 held a panel with Ela Başak Atakan, the author of *Bir Şifa Bağımlısının İtirafları* (Confessions of a Healing Addict; Mundi Kitap). The book is based on Atakan's own experiences, and the discussion revolved around how and if shamans, astrologers, hypnotists, body readers, massage and dance therapists, energy experts and healers help one's soul.



## Webinars

BCB Talks @ RKMD was planned to be a series of talks hosted by RKMD, delivered by Boğaziçi Counseling for Business - a network of professional consultants. It turned into a webinar series due to the pandemic that looked at various topics before, during and after Covid-19 such as managing our economy and people, the economy in 2020 and risks in new norms of the world, sustainability and investments, law and work life, what brands should be doing, and the digital world and customer experience.

Another webinar during this period was Embodied Parenting with Vivi Soryano RC 76. This interactive session, which also featured group exercises, helped parents consider how they themselves had been parented and their own current parenting style.

**BCBTALKS @RKMD**  
**DİNLİYOR VE YANITLIYOR**



Gülin Yücel



Polin Yenigün Dilek



Deniz Tarrıkulu Kalaylıoğlu

Covid-19  
Öncesi ve  
Sonrası  
Sürdürülebilirlik  
ve Yatırımlar:  
Ne Değişecek?

CANLI  
WEBİNAR

Tarih  
7 Mayıs Perşembe  
Saat: 17:00





## UK Alumni Meet with RC Head

**Alumni** from in and around London met with Head of School Adam Oliver at a reception in Notting Hill on January 20, 2020. It was a full house, with 75 people attending. Mr. Oliver gave a brief talk about the current status of the school and upcoming initiatives. The group of RC grads from six different decades enjoyed sharing memories with their classmates, and making connections with other grads in the UK.



Friends enjoy catching up. From L to R: Eda Yıldırım Büyükkayalı RC 95, Olgay Büyükkayalı RC 96, Defne Kazan RC 96, Zeynep Çizmeci RC 96, Deniz Taser Çetinok RC 97



Adam Oliver (center) chats with RC 14 alumni, from L to R: İpek Naz Erel, Esin Serin, Mert Dilek and Hande Güven

## Emre Turanlı RC 97

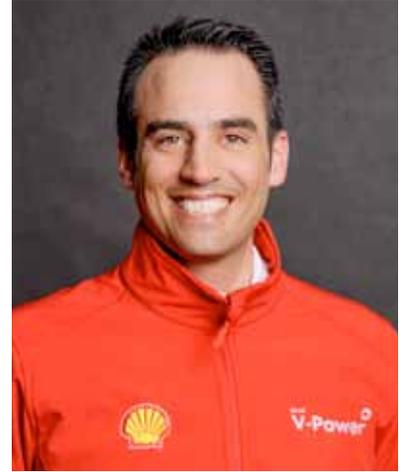
# Appointed CEO of Shell & Turcas JV

**Emre Turanlı** has become the CEO of Shell & Turcas JV, the sixth biggest company in Turkey. His new role covers retail, lubricants, trading and supply businesses, as well as supporting functions. Turanlı was recruited by Shell right after Boğaziçi University and was offered his first assignment in Corporate Finance at Shell Germany. He held various leadership roles in several countries within the company for the past eighteen years up until his latest appointment.

When asked about RC's contribution to his path in life, Turanlı stated "Robert

College gives you an amazing vision, diversity, and most importantly sense of leadership which effectively is the most important thing in today's world. Society and business need better leaders, and Robert College is very strong at transforming the beautiful minds that walk through that door at a young age, into strong leaders of the future.

It is often difficult to see this while you are still at RC or just after you graduate. However, as you progress in life, both personally and professionally, you see the positive impact that RC had on you as an individual."



Emre Turanlı RC 97

## Nazan Somer Özelgin RC 81 Named Board Chair of MAPFRE Sigorta

**MAPFRE Sigorta** is one of the most prominent insurance companies in Turkey, and one of RC's own is now at its helm. Nazan Somer Özelgin was appointed Chair of the Board on March 31, 2020.

After Robert College, Özelgin studied Business Administration at Boğaziçi University. She started her career in auditing and moved on to banking. She had been a board member at MAPFRE Sigorta since November 2018. She is also an independent board member of Unicredit Bank Romania, Unicredit Bank Croatia (Zagrebacka Banka) and Ingenico, France (a payment technology company). On the social responsibility side, Özelgin is a board director for Istanbul Golf Club and serves on the advisory committee of Darüşşafaka Foundation.

Özelgin maintains that the insurance industry got its fair share from the adverse circumstances resulting from Covid-19: "The real challenge across the globe post-Covid-19 will be how to adapt to exponentially expanding customers' needs, knowledge and expectations, a trend which has started in the past decade. Customer-based strategies, innovative products and the ability to adapt to a digital environment, as well as investing in technology and new talent will be the key to success looking into the future."

She credits RC with providing added value to her life, as well as career: "RC gave me knowledge, but more than that it gave me values. It taught me the importance of freedom of speech, being fair, embracing diversity, thinking straight and talking straight. It made



Nazan Somer Özelgin RC 81

me feel important and helped me grow my self-confidence but also taught me to respect others. When I look back today, it was like an executive training program specially designed for teenagers which in business life felt like I was always one step ahead."

# Sevin Yeltekin RC 89 Appointed Dean of the Simon Business School

**Sevin Yeltekin**, the Rohet Tolani Distinguished Professor of Economics and Senior Associate Dean of Education at the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University, has been appointed the next Dean of the Simon Business School at the University of Rochester. A highly respected macroeconomics scholar, Yeltekin is the first Turkish woman to lead a business school in the United States.



Sevin Yeltekin RC 89

Yeltekin highlights some of the challenges ahead: “Currently much of our time is spent designing classrooms, instruction, research and operations that respect safe distancing and health guidelines while delivering a high-quality experience and education. The travel restrictions due to Covid-19, coupled with a less

than favorable immigration climate in the US are making it difficult to bring in the diverse, international student body we would like. These immediate concerns, in addition to the shifting landscape of management education, are challenges we need to face and resolve. A third, and I think more important, challenge is designing a

strategy to address the racial injustices and violence pervasive in the US. All institutions, including business schools have a role to play. We need to move beyond words to measurable action and impact, and we need to be very intentional about it.”

Yeltekin credits RC for teaching her three fundamental things: “Analytical, critical thinking - to think about what I read, analyze it, construct analytical, rigorous arguments and most importantly, the confidence to defend those arguments; resilience and the power of hard work and the peer network and community. My best friends to this day are from my RC cohort. The ability to create, foster and maintain such a tight-knit community after three decades speaks volumes about RC’s priorities.”

# Ege Argüden RC 09 is Part of Porsche’s Design History

A **concept car** designed by Ege Argüden appears in *Porsche: Excellence was Expected*, a definitive four-volume book on Porsche’s design history. Argüden’s work was covered over four pages, and author Karl Ludvigsen named him one of the designers of Porsche’s future vision.

Argüden started drawing cars and scenes from nature very early. When his father told him cars are sketched by car designers who are often inspired by nature, he discovered his dream job. He did his first internship at the Yonca-Onuk shipyard in Tuzla, and there he met Murat Günak (Chief Designer of VW Group at the time). Günak liked his designs so much that Argüden was able to do internships at the VW Design Studio near Berlin for two summers during high school. He



Ege Argüden RC 09

had another internship at BMW, and subsequently studied at Art Center College of Design in California. The concept design in the book is his graduation project. Currently Argüden works at Ford’s main design studio in Michigan designing future production cars.

The RCQ asked him how he was inspired for this project: “I’ve always wanted to buy a 1973 Porsche 911 RSR. ‘What if I designed a modern version of my dream car from the ground up?’ was the question that started the 901 project. However, other notable cars in Porsche’s history have also inspired certain parts of the design. I’ve studied every blueprint of the original 911 I could find.”

Argüden credits RC for his open-minded attitude that has influenced every aspect of his career and his life: “I really think that RC is unique among other high schools with the quality of its staff, amount of elective classes and its flexible education. The most amazing campus and lifelong friendships made during my education are a big plus of course.”

# Robert College Navigates the Pandemic

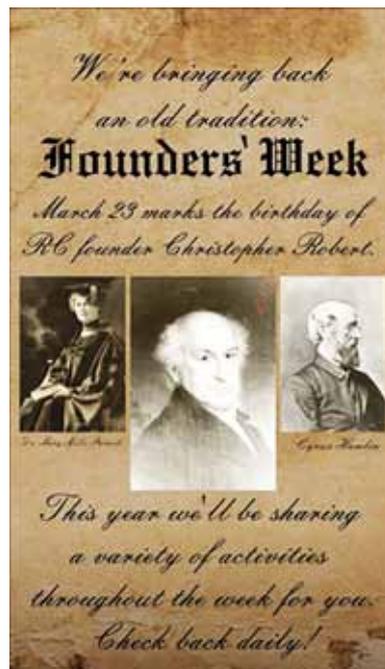
“May you live in interesting times!” The purportedly Chinese saying perfectly suits 2020 - the year of the coronavirus Covid-19 global pandemic. At this historical juncture, the RCQ reviews not only how RC adapted to the pandemic’s challenges in terms of education, but also the verve with which the RC community came together to support one another and those in need. 2020, despite all the hardships, is a year when the spirit of RC shines bright.





Everyone missed the wisteria this spring

**In its 157-year history,** Robert College has lived through many crises, as well as several wars. Indeed the two founders of the school, Cyrus Hamlin and Christopher Rhinelander Robert met in 1856, right at the end of the Crimean War, during which there was a terrible cholera outbreak. The solidarity of the RC community was evident from early on. For instance, in 1912, when the Balkan War broke out, teachers and students sewed outfits for soldiers, and the College donated beds for the wounded. Inspired by Halide Edip RC 01, many alumni became voluntary aids and looked after the wounded according to *The Story of Robert College Old and New* by May N. Fincancı, former RC Librarian. During the occupation of Istanbul in the First World War, the ACG and RC community supported the refugees from Albania and Crimea during their quarantine on Büyükdada and took some of them in as students and workers afterwards, as recounted in *Tepedeki Okul* by Cem Akaş RC 86. In the 1918-1919 Robert College Annual Report, it is noted that “the Spanish fever made its appearance during the year and many of our teachers and students suffered from it during the three months, October to December, 1918.” More recently, when Turkey was devastated by the 1999 earthquake,



Founders' Day was relaunched this year as Founders' Week on March 23, which coincided with the start of distance learning

the Robert College Earthquake Aid Committee was formed immediately on August 18. The Committee helped channel financial, medical and material aid to the disaster-stricken area.

After much turbulence through the decades, RC faced yet another one this year with the global coronavirus

pandemic. As the disease spread across the globe and approached Turkey, the school began making preparations in case online learning became a reality, and it did on March 23, 2020. It is an interesting coincidence that the transition to online learning occurred on this date, which happens to also be Founders' Day. This year, RC's Head of School Adam Oliver, spearheaded the revival of this tradition to celebrate RC's heritage (see p. 10). Indeed in line with RC's founding values, the RC community came together in myriad ways from then onwards for support and healing, as well as continued excellence in education.

### **Facing the Challenges of Online Education Shoulder-to-Shoulder**

The guiding principles of the school at this difficult time were maintaining the high-quality learning characteristic of Robert College, ensuring essential curriculum coverage, and fostering well-being. Head of School Adam Oliver underlines that the Board of Trustees and Trustee Emeritae provided invaluable support, as the school embarked on this complicated journey.

The very first action the school took was, of course, to create a Covid-19 response team to define protocols, plans, and alternative scenarios,

prepared according to different “back to normal” timelines. Three major educational goals for this period were immediately established:

- Connect educators and learners despite being physically away from each other
- Provide them access to information and learning environments
- Continue to support professional development of educators in a more flexible way

Fortunately, RC had already started preparing for distance learning as Academic Director Maria Orhon explains: “Robert College had already laid the foundation for ‘anytime anywhere learning’ when we established the 1 to 1 laptop program. Since that time RC has also invested resources to make sure that teachers have continuing professional development that enables them to use technology to enhance learning. Early in 2020 the school was tracking the spread of the virus in other countries and learning from other schools the best way to prepare for possible closure. By the time the Ministry made the announcement, teachers had



The IT team made sure distance learning continued without a hitch

already prepared at least two weeks’ worth of content, so we were actually ahead of the curve.”

### RC IT and Educational Technology Teams Worked Hard for a Smooth Transition

The RC IT team ensured that all stakeholders were up to speed for a smooth, multi-faceted online education experience. In Head of School Adam Oliver’s own words “Careful planning and dedicated work from our IT team have meant that hardware and software problems have been insignificant, and where issues arose, they were speedily resolved.” RC CTO Tanol Türkoğlu stated that they quickly developed an issue management and reporting system to better measure the support needs of faculty members and students during the distance learning period.

The Education Technology Team guided teachers as they moved to virtual classrooms. Pinar Kadioğlu, RC Education Technology Coordinator, explains that the school was well-prepared for the necessary transition: “Thanks to the special project that was carried out before the school year started, RC had already merged multiple Learning Management System (LMS) environments into a

single one, called Google Classroom, common to all teachers, students and courses. Google Classroom enables teachers to create classes, distribute assignments, provide feedback and promote collaboration. Students can follow up on everything related to their courses using the software. In addition to this system, a digital platform has been developed to gather essential how-to materials, and training videos on tech tools for all teachers to access as needed. For live video sessions, two alternative solutions (Zoom and Google Meet) were provided to the teachers, and each teacher chose one according to his or her preference. Moreover, additional devices were provided to science, math and university prep teachers to better their online teaching experience. At the start of the distance education period, each teacher demonstrated the technology skills they acquired in the past years to design new flexible teaching and learning environments, teach in a new (virtual) environment remotely and share experiences with their colleagues.”

During the distance learning period, surveys among teachers, students and parents were conducted regularly, and new adjustments were made based on the results. The

**Robert Kolej  
Tarihi  
Instagram Paneli**

**25 Mart 2020, 20:00**




**Nuri Çolakoğlu**  
RC Emekli Mütevelli  
Heyeti Üyesi,  
Gazeteci-Yazar

**Önder Kaya**  
RC Tarih Öğretmeni,  
Tarihçi, Yazar

ROBERT KOLEJİ

Trustee Emeritus Nuri Çolakoğlu RA 62 and RC History Teacher Önder Kaya discussed the history of the school as part of Founders’ Week

weekly schedule was revised to allow less screen-time without disregarding the educational principles.

