FROM THE FRONT

"October was always the least dependable of months... full of ghosts and shadows."
JOY FIELDING CANADIAN NOVELIST AND ACTRESS

Devoret wins Nobel Prize for quantum mechanics work

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the unknown with the same rigor and curiosity that have marked his extraordinary career."

Devoret and his colleagues earned their Nobel Prize for experiments demonstrating quantum phenomena on a scale that was visible to the human eye. One phenomenon, quantum tunneling, describes the ability of a particle to go through a barrier rather than over it. The other, energy quantization, is the idea that subatomic particles only emit or absorb energy in discrete amounts.

Using a chip with a superconducting circuit, the team was able to visualize the quantum effects on a macroscopic scale — a feat that challenged traditional assumptions about quantum mechanics.

"They answered the basic science question," Sohrab Ismail-Beigi, the current chair of the Applied Physics department, said, "and in the process, they created an approach and a protocol and a way of doing the experiment that had a really big impact."

Ismail-Beigi remarked that Devoret was a great colleague, who, in addition to being very knowledgeable about his subject, was good at explaining it to others.

Devoret joined Yale as a full professor in 2002, according to A. Douglas Stone, a professor of applied physics and the deputy director of the Yale Quantum Institute. Stone was chair of the applied physics department when Devoret joined. Since then, Devoret played a key role in developing the study of quantum technology at Yale alongside other physicists, such as Steven Girvin and Robert Schoelkopf.

"The three of them really pioneered the technology that's now being used by Google and IBM and Amazon and other places," Stone said. "The modern prototypes of quantum computers are being built with Yale technology."

Physics department chair Sarah Demers, who served as the director of undergraduate studies from 2022 to 2024, recalled hearing students speak with enthusiasm about the opportunity to work with Devoret and Schoelkopf.

"Not only was it cutting edge research done by faculty members, but the students were absolutely along for the ride," Demers said. "They opened up their labs — and still do in YQI — to a lot of undergraduate researchers."

Devoret was also among the founding members of the Yale Quantum Institute, referred to as YQI, which was established in 2014 to create infrastructure for Yale's research into quantum technology and computing, Stone said. Quantum research, he explained, is aimed at solving problems in computing that were once considered unsolvable.

Countries around the world are racing to advance quantum research and technology today, Stone added, because of how important the work is. The United Nations has designated 2025 the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology.

"It's a new kind of technology that goes beyond the transistors you have in your cell phone, and fiber optics and so on," Stone said. "It might be qualitatively more powerful for both computing and sensing, for measuring very, very small changes, which can be very important for all sorts of things, for defense, for the Global Positioning System."

Though Devoret's Nobel-winning research dates back to the 1980s, Stone thought that the quantum technology "gold rush" of 2025 could be traced back to research like Devoret's, which laid the groundwork for continuing research.

Currently, Devoret also serves as the chief scientist for quantum hardware at Google Quantum AI. Martinis, who previously worked on quantum technology at Google, has since cofounded Qolab in 2022, a quantum computing startup.

"Yale proudly cheers a trailblazer of a technology so consequential and far reaching that it may affect the life of every member of the planet," University President Maurie McInnis said in a press release. "The work for which Professor Devoret is recognized, and his continued work over two decades with his Yale colleagues and others, helped launch a revolution in quantum mechanics."

Devoret was born in Paris.

Jaeha Jang contributed reporting.

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Salovey plans to resume teaching psychology next year

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published in 2026, he wrote.

Alumni recall fond memories of 'Easy A Salovey'

Alumni who took Salovey's courses as undergraduates expressed enthusiasm for his return to the classroom, fondly recounting his dynamic teaching style and friendly personality.

Charlie Knoll '92, who took "Introduction to Psychology" and "Psychology and the Law" with Salovey, wrote in an email to the News that Salovey and his "engaging, energetic, and funny" teaching style influenced him to major in psychology.

"I remember one time he brought a brain to class and held it aloft for us," Knoll wrote. "I loved it. Since then, I've gone on to a career in Medicine and the brain and neurological system have been key aspects of my work. I can still picture his holding the brain."

James Mattucci '90 -- who took "Introduction to Psychology" in fall 1986, Salovey's first time teaching the course -- described the former University president's teaching as "half-teaching, half-stand-up."