### RC Teachers Rose to the Challenge but Missed the Physical Presence of Their Students

The RCQ asked RC teachers about their teaching experience, and their responses shed light on the surprises and challenges, as well as the funny instances of teaching online.

#### Maura Kelly, English Department Head: “Teaching remotely is hard and is not remotely as rewarding as being in the classroom with students.”

We went live with our distance learning experience on Monday, March 23 at 8:50 a.m. First lessons were awkward and slow. Microphones muted then unmuted and then muted again as people frantically gestured to you and mouthed, “I can’t hear you.” Students and teachers had to adapt to awkward conversations wherein people interrupted each other followed by long lags of silence. Teachers, like DJs, had to learn how to cue-up screens and video feeds while asking the students, “Can you see this? Can you hear it? Can you hear me?” Faces, reduced to small boxes, froze often. Teachers and students looked at each other through screens, asking: “Are you okay? Are you well? What about your family?”

Teachers’ learning curve needed to be fast. Lesson planning for an online



English Department Head Maura Kelly missed being in the classroom with students

class requires new approaches and vast technological know-how. A whole new vocabulary was introduced: synchronous teaching, asynchronous teaching, Zoom meet, Zoombombing, Google Hangout, House Party, break-out rooms, screen share, and waiting rooms. The IT Department was and is on-call, supporting teachers and students to navigate these new methods of learning. Yet, nothing can prepare you for the physicality and draining nature of online learning. It requires long stretches of sitting, shoulders hunched, and eyes strained looking into the glare of a screen causing headaches, backaches, eye fatigue, and muscle cramps. All of us in need of a stretch. All of us in need of a haircut.

Through it all, RC is showing its resiliency. There is laughter and moments of genuine communion as we help each other take each day as it comes. We escape the confines of our homes by using virtual backgrounds with colleagues teaching from space, the Caribbean, and students sitting next to Homer Simpson. We meet over movie nights, SC Corona Journals, and remote teas. We are keeping our spirits up with birthday shout-outs during Community Time and Music on Mondays concerts. All of us are thinking about the seniors, and we are celebrating the remarkable class of 2020 as they deserve.

The halls may be empty now, but the RC school spirit remains. We are together.

#### Nathan Harris, Chemistry Teacher “I’ve found small-group video conferencing to be one of my favorite tools.”

We’re doing a mix of large group discussion, small group discussion and individual work in chemistry, the same major elements we would have been doing in person. I aim to have each of these elements in each class. Ideally, class begins and ends with around five minutes all together, more if we’re beginning a new topic. Students will then typically watch a short video independently, followed by work or discussions in small groups until we meet to summarize at the end of class.

Atomic Line Spectra and Atomic Models



Chemistry teacher Nathan Harris created his own content that he used for his classes and shared with colleagues



Distance learning was new to everyone, even seasoned teachers like Art and Music Department Head Merrill Hope-Brown, who said, "I went to school to give my first online lesson and was more nervous than I have been since I started teaching 40 years ago."



Maria Sezer taught her students the principles of ceramics through cooking. Here Arda Poda L12 makes sweets.

My main contribution to this has been lab and demonstration videos. As a campus resident with access to the Feyyaz Berker labs, I'm able to set up and record practical chemistry videos. These have a very homemade feel, but I think this is one of their strengths. My hope is that they both tightly support what students are learning about and help them feel connected to their teachers and their school. Most or all material I am making is being used across chemistry classes, and I am routinely using notes and videos created by other teachers.

I've found small-group video conferencing to be one of my favorite tools. When students aren't faced with a screen of 25 thumbnail videos, they talk much more naturally. I can join these small groups to answer questions or guide the discussion. Students are tired, but persevering. With everything that is strange and different right now, the important things are the same. Students like to see us, and see that we are working hard and care about them and what they are learning. The converse is also true. I'm encouraged to see their faces on my laptop. It's heartening to see students smiling, working hard, and making the best of a challenging situation.

#### **Maria Sezer, Art Teacher**

**"Since every house has a kitchen, having my students cook seemed the best solution to me."**

When I heard that we were planning for online teaching, I was flabbergasted: How can I do ceramics online with my students, who will not have clay or tools at home? Quickly it became apparent I had to look for an alternative, something each person could do in their house. Since every house has a kitchen, having my students cook seemed the best solution to me. Cooking requires research, planning, fine hand coordination and aesthetic presentation, which are quite parallel to things we do in ceramics. Besides that, in a time of crisis, I hoped to bring family members together and for my students to be a help around the house, and food always comforts. Photographs of the process, the final product and a cleaned-up kitchen were to be posted onto the classroom.

Again, my RC students amazed me! Most of them clearly enjoyed their tasks and I heard many heartwarming stories of students learning about how to do certain dishes from dads, mothers and grandmothers. While online we discussed technical questions as to whether adding an egg to the dough would make the

We've been getting a lot of use from Edpuzzle, which allows teachers to annotate and add questions to online videos. There's a temptation I think many teachers around the world are facing right now to just lean on videos created by professionals. We are doing our best to resist this and use a healthy percentage of our own content.



Head of Counseling and Well-being Erkan Uğuzalp

dough less brittle and easier to shape. I learned of new ingredients like spirulina, for some of my students started making variations on dishes. A student told me that her food processor was bringing her happiness each day. Sometimes I heard of fierce judgements from grandmothers who were not easy to please, and we had good laughs about them! Of the vegetable dishes, *mücver* was most popular in all kinds of shapes and ways. But I also received pictures of sarma, or celery root with quince and orange juice - no small feat. I learned of a new Korean vegetable dish called *bibimbap*. Or veggie rolls Japanese style. For sweets, semolina was the most popular for making *irmik tatlisi*, but family members had birthdays and were surprised by some amazing San Sebastian cheesecakes as well! One student made *tanguyan*, a Chinese sweet consisting of rice balls stuffed with crushed sesame seeds, floating in a sweet juice. Bravo to all of them and the support they received from their families.

### Well-Being is at the Fore of RC's Approach

RC has been focusing on well-being even more, as part of its 21<sup>st</sup> century vision. Erkan Uğuzalp is the newly-appointed Head of Well-being for the school, as well as the Head of Counseling. He defines



RC's Level Deans, from L to R: Emre Firat, Gül Soydan, Aydemir Doğan, Neşe Yıldırım and Koray Demirkapı

well-being as good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning and purpose, and the ability to manage stress. He held an informative presentation and Q&A session with students, faculty and staff, as well as with the Okul Aile Birliği (Parent Teacher Association) right at the beginning of the move to online education. He emphasized that everybody is in unprecedented circumstances that require a different

mindset, such as focusing on what we can control, establishing a routine, and acknowledging anxiety as a normal reaction to the situation. He also stressed the importance of exercising regularly and feeling gratitude. Reminding parents of the competitive culture and high academic expectations at RC, Uğuzalp outlined the steps the school is taking to ensure the well-being of students.

## The Health Center Remains Accessible 24/7

The RC Health Center faced a once-in-a-lifetime health situation in 2020. Dr. Behlül Hüseyin explained how they handled it.

“Individual protection measures were obviously critical during the pandemic. The most important steps in this fight are about increasing social sensitivity and awareness. That is why as the Health Center, we started informing our students, teachers, and staff from the very first day with the most up-to-date information, as well as providing individual or group training. We keep abreast of every individual's health state in coordination with other departments in school. The Health Center remains accessible 24/7 with its full staff intact.”

The questions most frequently directed to the Health Center have been:

- When will this be over? When will we get back to normal?
- Is there an effective treatment method?
- How long will it take to develop the vaccine?
- Is it as dangerous as some say?
- How does the virus spread?
- How long does the virus stay alive on surfaces?



Every year the L12 students' graduation photos are hung in the hallways

One of the first initiatives that was undertaken to ensure a smooth transition and reduce stress was the Virtual Town Hall meetings. Dean of Student Affairs Margaret Halicioğlu explains that the meetings have been held for students and parents in each level, faculty and staff. "Students submit their questions ahead of time, there is a formal agenda, and a protocol for expected participation. Not surprisingly, most of the student questions have been around assessment, midterms and finals, as well as whether or not the school will be open during part of the summer."

Another critical aspect of the increased focus on wellness is the level deans. Since 2017, there is a dean

for each level of students at RC who is a communication center between teachers, students and parents. During the pandemic, level deans follow attendance closely, not for disciplinary reasons but because their priority is to learn if there is anything wrong and find a way to help the students and teachers to make education continue its flow successfully. They have regular meetings with the class representatives and are sometimes invited to or themselves volunteer to observe lessons.

The RCQ asked the Head of the Level Deans, Koray Demirkapı, to describe this period from their perspective: "This period is simply different. We see the students through a glass screen,

and it is not giving 100% correct information about the student. We miss the emotions. When we are physically at school, we walk around, and it gives us a chance for a wider observation. Sometimes we find a student sitting somewhere and upset about something. We are having a chance to solve a problem directly and help that student very quickly. During this period we cannot do that. That's why we are always in contact with teachers to get information about the students for a better follow up. The level deans are also working very closely with the counselors; we are supporting each other and share information about the students. We all have found ourselves in an absolutely different world suddenly, but our transition was successful, and the quality of education being given has met the high standards."



A typical department meeting during distance learning

The adaptation of the students has gotten better over time according to the deans: "The LPs and Lise 9s transitioned faster. The upper classes had slightly more problems than the lower classes. Some of the students who normally had motivation problems in the physical classroom had similar problems in the online world too. However, some of them have been doing better in an online environment. The positive side is the students are at home, and there is no time spent in



This year a video was taken of the photos and shared with the students

traffic. Most of the residential students seem happy to be with their families. The negative side is the time spent in front of the screen and the psychology of being trapped inside the house, as they are below twenty.”

The physical aspect of well-being was not forgotten. The PE Department has created a website “The RC Health and Wellness Library” to be used as a fitness resource. A wide variety of workout videos, healthy recipes, information on how to improve your sleep, and teachers’ recommendations have been compiled on this site. Students and teachers are able to upload their own workouts, cooking and relaxation/meditation videos.

### Parents Were True Teammates in This Transition

The move to online learning deeply impacted parents as well the students. All of a sudden, most of the family, if not everyone, is at home, needing their own working space, as well as regular meals and snacks. The RCQ asked the head of the Okul Aile Birliđi (Parent-Teacher Association - PTA) Özlem Mutlu Yalçın RC 89, about this unique experience from the parents’ perspective:

“RC Parents are at their proudest in the beginning of their children’s RC Journey on the registration day for Prep and in

the end, on the day of commencement. But this spring, everybody is singing praises of the school. We started the spring semester with a letter from the Head of School Mr. Oliver, giving us up-to-date information about the coronavirus and the precautions taken. In our monthly PTA meeting on March 4, we were informed that the school was ready for distance learning in case of a mandatory closure. The compulsory spring break was hard for families. Keeping teens at home 24/7 came with infrastructure challenges, internet quotas had to be revised with service providers, as well as emotional distress on parents as the teens all seemed to suffer from jet-lag, sleeping till the afternoon. RC’s counseling department rushed to the help of parents, putting into perspective our

children’s emotions, assuring us that we weren’t alone and we could ask for help.

“Before the break was over, we were informed in detail about the distance learning program that would be implemented. Expectations from the parents and students were clearly communicated. It was a relief for all the parents to learn that ‘online school’ would follow the same schedule as the ‘physical school’ albeit starting an hour later. We were reminded of the dress code - no PJs, preferably no disheveled looks and timely shaving. For those of us who work outside, this was a relief; we knew that our children were engaged and focused for the majority of the day. For those who work from home, the established routine made our lives easier and more productive.



Members of the Parent Teacher Association



Overseas College Counseling Director Tamara Türeli

“Our opinions about the program were asked and changes were made in line with our suggestions in addition to those of students and faculty. We all feel upset that they are missing the campus, the wisteria of Gould Hall and strolling on the Plateau, but we have no qualms about academics. More than ever, they are learning about those values that make us human, such as compassion and caring. Level deans and teachers write to them daily, sharing their feelings, lending an ear and as a result teaching them how to manage uncertainty while establishing stronger bonds in the RC Community.”



L12 Counselor Selin Şen

Turkish University and Career Counselor  
Mehtap Kaya

### Students Made the Best of an Unexpected Situation

Students’ feedback about the online learning experience is consistently positive. Lise 12 student Ata Engin states, “I found this online version of learning more effective for me. It was probably because I was comfortable during the classes, with my most comfortable outfit, my tea, my coffee... I arranged my room to create the best learning environment for myself. Also, this new way of living under quarantine decreased my focus points in life. That’s why, I was much more focused on the lessons than I used to be in school.”

Lise 9 Student Gülce Aydın says the pace of the lockdown period has impacted her learning positively: “The transition was fast. I wasn’t sure how I was going to learn, handle the situation or adapt to it. As days passed, we adapted through small changes in our schedules, pace and understanding. Since we have the chance to learn at our own pace, I understand topics better and learn new things from different courses that I enrolled in outside of school. I took the opportunity to improve myself and my well-being through different activities that I didn’t have the chance to perform because of the intensity of life and school.”



Turkish University Prep Coordinator Mehmet Ali Ayne

Gülce speaks for most students when she says the co-curricular activities were the saviors of the hard times: “I loved the effort that my peers and teachers put into it. I love the concerts, SC activities, and meetings with experts. We have online CIPs, and I feel amazing to have the chance to contribute to my community. RC Orchestra with Mr. Baysal is a lot of fun. We had an online concert, and it was really great to see our output.” Ata prepared an online mini clarinet concert for Music on Mondays: “After my video was shared with the whole school, I got almost 20-30 emails from teachers and students about my clarinet concert. Everyone’s positive reactions made me really happy.”

Students credit RC’s teachers and the whole support system with the smooth transition. Ata was in awe of the effort all the teachers put into the process: “They had to reshape their entire way of teaching.” Lise 9 student Gülce kept in touch with her level dean and counselor: “We talked about the ups and downs, progress and feelings. Overall, it was amazing to go through this with our teachers, counselors, level deans, peers, administrators and school head. I never felt alone and I saw how the faculty was trying to make the best of it through alterations, and this feeling of being considered important was elating.”

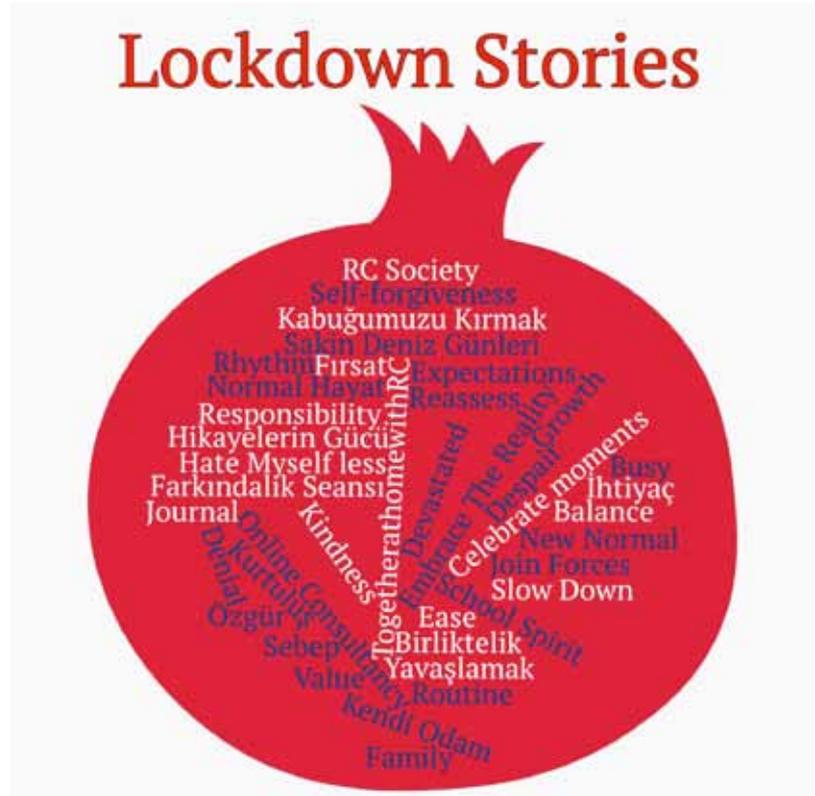
Ata underlines the extra effort for the graduating class: “Our level dean Gül Hoca put so much effort into our ‘online’ graduation preparations, and she motivated us all the time. Our school administration team (Mr. Oliver, Ms. Çetinyamaç, Ms. Halıcıoğlu, Ms. Orhon, Mr. Welch) always prepared surprise videos, especially for us as seniors - they were so much fun to watch.”

### The Graduating Class Faces Unique Challenges

The pandemic’s timing had an important impact on the graduating class. Whether planning to go abroad or to enter the Turkish university exam, there is a lot of ambiguity. The RCQ asked different members of the RC team to shed light on how this class moves on to university.

Tamara Türel, Director of College Counseling explained that universities abroad released their admission decisions as scheduled. However, the pandemic affected their “yield” efforts: “Normally colleges and universities hold admitted student days so that students can visit the campuses in person as they choose where to attend. Universities very quickly created online, virtual experiences instead, as the campuses were closing.

In terms of the next upcoming cycle, which will affect L11 students, many US colleges are moving to “test-optional” or no testing required, reassuring high schools that flexibility and understanding will be used while evaluating students who had interruptions to learning, limited access to testing, and little to no



Students and faculty shared their feelings in an open mic event hosted by the RC Social Entrepreneurship Club called Lockdown Stories

access to activities, clubs, etc. Similar messages are coming in from the UK and other European universities as well, in recognition of the challenges facing high schools worldwide.”

Turkish University and Career Counselor Mehtap Kaya conveys that the back-and-forth about the university exam dates caused mixed emotions among the RC students. “In the first days of uncertainty, it was helpful to students to learn about the exam dates and information about the exam content from YÖK and MEB, and

for students to make a study plan as soon as possible.”

University Prep Program Coordinator Mehmet Ali Ayne states that university prep work resumed the very first week schools were closed. Interactive online classes were held after school every day during the weekdays, and on Saturdays. Apart from the classes, students were able to ask questions to their teachers individually over Zoom. All the relevant documents and tests were shared over Google Classroom. All individual counseling sessions and



The school created a sense of togetherness through Community Time, an online version of flag ceremonies. The first event was hosted by Turkish Director Nilhan Çetinyamaç and Dean of Student Activities Joe Welch.

Turkey-wide prep exams also continued online. Ayne emphasizes that both attendance and presence in these sessions never waned, and students continue completing the necessary work on their own: “The motivation and enthusiasm of the students did not falter, despite all the difficulties, which made us very happy.”

Lise 12 Counselor Selin Şen describes how the students were coping with the changes emotionally. She explains that anxiety levels rightfully increased: “Immobility, difficulties in time management, changes in eating schedules, socialization limited to phones and computers were typical problems voiced by students.” Sleep turned out to be a problematic area: “Going to bed late, waking up late, difficulty falling asleep and wanting to sleep all the time were mentioned by the students.” Concentrating

and studying at home also proved difficult. The students with parents who are health professionals had compounded stress.

In short, Lise 12 students were deeply affected by being away from the school in the one semester when they were planning to say good-bye to it. RC came up with ways to celebrate the graduating class and to recreate the crescendo of activities that takes place during their final weeks on campus. Each year, the L12 students’ cap and gown photos are put up in the corridors between Mitchell and Sage. Because the students couldn’t be at school to see this, Film & Literature teacher Jameson Vierling and Dean of Student Affairs Margaret Halicioğlu hung the photos and prepared a video showing the corridors as well as a close-up of each photo. Another year-end tradition is a video with photos

of the graduating class as Lise Prep students. Normally shown during flag ceremony, a link to the video was shared with all the students as a surprise on May 20. The tradition of Senior Day, which is all about bidding farewell to the seniors in a meaningful way, was also not forgotten. An online ceremony took place June 4, with speakers addressing the seniors. The childhood photos of the seniors and the class video were shared. The ceremony ended with the school song and the songs that the seniors had selected for their traditional departure from the Maze.

### The Pandemic Fueled the Creativity of the RC Community

The sense of community is an integral part of an educational experience and extends throughout a lifetime. That is why RC devised many creative, ingenious ways to come together



Bob, the RC bobcat mascot demonstrated how to stay safe during the pandemic on Instagram

## Plant Management and Security Thought of Every Possible Detail

RC Plant Manager Serap Ulusoy and Security Manager Cengiz Pektaş had to think of the minutest of details and roll out never before implemented precautions during this time. Here are some examples:

- School buildings and all common areas are disinfected every day, as per Health Ministry protocols.
- Surfaces that are frequently touched, such as elevator buttons or door handles, are wiped with disinfectants frequently.
- Visuals reminding protective and preventive measures were placed throughout the school.
- All cargo and packages are disinfected through UV-C cabins set up at the security gates, the Health Center, and in front of the ATM machines.
- All common areas, dormitories, classrooms, and offices are aired frequently and cleaned meticulously.
- Only fountains from which water bottles or glasses can be filled remain in use; the rest are temporarily disabled.
- Informational meetings were held for the RC technical team and all third parties serving the school.
- The health of all third party staff is monitored.
- Food stock supplies are monitored to ensure continuation of food service.
- Pre-packaged knives, forks, spoons, salt, toothpicks, and bread are being used in the Murat Karamancı Student Center cafeteria. The salad bar is now temporarily closed, with yogurt, mixed salad, and other dishes are being served in pre-prepared packaged portions. There are also no more carafes on the tables and fewer chairs per table.
- People coming to campus have their temperature taken at the security gates with thermal cameras.



The Development Office kept the alumni community connected through the Together@Home series on Instagram

virtually during the pandemic. One of the first initiatives that immediately took off was Community Time. Dean of Student Activities Joseph Welch explains. “Community Time came out of our discussions about how we can create a forum like the Flag Ceremonies, where we are able to gather the students, faculty, and staff together to inform, recognize, and celebrate members of the RC community.” Every Monday an email was sent with announcements, attachments, and links to videos. The very first Community Time was on April 6, where Head of School Adam Oliver gave a video message, reminding the students to look after themselves and reassuring them the school will keep listening to them

to make the necessary adjustments and strike the right balance. Nilhan Çetinyamaç, Turkish Director and Associate Head, reminded the students that this is a historical time: “This temporary situation will pass. We will be together again, and your voices will fill the campus.”

Activities providing enrichment and fun bloomed across the community. The Student Council has been active with Instagram videos and quizzes and creating the RC Corona Journals with videos and weekly suggestions for films, books, recipes, as well as weekly memes. The İbrahim Bodur Library created its own Instagram account sharing news, e-resources, books and activities. The CIP Office created an





Concerts and events may have been canceled, but that didn't stop students from performing. The RC Singers, RC Modern Dance Club and RC Orchestra all filmed videos separately that were then combined to create moving performances.



The *Art Doesn't Stop* installation featured student self-portraits depicting their mood during isolation (see p. 12)

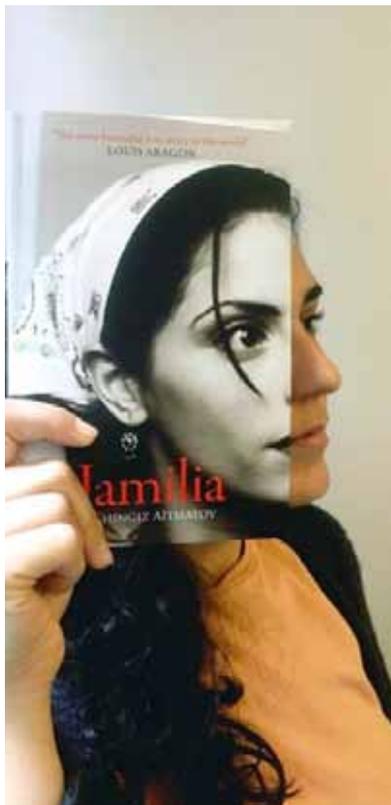
upcycling challenge with directions on how to make a paper wallet using paper from around the house.

Clubs have joined the mix by sharing interesting content. Because they couldn't do their annual performance in Suna Kiraç, the Modern Dance Club individually filmed one of their performances to "Bohemian Rhapsody". The clips were

stitched together as an end-to-end performance showing each of the dancers. The RC Singers put together a video showcasing the different choral competitions they performed over the years, and performed "Stand By Me" via video – with 35 people in sync over the internet!

Of course, the alumni contributed to the communal energy as well.

The Together@Home with RC series, initiated by the Development Office, organized many live performances and discussions, which were met with great enthusiasm. Some examples include concerts on Sunday evenings with talented musicians Cemre Necessbaş RC 13, Deniz Taşar RC 09 and Su Özer RC 15, meditation with Zeynep Aksoy RC 88, yoga with Hüma Gruez RC 85 and drawing with Kayansel Kaya RC L12 03.



Every Friday the RC Library posts a "book face challenge" to their Instagram account

### Alumni Rallied Together to Address Different Needs

Through the decades, many RC students went on to become prominent doctors in their fields, and the pandemic pulled them together like never before. In the early days of the outbreak, a WhatsApp group and Telegram group were established with over 250 members in a range of classes from ACG 46 to RC 19. Buğra Berkan Bingöl RC 15, currently in his fifth year at Yeditepe Medical School, managed the groups. He relays the experience: "It all began with my classmate and medical student Şeyma Hasköylü RC 15 asking me if there was an RC Doctors Network. Our intention was to gather the medical doctors who work in Turkey and around the globe in order to share the latest updates on the emerging global pandemic, and discuss the evolving treatment procedures in a safe atmosphere of a closed group of fellow alumni, as well as providing provide solidarity and

support to those who are in need. We began having brainstorming sessions about what we can do for those of us who currently work devotedly in the ERs and Covid services of the hospitals in Turkey. With the help of our alumni community we were able to provide personal protective equipment to 16 of the busiest hospitals, mostly in Istanbul and Ankara." RKMD helped in connecting alumni to doctors or hospitals who needed disinfectants, protective outfits or gear.

Mert Tanal RC 09, who is currently completing his general surgery

specialty at Şişli Hamidiye Etfal Research and Training Hospital, was one of the doctors at the heart of the pandemic. The RCQ asked Mert about how his RC education impacted his experiences as a doctor at this special time: "Robert College gives you a vision of life - a vision that allows you to make calm decisions and help people using your social skills. Being a doctor as an RC graduate pushes you not only to be a doctor, but also to be a problem-solving director in times when your colleagues are worried, pessimistic, and exhausted."

# Corona Journals

20-27 April 2020

Website Link: <https://sites.google.com/robcol.k12.tr/rc-corona-journals/home>

## First Corona Journals Newsletter

Hi everybody! We are very excited to announce "RC Corona Journals" but what is it? What's in it? Can we eat it? Here are the answers to all your questions:

- RC Corona Journals is a website that is designed for the RC community to have some good time and preserve the school spirit during quarantine times.
- The website features weekly activities, memes, RC news, suggestions, and videos.
- There will be new ones every week.

### 1. Activities

a. "Guess Who" is the first activity. It is a riddle within a story. This week's question is: who rang the fire alarm? The first one to solve might win a small prize!

b. The second activity is "JEOPARDY!", it is a trivia game consisting of several groups of questions. The first game will be on the 28th of April starting at 18.00. If you want to compete, gather your group! For further information and registration here is the link: <https://forms.gle/zuW83eoM7w8HbJYX8>

c. The third activity is a weekly quiz consisting of three questions.

d. The last activity is the "Crossword" consisting of ten questions.

### 3. RC News

These are the compilation of the things happening in our school, similar to Monday Community Hours and Daily Announcements. You may read them from the website.

### 5. Videos

You can watch the amazing performance of the RC Modern Dance Theater and the first Music on Mondays video!

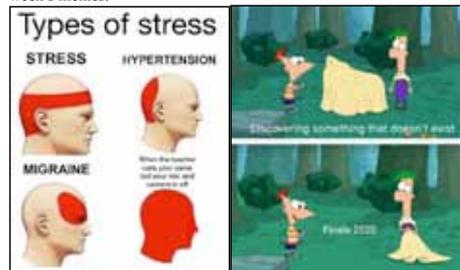
Every week, with the videos and photos you send to us, we prepare a funny video. To be featured, send your photos and videos -anything that you think would fit into a funny montage- to the mail address [sc@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:sc@robcol.k12.tr).

You can find these videos from the website.



### 2. Memes

There will be tons of memes every week because... Who doesn't love memes, right? Here are our 2 favorite memes from this week's memes:



### 4. Suggestions

The first suggestions are recipes! Check these recipes to cook some delicious food. This week we have a brownie and a birthday cake recipe for you.

The second suggestions are books! This week's books are "Wonder (Mucize)" from R.J. Palacio and "Masumiyet Müzesi" by Orhan Pamuk. You can read the reviews from the website!