According to Phoebe Roberts '95, "Psychology and the Law" met at a different location every session until the end of add/drop period due to its popularity, eventually settling at Battell Chapel.

James Borin '93 MED '98, who took the class, wrote in an email to the News that while students staged various pranks in the memorably large lecture -- including dressing up as secret service agents to escort students to seats, unfurling a "huge banner" from above the lecture stage and streaking naked through the aisles -- Salovey handled the interruptions with grace and kept "everyone's attention rapt."

According to Abbe Walter '92, "Psychology and the Law" was so popular that outside of the class, students sold t-shirts that read, "One in Four maybe more," an apparent reference to a phrase traditionally used to describe the LGBTQ+ demographic at Yale and, according to Walter, a tribute to the course's popularity.

"Considering there was no social media or internet at the time, this class was definitely 'a thing' and that can be wholly attributed to how great a teacher Peter Salovey was," Walter wrote in an email to the News.

The former president was also dubbed "Easy A Salovey," according to seven alumni.

Cheryl Green '93, who was Salovey's mentee for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, praised Salovey's kind personality. When she, who is in a wheelchair, couldn't attend class because of a broken elevator, Salovey came to her residential college, Jonathan Edwards, and taught her one-on-one until the elevator was fixed, she wrote in an email to the News.

Dozens of alumni agreed that Yalies will be lucky to learn from Salovey.

"I am happy that Dr. Salovey is returning to teaching -- it's a wonderful coda to his tenure as University President and it will benefit so many Yalies," Lauren Mangini '03 wrote in an email to the News.

Salovey was Yale's 23rd president.

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IRIS ditches refugee program now focused on Afrikaners

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said. "You may not actually agree with them on much. The point is that they're a refugee, because they are being attacked for some aspect of who they are, and it is unsafe for them to remain in their country, and that does not apply to Afrikaners."

On President Donald Trump's first day in office in January, he signed an executive order indefinitely suspending new refugee admissions under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, which partners with the Office of Refugee Resettlement to facilitate resettlement through agencies like IRIS. On Feb. 7, another executive order exempted Afrikaners from the suspension, classifying them as refugees.

In May, the government admitted a group of 59 Afrikaner migrants for resettlement in the United States.

The United Nations defines a refugee as a person "who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence," and who has "a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group."

Trump has alleged that Afrikaners are victims of a "genocide," citing violent crimes against white farmers as evidence of racial discrimination. A South African court rebuked that claim, and data suggests that crime against white South Africans is not as outsized as Trump suggests, according to the country's police minister.

"Afrikaners are not, as a group, politically persecuted," Daniel Magaziner, a professor of South African history at Yale, said. "They are not threatened with anything approaching genocide or something that would necessitate their being seen as refugees. Most Afrikaners are able to live very free and secure lives in South Africa."

Salem said the government offers a range of visa programs that could help bring in Afrikaner migrants, and that using refugee status to grant them a pathway to citizenship "undermines the credibility" of the admissions program.

As Trump has emphasized Afrikaner admissions, his administration has also significantly contracted federal avenues for refugee entrance into the country. Salem said that since January, IRIS has received, per month, a family of six and a "couple of individuals" as the government limited the admission of non-white refugees and slowed the processing of Special Immigrant Visas, or SIVs.

Last year, IRIS resettled 900 refugees through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, Salem said. She explained that the nonprofit will continue to support the refugees it has resettled through federal admission in recent years, and that it will accept and help resettle people who successfully enter the country with SIVs, including Afghan refugees who were allies of the U.S. during the war in Afghanistan.

On Sept. 15, Salem sent an email to IRIS' community sponsor organizations — which support resettlement throughout Connecticut beyond staff-led work in New Haven and Hartford — asking for their input on whether the nonprofit should continue its reception of refugees through the federal government.

"Would you be willing to help resettle an Afrikaner family were we to ask you for support?" Salem asked the sponsor organizations in the email, which the News obtained.

Danbury Area Refugee Assistance, or DARA, was among the sponsor groups that responded to Salem's request for input. Barbara Davis, the president of DARA, said that her organization's leadership unanimously voted against IRIS' renewed partnership with the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

"We didn't feel that those families could possibly have met the same bar, the very high standard of what it means to be a refugee in the United States," Davis said of potential Afrikaner migrants. "To shut the door on the most vulnerable populations who have survived some of the most dire circumstances in the world, only to allow in others that have not, seemed unfair, and we didn't want to legitimize it."