The third ones are song suggestions! Alongside with the new Spotify playlists of the school, you might want to check these songs out.

There are also some film suggestions! What is better than lying on your bed and watching some good films? This week's films are "The Platform" and "Mad Max Fury Road". You can check out the film reviews from the website!

Finally, we have TV series suggestions for you! We know that you absolutely love watching series, because we love too. This week's series are "Breaking Bad" and "Brooklyn Nine-Nine". You can have a look at the reviews from the website!



Mert Tanal RC 09

RC 97 was another example of resourcefulness. They led the generation of funds for the Cerus Intercept System, which was then donated to İnönü University's Turgut Özal Health Center in Malatya, the first hospital in the world to start immune plasma treatment after centers in China. Yasemin Sıralı was instrumental in identifying this device, as were Özge Karadağ Çaman and Burcu Tuncel who guided the process. In this effort, the Class of 97 partnered with Turkish Philanthropy Funds (TPF), whose founders include Haldun Tashman RC 66, Özlenen Kalav ACG 67, and Mustafa Kemal Abadan RC 77, as well as Paylaşma ve Dayanışma Platformu (PAYDA), which has RC graduates on its board and as



Buğra Berkan Bingöl RC 15

members, ranging from the class of 1962 to 2007.

The story of Şeyma Bilimer Arsel ACG 60 during the pandemic shows how an individual can create a world of difference. Bilimer Arsel states that her education at ACG/RC shaped her view on the necessity of solidarity and gave her the courage to pursue social responsibilities: "When this coronavirus also hit Turkey and became a serious danger, I felt that I needed to do something about it, so I started my own personal campaign." Arsel, a class agent who is very successful at raising funds for RC's annual giving campaign, rose to the occasion and collected over 2300 boxes worth of aid for the municipality's campaign.

Many corporations lent their relevant expertise where needed during the pandemic. Arçelik, whose CMO is Zeynep Yalim Uzun RC 86, was one such corporation. Arçelik commenced the mass production of mechanical ventilators, necessary for the treatment of Covid-19. Led by the Turkish Ministry of Industry and Technology and the Turkish Ministry of Health, Arçelik designed and tested the first prototype of the ventilator developed by Biosys.

Atabay Pharmaceuticals, whose Board member is Zeynep Atabay Taşkent RC 88, increased the production



Şeyma Arsel ACG 60

capacity of key medicines, capsules and suspensions which were used as part of the Covid-19 therapy protocols in hospitals. In June the Ministry of Industry and Technology announced that Turkish scientists were able to locally synthesize a key medicine in the treatment of Covid-19 and that Atabay Pharmaceuticals' infrastructure was being utilized to commercialize this medicine.

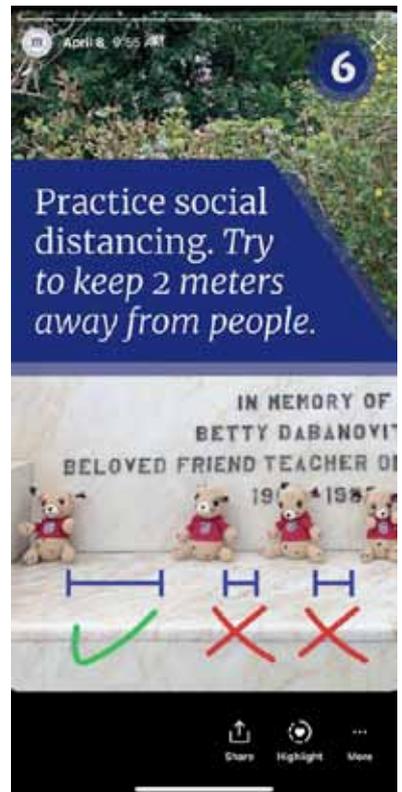
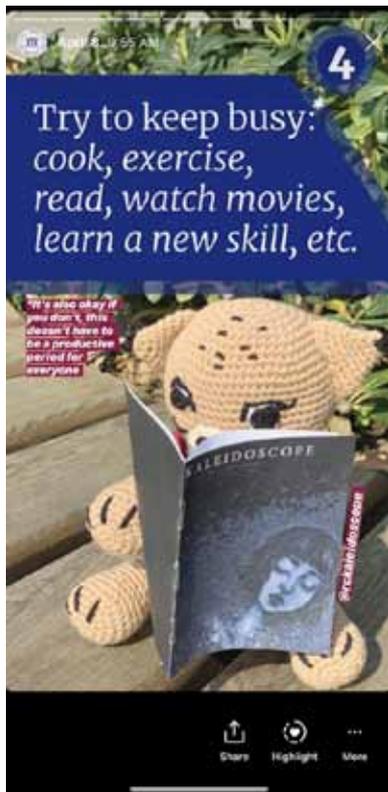
In short, more alumni than can possibly be mentioned, in their professional or personal capacities, contributed in the fight against the pandemic. Medical student Buğra Berkan Bingöl RC 15 sums up the sentiments of the RC community during the pandemic perfectly when he says, "We always knew that RC graduates were benevolent and united in times of need and always felt in our hearts that we are one big family of luminary thousands all around the world, yearning to get together with their loved ones under the wisteria just like I do."

This, too, shall pass. Knowing that RC marches on without compromising on the excellence of its education and with a powerful, loving, and giving community should make all members of the RC community very proud indeed.



Zeynep Atabay Taşkent RC 88

# Bob, the RC bobcat mascot demonstrates how to stay safe during the pandemic



# RC Alumni Help Interpret the Pandemic and the Post-Pandemic World

The pandemic once again reminded everyone how important it is to nurture one's physical, psychological, and spiritual wellness and to realize that health and balance are part of the definition of success. To that end, the RCQ contacted alumni who are studying or working in areas that explore this crucial matter from different perspectives and asked for their views and experience.

## At the Heart of the Pandemic

### Dr. Elif Altuğ RC 88 Helped Her Staff Cope With Stress

*"The acute stress of the early days turned into chronic stress, so we turned to mindfulness."*

Dr. Elif Altuğ has been working at the American Hospital for the last nineteen years as a pulmonary specialist. Because of her specialty, she faced the worst of the pandemic every day. Both she and her staff managed the stress through mindfulness practices.

#### What were the first days of the pandemic like for you?

I only now realize how hard it was in the beginning of the pandemic. I feel like I am emerging from a battlefield. We were living from moment to moment. Even though we had plans and procedures in place, we had to constantly shift course because real life is always full of surprises. Also it was never about just patients. We had to protect our nurses and our staff. It was a period of intense planning. There were unfortunately deaths. With each passing day, everything improved, but the first two weeks were really, really tough. My son says I lost all sense of time!

#### How did you cope with the stress?

Three years ago, we established a mindfulness center at the hospital named Code Lotus, with the help of my classmate Zeynep Aksoy. Our aim was to teach doctors and nurses to be aware of their bodies, their breath and to help them stay present. During



My RC 88 classmates were a source of happiness for me at this time.

the pandemic, the acute stress of the early days turned into chronic stress among my staff. Observing this, I started doing mindfulness exercises with three different services every morning for ten minutes each. Even our cleaning staff got used to doing the exercises. With masks on and keeping our distance I led them through visualization exercises, empowering them to feel more rooted in the here and now. Everyone realized that they were not alone in what they were living through. They became

more in touch with their bodies. They understood that the aches and pains they felt were, in fact, common among their colleagues. Their focus and intent became even sharper. The survey conducted during this period showed our team to be excelling in various criteria, proving how well they benefited from these exercises.

#### How do you envision life in the upcoming months?

My personal opinion is that the measures our country has been adopting are good. I think closing the schools was the right decision. I urge the RC community to continue to be careful, to follow the rules. Wearing a mask and social distancing are important. Once we start socializing, start by seeing people you know well, in small groups of two or three. Cut down the hours when you hang out. Continue to be careful around the elderly. Change your clothes frequently. Swimming is OK, if you are not in crowds. This summer, you cannot hang out on the beach for hours.

#### You were a source of healthy information for your classmates during this period. How did you interact with them?

My classmates made me feel supported, like, I was working for a wide community and that I was not alone. I often picked my phone up to write to our RC 88 WhatsApp group before I wrote to my family.

## Ayşe Türkeri Zadil RC 89 Helps Businesses Incorporate Mindfulness

*“Compassion shown to the difficult feelings that have arisen during this special period is a real antidote.”*

Ayşe Türkeri Zadil was a corporate and investment banker/manager for twenty-five years, but recently she became a mindfulness expert. She is now facilitating groups, coaching individuals and leading the Young Presidents Organization European Mindfulness Group.

### Why did you make this important change in your career?

My best friend was diagnosed with cancer, and I got the worst performance appraisal ever at work. These triggered a search for meaning in my life, and I began meditating. Mindfulness provides a way to watch your inner world, get to know yourself deeply and redesign your life. I shed my covers, especially the suffering perfectionist relentless performer, seeking confirmation and love, being tough on herself and others. I felt a



strong desire to introduce this practice to others. I left day-to-day banking and became a teacher certified by Deepak Chopra.

### How can businesses incorporate mindfulness in a practical and efficient way?

For businesses, a customized approach is important. The business world, full of competition, continuous pressure, and ambitions, amplifies our ego's drama. Some companies target stress reduction, others may

want to teach their employees to de-personalize work life.

### How can mindfulness help alleviate stress from the corona pandemic?

The pandemic has brought a spectrum from fear to creativity. Mindfulness helps at multiple levels: Relaxation, letting go of the emotions through practice of acknowledging, investigating and detachment from feelings. This practice brings freedom and creates a fertile ground for creativity.

### You did mindfulness exercises together as a class during the pandemic. How did that work?

We hold a weekly online meeting. Together we choose our variation on the basic mindfulness practice, such as emotion recognition, gratitude, self-compassion. Compassion shown to the difficult feelings that have arisen during this special period is a real antidote.

## Vivi Soryano RC 76 Draws Attention to Centeredness

*“I shifted from ego systems, focused on receiving, to eco systems that are based on giving and co-creating.”*

Vivi Soryano was an entrepreneur for much of her career. After selling her company, Foli, she became a career coach, and is currently a body psychotherapy practitioner.

### What is “centeredness” and why is it so critical as we pass through the pandemic?

Centeredness is the ability to be present both in spirit and mind, logic and emotion. When we are centered, we feel safe, serene and mindful. However, when we are preoccupied with our thoughts, we lose centeredness, especially when we get triggered, when we perceive that there is danger, or a life threatening situation or an emotional loss. Based



on Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, these cues of danger operate beneath our awareness. Our autonomic nervous system scans for cues of safety and danger without any assistance from our thinking brains.

In this pandemic we constantly perceive danger. The fear of losing our health and loved ones, the worry we experience as we think of the

economy, and the apprehension we feel of “not knowing” how things will unfold constantly trigger our autonomic nervous system. When we track our body and can tell that we are dysregulated, we can either ask for help from our loved ones, and/or self-soothe by breathing exercises, sensing the body, and drinking a hot tea that warms us. When we feel overwhelmed, we can energize our body by shaking, jumping or playing energizing games, or singing together with loved ones.

### How did your RC education influence your outlook today?

The idea that manifesting our purpose through giving not receiving was one of the values ingrained in the RC education. Hence it was easy for me to shift from ego systems, focused on receiving, to eco-systems that are based on giving and co-creating.

## Dr. Gülüstü Salur RC 85 Highlights the Needs of the Elderly

*“The need for equal access to quality healthcare services, social solidarity and digital inclusion are the take-home messages from this 21st century crisis.”*

Dr. Gülüstü Salur is a cognitive neurology specialist and one of the founders and current President of the 65+ Yaşlı Hakları Derneği (YHD-65+Elder Rights Association; see RCQ issue 46, p. 60). Her views on the quality of life for the elderly and the impacts of the pandemic on people over 65 are eye-opening.

### **What is 65+ YHD’s message during the pandemic?**

As 65+YHD we are a group of devoted volunteers from various walks of life. We try to contribute to the development of social policies for the elderly population and work with various partners to develop sustainable models to create communities with healthy, active, empowered older adults. The current approach to aging in Turkey ranges from denial and avoidance of aging altogether, to feeling powerless, lonely, deprived and in a way, crippled by aging. We propose a more realistic attitude that embraces change, adaptation and inclusion - enabling healthy and active aging in place with intergenerational support mechanisms.

The resilience of the older population has helped protect many lives during the pandemic. 65+YHD has been vocal and instrumental about families, communities and public services’



Older adults staying home have been the unseen force behind the relatively “flattened curve.”

supporting elderly people staying at home. We have also advocated for a controlled flexibility in letting the elderly go out.

### **How has the psychology of the elderly been affected by the pandemic?**

Initially older adults felt protected, rather than entrapped. Some had difficulty managing their daily needs, but there has been tremendous

support from the community. As 65+YHD we emphasized that older adults are a heterogenous group with varying needs. We all need social and psychological support at any age.

Digital technologies have been very instrumental in helping us feel connected when in physical isolation. Therefore, digital literacy for the elderly has been an important focus of our activities throughout the pandemic. The need for equal access to quality healthcare services, social solidarity and digital inclusion are the take-home messages from this 21st century crisis.

### **The RC Alumni Association established a hotline for alumni over 60. How did you support the founding of this service?**

The idea for this hotline was already developed by the RKMD Board chaired by Arif Akdağ RC 88. For the hotline we volunteered to provide support for any health-related issues that might come up. Kindness had been quite invisible in our lives. I have never felt this proud to be an alumnus of RC. All the kindness, empathy and effort resulting from the intelligence and hard work of my fellow alumni during this pandemic gives me hope that smart, educated people with goodwill can change the world for the better. For those of you who are curious about how younger generation of RC is doing, just wait for them, they are amazing!

Read more about 65+ YHD at [yaslihaklaridernegi.org](http://yaslihaklaridernegi.org)

## Zeynep Aksoy RC 88 Helps People Improve Quality of Life

*“With mindfulness practices, one becomes more available, flexible, and able to enjoy the arising and passing of the movements of one’s life.”*

Zeynep Aksoy is one of the pioneers in yoga, meditation, and mindfulness in Turkey. In 2019, she and her husband David Cornwell launched their brand Reset - an online platform offering mindfulness and meditation practices, podcasts, and education programs.



### How has your understanding of the mind-body connection changed over time?

In reality, there is no separation between our mind and body. The contact of the outer environment with our inner reservoir of experience means that we re-present ourselves in every moment in one form or another. Over time patterns of emotion, thoughts and behaviors emerge. We know that childhood patterns are constantly projected out into our

new encounters. Realizing this and connecting the ‘tone’ of my body and the contents of my thoughts through mindfulness makes me feel like I am not on autopilot cycling through ingrained patterns in new situations. With these practices, one becomes more available, flexible, and able to enjoy the arising and passing of the movements of one’s life. Developing this capacity is open to all, research shows that even minimal practice can profoundly impact one’s quality of life.

### How is Reset affected by the pandemic?

Reset subscriptions increased. The episodes where I talk about what respected teachers and meditators say and recommend doing during this time are particularly popular, as well as the ones about breath practices and the power of breath.

### What are some other great sources to get more informed on this matter? Can you point the RC community towards good books, authors, experts?

My favorite resources are books by Dr. Dan Siegel ([www.drdansiegel.com](http://www.drdansiegel.com)), Dr. Gabor Mate, Bhagavad Gita, and Patanjali Yoga Sutras, by Chip Hartranft. Joseph Campbell, though focusing on mythology, also talks about the connections humans have with nature, their own bodies, their minds in the context of varying cultures and has been a source of inspiration to me.

## Esin Başkaya RC 17 Underlines the Concept of Health Span

*“The gold standard in nutrition is finding and adopting foods that are coherent with your body.”*

Esin Başkaya RC 17 is studying Nutrition & Dietetics with a minor in Molecular & Cell Biology in New York University. She is learning about the very latest thinking on nurturing our bodies well.



### Do the ways we view nutrition still hold up during the coronavirus?

There is an astronomical increase in the number of chronic diseases. Credible literature concurs that these conditions are related to diet and lifestyle. Therefore, we are now seeing top institutions putting nutrition at the epicenter of successfully preventing, controlling, and sometimes reversing chronic illnesses. Preventive medicine often corresponds with a detailed assessment of the body, adopting a healthy diet and lifestyle according

to that assessment, and using nutritional supplements, which might be necessary for some. You don’t want to increase your lifespan, you want to increase your health span.

There are countless trends in nutrition to increase health span such as dinner-cancelling, elimination of processed meats and refined carbs, and the inclusion of probiotic foods. Yet many of these trends have lost

their popularity during the pandemic. In times of stress and anxiety, the ancestral survival mode can push us to eat carbs and fat. Continuing to make an effort to eat healthy during this period is crucial. A pandemic is also not the best time to make radical changes in your eating style. It can have both physically and mentally negative impacts.

### What are your favorite sources for information, recipes, and food tips?

I get nutrition information from nutrition journals, such as The Journal of Nutrition and the British Journal of Nutrition. For recipes, I love the Budget Bites, Sweet Peas and Saffron, and Real Food Deals. Lastly for the food tips, I love the food influencers on Instagram; my favorite two are @jshealth and @leahitsines.

You can follow Esin Başkaya on Instagram @nutritionbeatz

## Selin Gören L12 Inspires Peers to Take Climate Action



Selin Gören RC 20 (center) urges people to create a sustainable world at a Fridays for Future rally

**Graduating from RC** this year, Selin Gören already has significant achievements under her belt: She started mobilizing high schools all over Turkey, and of course RC, to be involved in the #FridaysForFuture (FFF) movement. FFF began in August 2018, after 15-year-old Greta Thunberg sat in front of the Swedish parliament every school day for three weeks to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. Her protest went viral. The hashtags #FridaysForFuture and #Climatestrike, as well as the protests, spread all over the world. In 2019 Selin met middle-school student Atlas Sarrafoğlu who had started the movement in Turkey (and who is the son of Nil Kayarlar Sarrafoğlu RC 89) and understood that the movement had not taken root in high schools yet, so she took the initiative and ran with it. There are currently over 100 high schools in 25 cities involved in Turkey.

Selin explains how she became interested in climate change. “I was doing permaculture at RC in 10<sup>th</sup> grade with my geography teacher, Necla Sönmezay. We visited the

Belentepe Farm in Bursa run by Taner Aksel RC 87. I was reminded of how distant we’re living from nature and that the problems of the world can’t be studied solely from a textbook. I started feeling that it’s a moral obligation for me to become an advocate for the environment.”

Selin works collaboratively with RCEM (the RC Environmental Movement) which is a coalition of faculty, students and the administration working to turn RC into a more sustainable school. “I’m glad that such an umbrella movement exists at RC, and I hope that more students will join that initiative. I’m working on involving especially the younger classes, so the tradition of FFF at RC continues.”

Selin’s experience at RC was diverse and helped her activism in many ways. “Thanks to RC, I found out about permaculture and organic farming. The DEKAMER (Sea Turtle Research, Rescue and Rehabilitation Center) trip organized by my biology teachers helped me understand how passionate I am about wildlife conservation.

Thanks to MUN, I developed my public speaking. Through working on school magazines, I learned how to convey an idea in writing. Through theatre and dance I gained self-confidence, and by becoming a member of the Student Council I learned how to work cooperatively to plan events.”

Selin will be attending Yale University in the fall. “I’ll probably major in ecology and evolutionary biology, but I would also like to combine that with a major like political science in order to help form a bridge between science and environmental policy-making,” she says. “I’m aiming to continue with my climate activism in the US, but I’m also sure that I’ll always be a part of FFF Turkey and help them raise their voices no matter where I am in the world.”

Selin’s message to the RC community has urgency. “Every effort to help create a sustainable world counts, and Fridays for Future especially needs the support of leaders, like RC graduates, whose voices reach a lot of people.” Find out more on Instagram: @selin.goren or @fridaysforfuture\_tr



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# Seeing Seven Continents on Foot

By Azade Çakır Yedidağ RC 83

Azade Çakır Yedidağ RC 83 has lived in the US for the last 30 years, having completed her residency in internal medicine and fellowships in gastroenterology and transplant hepatology there. She has traveled around the world through her late-blooming passion for running.

When I was younger, I didn't have any free time, but with medical school, residency, two fellowships, and twenty years in academic medicine, it seems that I became even busier. In this busy lifestyle, I had been

running short distances - badly; yet I suddenly found myself able to access longer distances in 2014. I started running seriously, and it has become the mainstay of my daily routine ever since.



Azade Çakır Yedidağ RC 83 (right) and her husband Emre Yedidağ at the Antarctic Ice Marathon in 2017



Azade and Emre Yedidağ after the 2016 San Diego Marathon

I am lucky to share this passion with my husband, Emre. After our first marathon in San Diego in May 2015, we set ourselves two goals: To run at least one marathon on all seven continents (SC) and to complete six Abbott World Marathon Majors (AWMM). Here is our story, and also tips for other running enthusiasts contemplating doing marathons around the world.

### SC 1: North America

#### AWMM 1: Chicago – October 2015

We started this journey in Chicago, our second hometown. The Chicago Marathon is known worldwide for its fast, flat and looped course with the start and finish in Grant Park. Runners enjoy the support of nearly 2 million spectators, as they run through 29 neighborhoods. The Chicago Marathon is extremely well-organized. Logistics are smooth, roads are wide, and the park finish is easy. It is a great city, with huge support and a flat course. It is by far my favorite race!

### SC 2: Europe

#### AWMM 2: Berlin – September 2016

The Berlin Marathon was a great way to see the city by foot. The course was flat and fast. The crowd support was awesome, especially the Turkish



Taking in the local sights in Antarctica

supporters! You can't beat finishing through the Brandenburg Gate!

### SC 3: Asia

#### AWMM 3: Tokyo – February 2017

Tokyo is the most difficult marathon in the world to get into. The course starts at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building and provides a tour of downtown Tokyo with the finish near Tokyo Station. Runners were quite aggressive: I have never been elbowed so many times in any

other race. Amazingly, for each runner there were four volunteers.

### SC 4: Oceania

#### Sydney – September 2017

The Blackmores Sydney Running Festival is the sole remaining legacy of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. The course takes in all the Sydney iconic landmarks and provides runners with the unique opportunity of crossing the Sydney Harbor Bridge traffic-free, finishing at the Sydney Opera House. Although Sydney is a great location for a marathon, this was an expensive marathon to enter and didn't stack up in terms of the generosity to other events I've run. For example, there was no recovery food or drinks.

The highlight of the trip for me was the visit to Koala Park Sanctuary, petting and hugging a few koalas and feeding kangaroos.

### SC 5: Antarctica

#### Union Glacier – November 2017

We had been to Antarctica three times prior to running the Ice Marathon. Antarctica is the most beautiful, sublime place on earth, and that is why we keep going back. We visited the Antarctic Peninsula, Falklands, South Georgia and South Pole. We also camped with the Gould Bay emperor penguin colony.

The Antarctic Ice Marathon takes place at 80 degrees south, just a few hundred miles from the South Pole. This race presents a truly formidable Antarctic challenge, with an average windchill temperature of  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and the possibility of strong Katabatic winds to contend with.

Don't expect to run your quickest time, as winds can blow from the Pole at a steady 10-25 knots. Also, forget about penguins or crowds cheering you along the route - no penguins live this far south.

Running in Antarctica can be defined as "moments of being," when our



The Blackmores Sydney Running Festival course lets runners take in the highlights of the city

senses reverberate with the pleasure of the present. Runners call it “the high”, and when it kicks in you feel calm and invincible, super sensitive to your surroundings.

This was the most difficult, challenging and amazing race that we have ever run, and the one we are most proud of. We became the first Turks to run a marathon in Antarctica.

#### **SC 6: Africa Marrakech – January 2018**

Marrakech offers an exceptional setting - a mild climate in January and a circuit considered as one of the fastest in the world. It goes along alleys of palm, orange, and olive trees, as well as by the ramparts of the city. The Marrakech Marathon was not crowded at all - nearly 8000 runners and very few women. Bedouins cheering and camels resting along the course were unique scenes. I ate nearly one pound of the dates served as energy food during the run!

#### **AWMM 4: Boston – April 2018**

The Boston Marathon is the world's oldest annual marathon, ranks as one of the world's most prestigious road racing events, and is the only Abbott World Marathon Majors race that requires a qualifying performance time. The legendary point-to-point course starts in rural Hopkinton and passes through numerous quaint New England towns before finishing on Boylston Street in the heart of Boston.

The weather forecast called for 38°F temperatures, two inches of rain, a sustained 15 to 25 miles per hour head wind, and a real feel temperature below freezing. Running 26.2 miles in these conditions just seemed like a cruel joke.

I had the flu before the race and ended up with pneumonia and a femur stress fracture.

#### **SC 7: South America Rio de Janeiro – June 2018**

The Rio de Janeiro Marathon is one of the most picturesque marathons in the world. The 26.2 mile course hugs the beautiful beaches, while the Serra do Mar Mountains provide the perfect backdrop for marathon pictures. Christ the Redeemer towers over the course. An early start ensures that you beat the heat of the day, but it is still very hot and humid.

This was our last continent! In two years and eight months we made it to the Seven Continents Marathon Club.

#### **AWMM 5: London – April 2019**

The London Marathon has become one of the most sought-after Abbott World Marathon Majors races, but, for me, it was the least impressive of the six.

The point-to-point course is very flat with only one small rise. The race itself was crowded; I had to expend tons of

energy avoiding being punched and prodded. Also, they were still handing out large flip-top plastic bottles - what a huge waste!

#### **AWMM 6: New York City – November 2019**

The New York City Marathon is definitely a once-in-a-lifetime must-run event. The organization is amazing, and the atmosphere along the course spectacular.

Starting on Staten Island and finishing in Central Park participants run through each of the five boroughs: Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Manhattan. There were 53,627 finishers at the 2019 TCS New York City Marathon, making it the world's largest marathon ever.

New York in November has a special charm to it: The air is clear and crisp, and the leaves on the trees in Central Park are just beginning to turn golden. A perfect way to finish the Six Majors! I am proud to say that we are two out of six Turks who have completed Six Majors so far, and the two oldest.

Running is magical. It is a way to recover some of the joy that modern life increasingly denies us. What you find running in the freezing winds, the drenching rain, intense heat and humidity is something you cannot wear, or download, or even write about. But we all have the chance to experience it.

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## Tamer Tamar RC 92 Opens Solo Exhibition in Tehran

A documentary photographer based in Switzerland, Tamer Tamar recently showed his work in an exhibition in Tehran titled *Here the Women Laugh Out Loud*. The RCQ asked him about the story behind his latest exhibition: “One question always intrigued me - ‘Are we going to become the next Iran?’ Not accepting clichés at face value, I decided to investigate this ‘evil’ country we were in grave danger of transforming into. On my first day in Tehran in 2014, I was detained by menacing-looking officials while photographing women at a metro station. The clichés must have been true. I was in trouble. Then, the moment came which launched my five-year long commitment into a documentary project. Before bursting into laughter, one of the officials uttered in broken Turkish, ‘Seni seviyorum sensiz nefes alamam (I love you and cannot breathe without



you).’ Apparently, after the onset of Turkish TV series, it was Iran that was in danger of transforming into Turkey! They had fooled me properly. Seven years of RC dormitory street smarts had not prepared me for this Iranian prank attack.”

From 2014 to 2019, Tamar focused his camera on Iran’s modern Iranian women: “I was fortunate to be

afforded the time and space by Iranian women, who saw me as an outlet to tell their story. I photographed women snowboarding in Dizin, bungee jumping into the Armand River, drinking and smoking in the desert among friends, and posing with an Iranian Santa Claus on Christmas Day. The question of intrigue now became, ‘When will women take control in Iran?’”

Dena Gallery shared Tamar’s optimism, and he opened *Here the Women Laugh Out Loud* in Tehran in November 2019. At the opening, a young woman whispered, “Thank you for showing us as we are.” “I hope I was worthy of this compliment. I also hope that we do our best to maintain an open mind and heart for our fellow humans.”

You can see Tamar’s photo stories on [www.tamertamar.com](http://www.tamertamar.com)

## Naz Beşcan RC 12 Explores Healing in Latest Exhibition

*Homeostasis*, curated by Naz Beşcan and featuring works by Luna Ece Bal, Patricia Domínguez, Serra Duran Parali, and Melike Koçak imagines an exhibition as a healing practice, the gallery as a healing space. “As part of my ongoing curatorial research on healing practices, *Homeostasis* is envisioned as a site-specific response to the plaza building that Galeri 5 is situated in and the surrounding neighborhood, Ümraniye,” says Beşcan. Referring to the processes that help an entity keep its internal balance regardless of the external factors, *Homeostasis* presents works that critically engage with this balance and present alternative ways of healing. “I imagined the visitors, mainly white-collar professionals working in the building, making connections to their internal balances and imbalances through the works,” she adds. The exhibition opened in February 2020 and is expected to run through the end of the summer. Beşcan’s previous exhibitions include *I’m an Eye*, A

*Mechanical Eye* (Zilberman, Istanbul, 2019), *Who Cares? a radio tale* (Gasworks, London, 2018) and *SMOG* (Arthill Gallery, London 2018).