Davis explained that since Trump took office in January, DARA has "pivoted" its focus to fundraising to support IRIS in its work assisting newly-arrived families in New Haven and Hartford. IRIS lost millions of dollars in federal support for its resettlement work earlier this year.

"I always felt that the Refugee Resettlement Program was one of the most efficient and valuable public-private partnerships in this country," Chris George, IRIS' former executive director from 2005 to 2023, said. "We always trusted that the government would select people who meet the definition of 'refugees.'"

The Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut founded the Interfaith Refugee Ministry, now IRIS, in 1982

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Commons menus to be decided by ballot

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now costs 11 points — equivalent to roughly $11.

Currently, Lotus serves crispy black bean tofu or crispy black bean pork and a variety of dumpling options. Pasta e Basta serves ragù alla pugliese and fresh asparagus pasta.

Van Emmenes wrote that the new menu options were created by staff at Commons.

"The culinary team at The Commons created several Fall menu items for students to vote on at the LOTUS and Pasta e Basta stations based on seasonality, supply chain availability, food trends, and historically popular dishes," Van Emmenes wrote, citing the Korean fried chicken bowl as one popular example.

Alongside the new voting initiative, the YCC dining policy team announced another change: Beginning after Oct. 15, students will be able to add cheese to their pasta bowls at Pasta e Basta. That change came after advocacy from Branford Senator Santiago Giraldo '28.

"Everytime I went to the pasta station at Commons I would always get a plate without cheese and it would irritate the hell out of me," Giraldo wrote in a statement to the News. "I'm a big cheese with pasta fan. So not having cheese with my meals was incredibly annoying and I know for a fact that I wasn't the only one who felt that way."

Santiago said that YCC dining policy director Thy Luong '28 and deputy dining director Brendan Kaminski '28 met with a representative from Yale Hospitality to bring his idea into reality.

Luong wrote in an email to the News that she and Kaminski met with Yale Hospitality on Sept. 23.

Luong said the meeting consisted of introductions between YCC officials and Yale Hospitality and discussion of other new initiatives, including the potential for "future pop-up ideas."

"I'm really happy that Thy and Brendan have kept up and built upon the amazing relationship we began with Ms. Westwater and Ms. Hepburn-James at the beginning of the summer," YCC President Andrew Boanoh '27 wrote to the News, referring to Jodi Smith Westwater, Yale's assistant vice president for hospitality, and Stacey Hepburn-James, Yale Hospitality's senior director of residential operations.

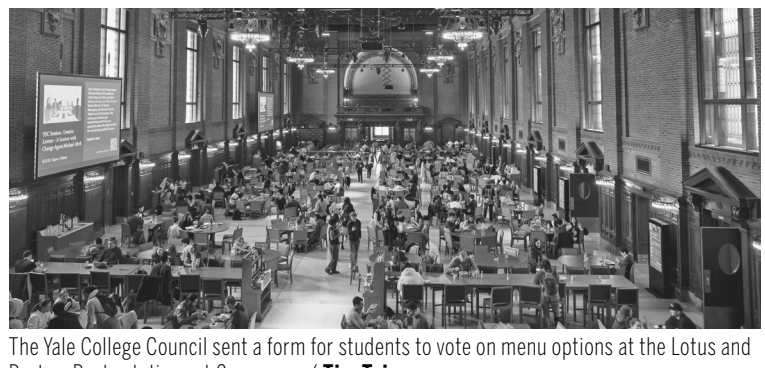
Boanoh said he cast his vote for the Korean fried chicken or tofu and wild mushroom cream options and "would encourage all students to do the same."

According to Luong, the dining policy team plans to meet with Yale Hospitality administrators once every three weeks, and is in communication with Yale Hospitality about bringing cookies back to Commons.

"We're looking forward to fully advocating for student demands and, most importantly, collaborating with Hospitality to implement feasible change," Luong wrote.

Commons is located in the Schwarzman Center.

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The Yale College Council sent a form for students to vote on menu options at the Lotus and Paste e Basta stations at Commons. / **Tim Tai**