When asked about her experience at RC, she says, “It is where my interdisciplinary approach was formed. I was involved in Studio Art and Art Excellence and got the chance to study fashion design, film, literature, photography, and art history at a very young age. My art teacher at RC, Jeffrey Baykal-Rollins was my first mentor.”

Naz Beşcan says the decision to become a curator followed naturally. “I knew I wanted to be part of the knowledge production in contemporary art. I believe the production of substantial knowledge, with ‘the new normal’, will become crucial, as we are staying home and scrolling through a vast sea of information. I am sure the link between contemporary art and healing practices will become more

relevant and apparent in the days after the pandemic.”



Photo: Serra Duran Parali

## Duygu Alptekin Gürsu RC 92 Pens Leadership Guide

By Seda Çaykara Şen RC 96

Duygu Alptekin Gürsu has brought together her experience of 13 years in marketing and over 10 years in leadership and team coaching in her first book, *İçimdeki Lider* (*My Inner Leader*; Mediacat Yayıncılık). She explains that she sees her work as a way to give back to the community by making her coaching techniques and learnings available to everyone, through her book.

She describes leadership as “a skill to inspire positive change in all of our relationships, in every situation, for ourselves and everyone around us”. This interpretation of leadership takes the concept out of the realm

of corporate life and creates a holistic approach, giving the reader different perspectives on how to develop personal as well as corporate relationships.

*İçimdeki Lider* divides leadership into four different categories - personal, relationship, team and organizational - to put together a whole picture of who and what a leader should be. Enriched with previous personal experience and case examples, Gürsu brings alive her theories and gives the reader many different exercises to help improve their own skills. This is a very comprehensible guideline for anyone who inspires to create positive change.



## Cem Behar RA 64 Examines 16<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Music

By Seda Çaykara Şen RC 96

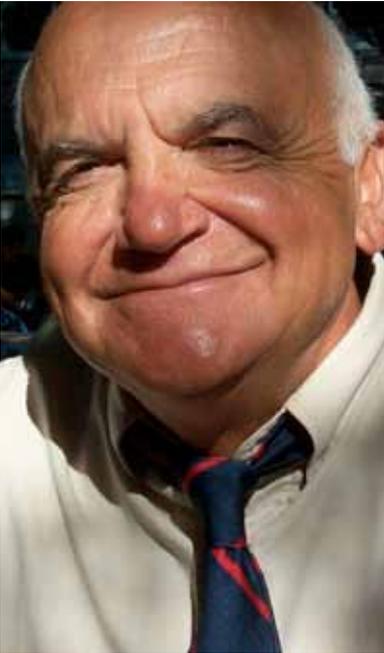
One of the most prominent musicologists on the Ottoman/Turkish music tradition, Cem Behar published his most recent work *Orada Bir Musiki Var Uzakta* (*There is Music in the Distance*; Yapı Kredi Yayınları) in January 2020. The book investigates the development of the Ottoman/Turkish music tradition in Istanbul in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As there is no written or recorded history on the forms or development of the Ottoman/Turkish music tradition, Behar approaches the subject from a different and interesting perspective. Careful to underline that there is no historical proof, Behar, nonetheless, puts together a solid theory on how Ottoman/Turkish music tradition arose in the second half of



16<sup>th</sup> century, by shuffling and looking at different aspects of social and economic developments and cultural life in Istanbul.

Newly developing coffee houses (*kahvehane*) are at the heart of this development, serving as cultural and social centers within the city life, simultaneously making music tradition available to bigger crowds. He examines and interprets a miniature painting from that era to shine a light on the role of music in those years. The book is a highly comprehensive study on Ottoman/Turkish music tradition and a very interesting way to look at Istanbul in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## Sargun Ali Tont RC ENG 56 ex Shares His Love of the Sea



Marine ecology expert and academic Sargun Ali Tont has a new book out: *Deniz Tutkusu: Efsaneler Şiirler Denizciler ve Kıyıdağiler* (*Passion of the Sea: Legends, Poems, Sailors and Those on Shore*; DKM Yayınları). Teaching courses such as Mystery of the Sea, Science and Poetry of the Sea, Ecology, and Environmental Science since 1969, Tont has also worked on documentaries and popular science series for TV, as well as written articles for both academic journals and popular science magazines.

His current book consists of articles previously published in both Turkish and English journals. Tont relates that each article consists of both scientific analysis of the subject and related literary and aesthetic considerations: "In a sense they are 'Two Culture'

articles." When asked about his motivation for writing, Tont states, "My father was a writer. I have been writing since the second grade. I want to share my love of nature with other people. I believe they will become better people through reading more books like this one."

Tont credits RC with his love of nature: "I became a nature lover thanks to Mr. Gilchrist, my English Literature teacher, long before I took courses in natural history, botany or geology. He was especially fond of William Wordsworth, who, thanks to him, I think of as the greatest poet of all time."

Tont will soon publish another book, *Odunluk Taşkonak Günlükleri* (*Odunluk Taşkonak Chronicles*), about life in a small village on the Aegean shore.

## Müge Mengü Hale RC 92 Debuts Children's Book

Müge Mengü Hale's book *Ayışığı Arayan Denizkaplumbağaları – Çıtırık ile Pıtırık* (*Sea Turtles Searching for the Moonlight – Çıtırık and Pıtırık*; Yapı Kredi Yayınları) is the story of a sister and brother turtle hatching and their struggle to reach the sea in the dark.

After RC, Hale studied philosophy at Boğaziçi University and completed her graduate work at the New School on media. Having worked as a journalist and editor, she is currently teaching at Bilkent University, and feels happy that her first book is for children: "Children are the best audience for books because they are unbiased and connected to their feelings."

Hale relates that the story resonates with readers of all ages: "Parents and grandparents tell me they enjoy the book because it hits an archetype of humanity to tell us how we can help each other to get through obstacles." *Ayışığı Arayan Denizkaplumbağaları – Çıtırık ile Pıtırık* is a rhyming picture book, written in 14-syllable verse.

Hale fondly remembers how the light for writing was ignited at RC: "I would especially like to thank Adil İzci, and all of my teachers and wonderful classmates for supporting my poetry during my years at RC."



## Belma Ötüş Baskett ACG 50 Pens Book for Hemingway Lovers

A comprehensive look at the life of Ernest Hemingway is illustrated in the latest book by Prof. Dr. Belma Ötüş Baskett - *Sonsuza Dek Hemingway* (*Hemingway Forever*; Bilgi Yayınevi). The book provides readers with in-depth information about how Hemingway took his first step into the world of writing during his childhood, and where he lived and wandered throughout his life, as well as many other fascinating details.

Baskett wrote her PhD thesis on Ernest Hemingway; it was published as *The Concept of Death in Ernest Hemingway*

(Doğuş Matbaası). She is a member of the Hemingway Society and has done a lot of research on Hemingway, visiting his “places” in the US, Cuba, Spain, Italy and France. Baskett has worked on Hemingway manuscripts at the J.F. Kennedy Library in Boston, looking at the drafts of his published and unpublished works and tracing the evolution of his style. In addition, she has followed new publications on Hemingway over the years. The result of this in-depth research is *Sonsuza Dek Hemingway* where Hemingway’s visit to Turkey, his love of Istanbul and admiration for Atatürk are highlighted.



## Ayşe Odman Boztosun RC 90 Writes a Groundbreaking Novel



Prof. Dr. Ayşe Odman Boztosun, a law professor at Akdeniz University, wrote a novel named *Anayasa Candır* (*The Constitution is Dear*; On İki Levha Yayınları). Boztosun was inspired by her first year students’ questions on the meaning of law and the role of the state: “Teaching is a symbiotic process where the teacher becomes the student of the students in due course. Thus, this book is modeled on the Socratic method whereby the protagonist Zeyno learns through her conversation with the Wise State.” The book appeals to a wide range of readers; indeed a popular economist claimed it is “a must-read for every citizen.”

Boztosun recalls her years at RC fondly: “Both the Orta and the Lise libraries were my refuge, where I was able to quench my thirst for reading and reflecting.”

It was a blessing for me to be the student of legendary literature teachers, Münir Aysu and Rükzan Günaysu. Considering that I was awarded the Turkish Literature and English Literature Prizes upon graduation, I reflect back and think, ‘Hey, my alma mater probably set quite a goal for me, which I dared take up only thirty years later.’”

Do you have news to share with the **RC Community**?  
Send a short write-up along with a photo to  
[alumni@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:alumni@robcol.k12.tr)

## Retired Turkish Ambassador Mustafa Akşin RC 50 Receives Honorary Award

Mustafa Akşin was presented the Global Relations Forum (GRF) Honorary Membership Award in honor of his many contributions to Turkey during his diplomatic career, at a ceremony on March 4, 2020. During the ceremony introductory speeches were given by GRF Chairman Mr. Cem Kozlu RA 65 and GRF President Ambassador (R) Selim Yenel. Akşin's contemporaries and GRF members, Ambassador (R) Ertuğrul Apakan, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador (R) Yaşar Yakış and daughter of classmate İbrahim Bodur RC 50, President

of Kale Group Ms. Zeynep Bodur Okyay, shared their memories and experiences with Ambassador Akşin. After graduating from RC, Mustafa Akşin studied law at Ankara University and received his MA from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He joined the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1955. Throughout his illustrious career, he worked at the Turkish embassies in the US, USSR and Germany, and was ambassador to Kenya, Syria and Yugoslavia. He served as the permanent representative of Turkey to the United Nations from 1988 to 1993, when he retired.



Mustafa Akşin RC 50 (center) receives the GRF Honorary Membership Award from Cem Kozlu RA 65 (left) and Zeynep Bodur Okyay

## Eminenur Diler RC 71 Explores Seasons Through Jewelry

Eminenur Diler's solo exhibition *Mevsimler*, held at Ayşe Takı Gallery in December 2019, featured exclusive handcrafted jewelry. Well known as a floral designer, Diler mainly uses silver, gold and semiprecious stones as well as organic material to create unique necklaces, earrings, bracelets and rings. She mostly hammers her metal and also uses cast pieces that she prepares herself. Eminenur Diler has been designing jewelry since 1982, but



following an interval of some ten years, she sat at her work table again in 2017 to create designs for three consecutive exhibitions: *Karmakarışık*, *Çiçeksiz Sokaklar* and *Mevsimler*. She explains her recent exhibition: "I've created jewelry pieces that are really poems of seasons. My designs have always been personal poems for women. I had found these poems in nature and flora." *Mevsimler* was her 36<sup>th</sup> solo exhibition. You can follow her on Instagram @eminenurtaki

## Irvin Cemil Schick RC 72 Writes Column on Rare Books

After receiving his doctorate in mathematics from MIT in 1989, Irvin Cemil Schick worked many years in R&D and taught at universities both in Turkey and the US. He is now going for a second doctorate – this time in history at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He also writes a regular column entitled "min nevâdirî'l-kütüb" (of rare books) for the web site K24 (under the news site T24). "Each month I choose a specific book, usually from my own library, and

discuss it," says Schick. "I know ink and paper are not fashionable these days, but I have been dedicated to books my entire life as both a reader and an author, editor, or translator. I have a rather large library, and although I wouldn't consider myself a 'rare book collector' per se, there are certain topics on which I am an omnipurchaser, notably the Islamic arts of the book, and gender and sexuality in the Middle East.



## Serra Akıncı RC 79 Shares Her Passion for Mosaics

Although she studied graphic design, Serra Akıncı always had a soft spot for interior design, including mosaics. “I guess spending my childhood among apartment buildings with mosaic façades shaped my artistic sensibilities.” About 25 years ago she began making mosaics and attended courses on various techniques, materials and styles in England, Greece and Italy. In 2016 she set up an atelier in Arnavutköy. “What began as

a hobby became my main occupation especially after retiring from office life,” she says. She holds classes for small groups, 2-3 times a week, as well as doing workshops at other art houses. In April 2017 she took part in the exhibition *Made in Türkiye* at the Hasköy Wool Thread Factory. Akıncı is a member of AIMC - International Association of Contemporary Mosaicists. You can see her work on Instagram @serramosaik



## RC 83 Grads İpek Borucu Yücel and Serra Mansur Soysal Capture Family Legacies on Film



İpek Borucu Yücel RC 83 and Serra Mansur Soysal RC 83

Bu Belgesel Benim (This is My Documentary), is a new venture by İpek Borucu Yücel and Serra Mansur Soysal, who are making documentaries of individuals and families as a legacy for future generations. The idea sprang to their minds from conversations on their class WhatsApp group when a member asked about family origins. Stories ranging from the Balkans to Crimea and Palestine fascinated Serra and İpek, and they felt they had to make a survey of this diversity. İpek has a psychology degree and master's in social psychology from Boğaziçi University, and pursued a career at TRT in children's programming. Serra holds an MA in communication from the University of Pennsylvania. They have many years of combined experience in the television sector.

Their documentaries are intimate family films meant mainly for private circulation, as opposed to mass media broadcast. Their film shoot usually lasts one or two days. They interview individuals on topics such as their family backgrounds, their youth, careers and life experiences, resulting in videos of variable length which are enhanced with photographs and documents such as diplomas, old passports, etc. Later they edit the film adding any existing footage the family might want to include. If requested they also make a book of their interview, so the family has a printed keepsake. Clients have said that the experience was very rewarding and enjoyable. They were very pleased to have a coherent recording of their family stories to pass on to future generations. [bubelgeselbenim.com](http://bubelgeselbenim.com)

## Zeynep Pekün Ekşioğlu RC 90 Enters the World of Plant-Based Food

After a career in fashion retail, Zeynep Ekşioğlu went to culinary school and became a licensed chef. She is the founder of Lokal Plants, which sells plant-based products, supports local production and promotes an integrated approach to health.

“My daughter became a vegetarian at age 16, then vegan,” says Ekşioğlu. “The more I learned about the benefits of plant-based living, both ethically and health wise, the more I decided



to make it my life's mission to cook and feed people this way. It makes me happy to be part of a team where small producers and small business owners like myself are linked in a sustainable and loving food chain.” Ekşioğlu credits RC for giving her the confidence to pursue her dreams: “I find myself infinitely lucky to be a part of the RC community. I urge everyone to support this community in every way they can.” [lokalplants.com](http://lokalplants.com)

## Aslı Eti RC 96 Launches Mindfulness App



2020 has been a year of transformation and blessings for Aslı Eti, despite the pandemic. In April she launched a mindfulness brand, through an app called Anda Burada which includes sleep stories and meditations designed with mindfulness techniques for adults, children and parents.

“It is an inspiring mindful living platform I’m building with my partners,”

says Eti. “The mindfulness practices it offers have one goal; to provide a toolkit and a fresh perspective for a happier, healthier and a more fulfilling life. I’ve discovered that this is actually possible, after years of practicing and searching for answers.” Anda Burada is a channel for Eti to share what she has learned. She is also working on a novel for adults.

## Billur Turan RC 02

### Takes a Multidisciplinary Approach to Film Design

Billur Turan is a product designer by training and has also been designing for films since 2012. The latest film she art directed, *The Near Room* by Sophie Cundale, was on show at South London Gallery in early 2020. In Turkey, Turan has art directed three feature films which will be screened at festivals soon. In her creative process, Turan draws upon a variety of disciplines including art, psychology and neuroscience. Her work has been exhibited internationally.



“Being able to choose elective courses early on was such a privilege at RC,” says Turan. “I remember running from Erol Altuğ’s Bio II to the art studio, which was on the other side of the campus. The most direct contribution might have come from Ms. Kelly’s wonderful Film and Literature course; a few months back I found an assignment where we had storyboarded a short story.”  
www.billurturan.com

## Lalin Anık RC 02 Named MBA Professor of the Year

Graduate school publication Poets & Quants named University of Virginia Darden School of Business Professor Lalin Anık its MBA Professor of the Year, “for bringing all of herself to the job and doing so with compassion and caring.” Anık is a behavioral scientist in the marketing department. She believes teaching and marketing are both about empathy: “In both, you need to ask, ‘how can I make life better

for others?’ while also exploring the echoes of other people in you. That muscle for empathy is exactly what we need to overcome the uncertainty and pain of this period.” Anık claims the guidance of her RC teachers still lights her way: “They not only challenged us with rigorous scientific thinking, they also instilled in us an appreciation for conscious and conscientious living.”



## Suzan Nogay RC 04 and Cenk Gümüşcüoğlu RC 97 Tie the Knot

Suzan Nogay and Cenk Gümüşcüoğlu got married on August 31, 2019, in Bozburun, Muğla. After graduating from RC, Suzan got her degree from Yeditepe University Faculty of Dentistry and began working as an endodontist. Cenk began a career in advertising after graduating from Boğaziçi University and became a founding partner of Karbonat advertising agency, where he is also the creative director. The happy couple live in Istanbul.



## Sinem Hallı RC 06 and Arda Cezzar RC 06 Build a Life Together



Sinem and Arda had known each other since high school days. However, they had the first chance to talk with each other at their 10<sup>th</sup> year Homecoming. After that magical day, they started dating in 2016. On December 7, 2019, they were married in Istanbul in the presence of their loved ones and many classmates from RC. On April 24, 2020, they welcomed their son Alp during the

Covid-19 lockdown in Istanbul. These days, Alp's favorite activities are taking out his hands from his swaddle like a professional magician. He is enjoying growing up with his parents beside him. Sinem finished product design at ITU and continues her design work from home. Arda has a mecatronics degree from Sabancı University and is currently working in tourism.

## Deniz Öksüz Fer RC 07 and Bora Fer RC 03 Create Design Brand

Bizzat is a registered sustainable and slow-fashion brand, co-founded in October, 2018 by Deniz Öksüz Fer RC 07 (sociologist, language professional) and Bora Fer RC 03 (academic in communication design). The creative couple who met during RC years got married in 2016 and moved to Şile, where the seeds of Bizzat were sown. Their handcrafted products are all personally designed by Deniz and Bora in small quantities at their home-studio. With a focus on contemporary embroidery and ceramics, the current collection includes jewelry, bags, and



aprons. Besides the products, Bizzat also has a dictionary initiative, through which Bora and Deniz invent witty and functional words in Turkish. Bizzat periodically creates music playlists on Spotify. In addition, Bizzat attends events to promote their products and exchange ideas with other designers. If you wish to explore the current collection, playlists, "Bizzatça" dictionary and find out when and where Bizzat's next pop-up stall will be, please visit them on Instagram @bizzatdesign

## Wedding Bells for Ayşe Canan Altındaş RC 07 and Ali Berge Dikmen RC 06

Ayşe Canan Altındaş and Ali Berge Dikmen were mere acquaintances during their time at Robert College. Winds of affection started blowing in 2017, when Berge finally secured a date in the beginning of March. Their love bloomed, and they decided to tie the knot in September and October of 2019, in two places which bear much meaning to them. The first



wedding took place at Bizim Tepe, and the second wedding in Vouliagmeni, Athens, where they had shared a beautiful vacation. They are continuing their work in Istanbul, Turkey. Canan is a clinical psychologist and educational consultant with a private practice, and Berge is a vice president at Deutsche Bank Turkey.

## Ceren Tosun RC 12 Offers a Holistic Approach to Health

While studying to be a dentist, Ceren Tosun was struck by the potential of the human body and how modern medicine forgets to look at it holistically. She also realized that the medical system is oriented towards lessening symptoms rather than addressing the core problem. She wanted to offer a preventative approach, so she founded Spicy Health.

Tosun provides health coaching to build healthy habits, gain clarity and direction on the body's needs

and build momentum to achieve significant changes, feel energized, uplifted and empowered. "It's actually all about self-care, which can range from a long bath with magnesium salt to saying 'no' to an event, or waking up early to write a gratitude journal. It's about understanding your needs and honoring them. Self-care also involves integrating self-compassion into your life which is befriending that judgmental voice inside your head and mindfully giving yourself permission to be imperfect."



## Berkay Yilmaz RC 14

### Headed to World Gaming Championships



Berkay Yilmaz and his friends in Team Closer secured a place in the Dota 2 gaming world championships after coming in first place at the Turkey Championships in December 2019. Yilmaz was introduced to Dota 1 when he was in prep class in 2009, and he and his dorm friends still play together. "My dream about being a gaming professional started when Dota 2 came out, and I was excited to participate in big events. Today, I can proudly say that I am one of the best players in the world."

Currently a student at Medipol University, Yilmaz says, "It wasn't easy as a student of medicine. Everyone asks how I balance practicing for tournaments with my studies. The answer is planning time spent on specific activities to increase effectiveness, efficiency and productivity; simply put, time management." Yilmaz says he not only aims to be the best player, but also the best doctor and most importantly the best friend to his teammates and those who support him.

## RC 14: A Night to Remember

Contributed by Ege Bıçaker RC 14

Five years after our graduation, marking the first milestone in many anniversaries to come, we gathered as the Class of 2014 at a restaurant on the evening of December 21, 2019, organized by Sıla Küçükosmanoğlu. Classmates who live all over the world attended this celebration with fascinating stories to share. It was

rewarding and heartwarming to see familiar faces, all grown and having accomplished so much, yet somehow the same. It was hard to realize that time has flown, and five years passed already. Not long ago, we were walking through Gould Hall together. Now we all pursue different journeys as recent graduates. For some of us,

this was the first time that we have seen each other after graduation. For others, we have never felt separated. Yet, the feeling of nostalgia was felt by everyone. We continued chatting till late at night, trying to hang onto the time we spent together. We hope to continue this tradition and look forward to our next anniversaries.



The Class of '14 came together to celebrate their 5<sup>th</sup> reunion in December 2019.

faculty & friends news

## Nancy Atakan's Virtual Retrospective Spans Forty Years

Former RC art teacher and college counsellor Nancy Atakan is a renowned contemporary artist. During the pandemic, she transformed her website ([nancyatakan.com](http://nancyatakan.com)) into a retrospective of her art. Atakan concentrates on topics like the relationship between image and word, the meaning of belonging, gender politics, memory, and globalization: "One of my main aims has been to give voice to women who have been overlooked or left out of history or cultural narrative. My work is often autobiographical and may reflect on my in-between position as an American who has lived and worked in Istanbul since 1969. I emphasize the importance of collaboration, sharing and dialogue for all types of human interaction because I believe they are particularly needed today in a society becoming more and more separated

into factions. Because I find the art arena to be a space for experimentation and developing alternative models for living, I see having co-founded in 2007 the Istanbul based art initiative/project space, 5533, as an important part of my art practice."

Atakan's latest exhibitions have been closed due to Covid-19. *It Still is As It Always Was*, (with Kalliopi Lemos) opened on February 20 and closed on March 16 at Pi Artworks London but will re-open on June 17. Work that was shown in *Forward March!* at SALT Beyoğlu during the summer of 2019 was included in *Translation in Motion*, (with Maria Andersson) at Riksidrottsmuseet in Stockholm; this exhibit which also closed in mid-March is to continue from mid-August. When travel resumes, the London show will move first to Baku and then

to Crete. During the lockdown, Atakan has also been working on a new series of needleworks about the importance of plants and trees.



Nancy Atakan poses with her work "Rotating Time" from her *Transition* series

## Farewell to Ms. Orhon

Excerpts from the **BOSPHORUS CHRONICLE** article by Ali Telek L9 and Can Yağız Oral L10

After being at RC for almost a quarter of a century and adding so much value to the community, Academic Director, Maria Orhon, is leaving. Maria Orhon started working at RC as the Assistant English Department Head in 1998. She became the English Department Head, joined the administration as the Assistant Lise Director and became the Academic Director in 2002. Ms. Orhon believes having worked in all of these positions has helped her to understand not only the academic side of the school but also many other aspects, such as clubs, student life, discipline, and residential life.

Some of her favorite memories were when she was in the classroom with students. She also loves Homecoming

because she is able to see many of her former students. Her friendship toward the Student Council helped establish a constructive collaboration between the students and the administration. She is very proud of the fact that she has hired more than half of the current faculty.

Ms. Orhon very clearly answers the question of what she will miss most after she leaves RC: “Everything!” She states she spent half of her career working at RC and living on its campus. She will miss the campus and the buildings, but mostly, the students, faculty, and the staff, who, she says, “have been like family for me.” She makes the point that she is not retiring, but “graduating and taking a



gap year” before deciding what she would do next. She thinks finding new endeavors and spending more time with her new grandson would be enjoyable. She also would like to read and write when she has the time.

## A Farewell to the Queen of Lise Live: Merril Hope-Brown

Excerpts from the **BOSPHORUS CHRONICLE** article by Emir Kirdan L12



Having joined the RC faculty in August 1998, Merril Hope-Brown, the Department Head for art and music, is retiring after working at Robert College for 22 years. Going back and forth between the corridors of Sage Hall and the music rooms, Ms. Hope-Brown has taught numerous art and music classes for all levels.

Ms. Hope-Brown has broad ideas for the next chapter of her life. “Actually, my plan is to have no plan. After a

very long career in the classroom of knowing exactly where I will be at any given time, I am looking forward to having no schedule, and deciding almost on the spur of the moment, or according to the weather, what to do and where to go.” Still, there are many things Ms. Hope-Brown is excited about such as being in London with her brother and friends for Christmas and having the opportunity to take advantage of its winter theatre and concert season. For the summer, she is

planning to take a rest in her summer house in Akbuk (near Didim) with occasional short trips to Istanbul and other places.

Before coming to Robert College, Ms. Hope Brown was expecting to “find highly motivated students, professional colleagues, and career satisfaction” in working in a positive, academically-oriented but enjoyable environment. We are glad that Ms. Hope Brown says that she has not been disappointed.

Having worked hard for the organization of Lise Live from the pre-selections to rehearsals, Ms. Hope Brown believes that all 40 Live Live performances are the most significant thing she feels she left the school community. The student body feels gratitude and reverence for the intellectual, academic, and social contributions she has made.

## Rahşan Ecevit ACG 43



Turkish politician Rahşan Ecevit, wife of former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit RC 43, died at the age of 97 in Ankara, on January 17, 2020. She was born in Bursa, to a family which came from Thessaloniki after the population exchange agreement in 1920. In 1946 she married her classmate Bülent Ecevit. Their love for one another was well-known, as expressed in the poem

that Bülent Ecevit wrote for her titled "El Ele Büyüttük" ("We Grew Up Hand in Hand").

Rahşan Ecevit founded and led the Democratic Left Party and the Democratic Left People's Party. Her book *Pülümür'de Aşk* (Love in Pülümür) was adapted to the theatre in 2002.

## Nimet Ebussuutoğlu Erenli ACG 43

My mother Nimet Ebussuutoğlu Erenli's love for her College was almost a passion. At the end of her long life of 98 years, she thanked her parents and dear school for endowing her with such an excellent education. She joined me in singing "Alma Mater" with difficulty in her last days. Being a conservative father, Nuri Bey had to visit her school and was convinced by Miss Summers to send her daughter to ACG. Nimet started in 1937, discovering a totally modern, brilliant new world. Being a

very involved student in numerous school activities, she was prepared for her future life. She was always proud of her College and wanted her children to have the same experience. She is survived by her son, Hayri Erenli RA 65, RC YÜK 69, daughter Oya Erenli Sezer ACG 69, son-in-law Zühtü Sezer RC YÜK 68 and granddaughter Didem Sezer Manecolo RC 90.

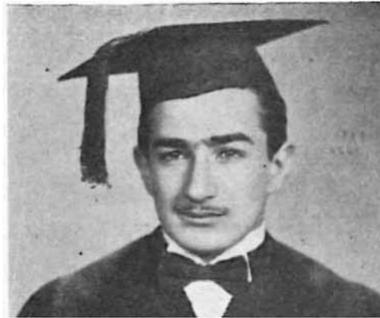
*Contributed by Oya Sezer ACG 69*



## Cülmüt Uzman RC 49

Cülmüt Uzman was the youngest boy of internationally-known psychologist Mazhar Osman Uzman. He was the brother of Nasut, who was a student in the engineering department at the same time, and Lahut. They had two older sisters who were married and lived in Istanbul.

After graduation, Cülmüt left to continue his education in Switzerland,



and spent rest of his life there. He worked for Migros A.G. up until the last 10 years, he used to come Istanbul in the summer, and spent a week with his sisters and friends. Cülmüt's visit was a joy; we tried our best to be together as much as we could. He is survived by his wife Louisa who in Zürich.

*Contributed by Behzat Rızvani RC 49*

## Burhan Silahtaroğlu RC 51

Our father Burhan Silahtaroğlu left us on January 19, 2020. He was born in Erzurum in 1932. His father has brought him and his nephew Orhan Silahtaroğlu from Erzurum to study at Robert Academy in 1943. He was a very bright and hardworking student at RC. He continued his studies at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich in 1953. His ambition and eagerness to start his own business made him an entrepreneur in industry. After 1980, he became one the first tourism

investors in Turkey. He was pioneer in developing new tourism destinations and concepts such as family resorts, water parks, paragliding in Ölüdeniz and balloon flights in Cappadocia. He is considered a doyen in Turkish tourism and was the "father" of all tourism workers. We are very proud to be his family. He will always be our lifetime father and coach.

*Contributed by his daughter Zeynep*



## Nezir Kırdar RC ENG 51

Nezir Kırdar was born in Baghdad to a prominent family, which was dedicated to public service in Turkey. In 1957 He was chosen as the first Eisenhower Fellow to represent Iraq. Kırdar was the youngest member to be elected to the Iraqi Parliament, in 1958. Kırdar was the owner of Kırdar Felt and Alladin Travels Co. in Baghdad. He was a board member for the Iraq Federation of Industries, and One World 2011 –

an organization that creates positive relationships between people in the Muslim world and in the US. In 1987 he moved to Istanbul. Kırdar was awarded the Distinguished Fellow Award by Eisenhower Fellowships in 2009. He recounted his life in the autobiography *Bağdat'tan İstanbul'a Dünüm Bugünüm* (From Baghdad to Istanbul, My Yesterday and Today).



## Olcay Bergman ACG 52

Olcay was the pride of our family, and a bright student of ACG as well. I tried to follow in her foot-steps but I was never up to her standards. Her senior report card was all 10s without exception. Miss Wright had congratulated her on the steps of Gould Hall.



Olcay was interested in antiquity and archeology. After retirement she went back to university and became a tour guide, which she enjoyed very much, and met some interesting people who

later became good friends. As Mrs. Jaquinet had commented, she had an ancient Greek approach towards life.

After she was diagnosed with cancer she spent her last months at a hospital, and passed away on May 16, 2019.

She is survived by her son Akif.

*Contributed by Senem Bergman Gazioglu ACG 55*

## Attila Çelikiz RC 54



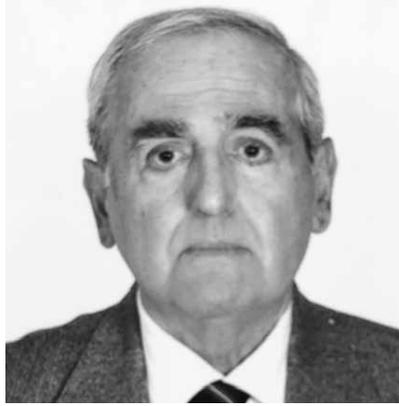
Attila Çelikiz passed away on January 1, 2020, age 85. His passion for joy in life, even at difficult times, and his integrity, creativity and love for arts and music were an inspiration to those who knew him. After graduating from RC he studied textile design at Rhode Island School of Design and at Philadelphia College of Science and Technology. Upon returning to Turkey, he married Bige Atasagun ACG 58 and started working at Organik Kimya. He moved to Bodrum after retiring from

Net Holding. Attila loved beauty and the arts as much as he enjoyed a life of elegance and opulence. He was a born leader in many ways, serving as the president of Bizim Tepe, Istanbul Rotary and as an active freemason. A talented goalkeeper for RC Varsity, Attila was invited to train with his beloved Galatasaray club, which he had to decline to concentrate on his studies.

*Contributed by Ahmet N. Taşpınar*

## Ertuğrul Güzelöz RC ENG 56

Ertuğrul Güzelöz passed away on April 22, 2020, at the age of 86. He was a popular member of his class from his first year at RC until his graduation as a civil engineer. After RC he attended the University of Illinois, earning his master's degree in 1957. After returning to Turkey, he worked as a civil engineer at PETKIM, STFA and as an independent consulting engineer. His keen insight, rational political and economic views and unyielding commitment to truth and integrity in private, as well as professional life earned the respect



of friends and adversaries alike. His leadership qualities earned him the nickname "Başbakan" among his friends during his Robert Academy years. Ertuğrul loved reading and learning, and was frequently on the Dean's Honors List. A dedicated family man, he is survived by his wife, Canan, son Sirri Fikret, daughter-in-law Aslı and two grandchildren.

*Contributed by Ahmet N. Taşpınar*

## Fatoş Bereket ACG 56 & Selahattin Bereket RC YÜK 63



extremely kind and generous. I know that all her friends loved her very much and will miss her, as I will.

Rest in peace, dear Fatoş. We will reunite soon. It seems there are good shops in Heaven, so you can do a lot of shopping now. We miss you a lot, my dear sister.

*Contributed by Deniz (Türkmen) Uslu  
ACG 56*

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The loss of our dear Fatoş devastated me. Our friendship dates back to 1945. It is hard to enumerate all her qualities: all the gifts she brought from the States for her friends, all the financial support she offered to those in need... she was

Selahattin Bereket passed away on April 6, 2019 at the age of 86. He was from a prominent Hatay family, a son of former President of Syria, Mr. Mehmet Bereket, who signed the annexation document of Hatay to

Turkey in 1938, and told his family, "it is time to go back home to Turkey."

Selahattin attended the University of Illinois, graduating with a BS in Civil Engineering in 1956. He married his teenage sweetheart Fatma Edige in Chicago in December 1957, with whom he had a model marriage for 61 years. He later earned his master's at RC, and worked for ARI İnşaat, and as an independent engineer.

A complete gentleman in the best Ottoman tradition, Selahattin was dearly loved by his friends, who admired his courage and strength in dealing with problems and hardships.

*Contributed by Ahmet N. Taşpınar*

To share news of a deceased RC community member please send a notice in English of no more than 150 words to [bonayozman@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:bonayozman@robcol.k12.tr)

Longer notices will be edited due to space restrictions.

*Please include a high resolution (minimum 700 x 700 pixels) photo of the deceased.*

## Alpaslan Akpınar RC ENG 60



Alpaslan Akpınar, 81, passed away in San Francisco on December 14, 2019. Alpaslan was a dear friend to many from RA and RC Engineering. He was born in Istanbul on March 17, 1938. He will be remembered for his theatrical achievements, as a member of the RC Players, his active membership in the Classical Music Club and interest in athletic sports. After RC, he completed his master's degree at Purdue University. He married Snjezana Veljagic in 1966 and settled in the US

where he lived happily for the rest of his life. He worked for Bechtel Co. until he retired. He was the father of a son, Bahadır and a daughter, Maya, and a big brother of Ayşen Akpınar ACG 64, and he cherished all dearly. Alpaslan's family and friends will keep his memory alive by remembering his unique life, inspiring ideas and intelligent sense of humor.

*Contributed by his sister  
Ayşen Akpınar ACG 64*

## Örsçelik Balkan RC YÜK 64



We lost Örsçelik Balkan, age 78, on March 6, 2019. He was the president of the RC Turkish Folklore Association and the founder and President of the RC Business School Student Association. After graduating, he established his consulting company and served on the boards of construction and engineering companies. He was a member of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce. He made outstanding contributions to Turkish Rotary Clubs. He became the first Turkish citizen to join the board of Rotary International as a trustee. He represented the UR

Foundation in the World Bank, IMF, and UNESCO Europe. He was awarded with 'Special Recognition' from the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry. His biggest hang-up was the cold air current. He never allowed A/C and open car windows in the 110°F Arizona summer! His keen sense of humor and laughter are unforgotten by his friends. He is survived by his wife Afet, and sons, Aydın and Gökçe.

*Contributed by  
Feridun Taşman RC YÜK 64*

## Ömer Tunçer RA 66

Ömer Tunçer passed away on February 22, 2020 in Istanbul. Born in Istanbul in 1946, Ömer joined Robert Academy in 1957, and in his own words had the privilege to be classmates both with RA 65 and RA 66 classes, after he lost one year in Lycee. After RA, he joined Istanbul University's Medical Faculty and continued his education in psychiatry until he became a professor of psychiatry in 1995. He married his beloved wife, Beyhan in 1977. Beyhan

and Ömer lived as an inseparable couple all through their lives. Sincerity, humility, politeness and kindness were the main features of his character. We were expecting him to write a book, analyzing the psychological status of the group of RA classmates. Unfortunately that book will never be completed. We will miss him.

*Contributed by Sertan Özcan RA 65*

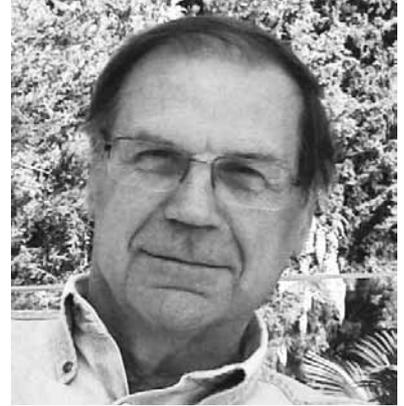


## Bariş Arkayın RA 66

Bariş Arkayın's sudden demise, on April 8, 2020 in Istanbul, due to Covid-19, and his lonesome march to eternity had left his colleagues, friends and family in shock, sorrow, and desperation during those grave lockdown days. Bariş was born on June 13, 1945 in Istanbul. After RA he earned his BS in mechanical engineering, and MS in industrial engineering from US universities. He worked in Germany for BASF and in Turkey for Tokar, Bimaş, Temsa, TSKB, EKA, Alper, and Eti Elektronik. Bariş

is survived and very much missed by his beloved wife of 49 years Ayda, son Efe, daughter-in-law Sinem, and granddaughter Aden Aylin. Bariş will be remembered for his incessant questioning and encouraging silent smile. He tried to make the most of life and be happy with what he could achieve. He will be commemorated dearly by his RA colleagues especially during the bi-weekly Tarabya lunches.

*Contributed by Nabi Eren RA 65*



## Şevki Pekin RA 66

The hardest thing is to say farewell to people you love. Şevki and I were in the same dormitory at RA and never lost contact since then. We most likely have our wives to thank for this. He was kind enough to draw my first three stores and two houses for me. An innovative architect, he hated decorating and always tried to avoid it. He loved creative designs. He deservedly was awarded the most



important architectural award in Turkey, the Mimar Sinan Award, for his achievements. Kubbede kalan bir hoş seda (A pleasant voice in the dome). He also received the Aga Khan Architectural Award for a summer house he built in Bodrum. He was the father of four boys: Cem, Ali, Ömer and Osman.

*Contributed by Ali Vardar RA 66*

## Zafer Olgaç RA 66



Zafer Olgaç passed away on May 10, 2020, in Istanbul. He was a popular and beloved member of RA 66. He will be remembered for his boundless sincerity and enthusiasm. His passionate personality always co-existed with a set of disciplined principles; deeper inside, there was a genuinely kind, giving and tender soul. The main thread that ran through Zafer's personal and professional life was his inner strength and his uncompromising sense of responsibility. Following his BS and MS

degrees in metallurgical engineering from the University of Texas, El Paso, Zafer worked in the engineering equipment industry in Houston and Southern California, before retiring from Valley-Todera as Director of Operations. He and his family settled down in Istanbul in 2014. He is survived by his wife Sergül and his son Alp. We will keep his compassionate and joyful image in our heads and in our memories forever.

*Contributed by Osman Baran RA 66*

## Nevra Demirel ACG 68

Nevra Arda Demirel passed away on August, 22 2019. Nevra was one-of-a-kind with her enthusiasm for life. She pursued her MS degree at RC and started a rigorous work life at TASAŞ, which involved traveling to lands where women did not venture much at the time. Nevra had many friends and some know her as an avid bridge player some know her as a caring mother, some as an RC volunteer, and many know her as the great traveler that she was. Her travels during the



last period of her life was what gave her the extra push and energy along with the joy of her grandchildren. She was always there for her friends to give advice, to have fun together or just to chat. Nevra is survived by her husband Ahmet, her beloved children Ayşe and Emre, son-in-law Murat, grandchildren Ali and Eda, and her twin sister, Nilgün.

*Contributed by Fatoş Erkman RC YÜK 72*

## Vahak Mangır RA 69

Vahak Mangır passed away on July 21, 2019, after a brief illness. He was 69.

Vahak came to RA from the English High School. Following his graduation from Boğaziçi University in 1973, he attended the University of Manchester where he obtained a master's degree in chemical engineering. He made a career as a distributor and representative of electrical and electronic component manufacturers. He was a founding

member of the Cağaloğlu Lions Club, as well as the Göz Nuru Koruma Vakfı.

Vahak was predeceased by his sister Diana Markerink RC 74, and is survived by his brother-in-law Sir Henk Markerink, beloved partner of 26 years Gülgün Ergin, and his one and only son Can Mangır. He will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him.



## faculty and friends obituaries

### Wilbur (Bill) Steltzer, Jr.



Wilbur Steltzer, Jr., 90, died peacefully on January 20, 2020 in West Grove, Pennsylvania. Bill was born and raised in Philadelphia. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1951 he served three years as a naval officer. He received his master's in education from Penn in 1957. Bill began his career as a science teacher, highlighted by two years at the American College for Girls (1965-67). He retired in 1988 after 18 years as a middle school principal. Married 52 years, he and his wife Alice (deceased 2010) raised their family in

Kennett Square, PA. Bill's passion was travel. He completed 45 international trips, visiting every country in Europe. An avid hiker, he trekked across England, Portugal, the Netherlands, all the small European countries, and several US states. Bill is survived by three children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

*Contributed by his daughter Alison Clough*

# SÜPÜRGENİN EN MÜKEMMEL HALİ

**Arçelik Imperium Go**, kablosuz ve şarjlı dik süpürge. Temizlik alışkanlıklarınızı değiştirecek, performansıyla sizi kendine hayran bırakacak. Yeni bir süpürge deneyimiyle tanışmaya hazır olun.



#### **Yüksek Emiş Gücü**

165W emiş gücüyle evin ana süpürgesi.



#### **Ergonomik Tasarım**

Katlanabilen borusu sayesinde ulaşılması zor yüzeylere kolay erişim.



#### **Uzun Süreli Çalışma**

45 dakikaya kadar kullanım süresiyle uzun süreli süpürme imkanı.



#### **Led Işıklı Fırça**

Fırçasındaki Led ışığı sayesinde görünmeyen tozlar için daha detaylı temizlik.



Ücretsiz  
Evde Servis  
Hizmeti



*“Kadın eliyle anne  
hassasiyetiyle...”*

*Funda Özer Baltalı, RC' 79*

