
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Emily Fitzgerald

Before I even enrolled as a student at Duquesne, I knew I wanted to take Dr. Dillon's Magazine Journalism course. Once I got the chance in my penultimate semester of graduate school, I knew I wanted to be the Editor-in-Chief and in charge of pulling this publication together. However, what I didn't know – and never could have predicted – was the situation I would find myself in during my last semester: spring of 2020.

There was no way anyone could have prepared for a pandemic outbreak that would shift classes online and completely disrupt our way of life. In a way, this edition of *Off the Bluff* became one of the most significant. A magazine that has served as a glimpse into the lives of Pittsburgh's neighborhoods suddenly became the last portrait of our Pittsburgh as we always knew it, but aren't likely to return to anytime soon.

Producing this magazine was no easy task. Tracking down photography credits, fact-checking story details and structuring the publication itself – all remotely and all while coming to terms with the fact that life as I knew it was rapidly changing – was an interesting challenge. However, some small part of me knew how important this edition was, even if I didn't realize it at first.



Despite everything, I felt a quiet motivation to edit and lay out pages; the stress of choosing a good font overpowered my sense of hopelessness at the idea of graduating in the middle of a pandemic-induced recession.

What started as a portfolio piece became a daily ritual that kept me sane: make coffee, light a candle, sit down and get to work. I found the monotony of checking spacing and spelling a small comfort in a difficult time. I got lost, not only in the editing, but in the stories themselves. They reminded me of something important that I almost forgot in the mayhem of adjusting to the new normal: Pittsburgh isn't defined solely

because of its buildings and bridges – the city is a by-product of all of us who live here. Pittsburgh is family restaurants sharing a taste of home and local, small businesses who know customers' pets by name. It's pierogi and pickles and always having a neighbor when you need one.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as the Editor-in-Chief of *Off the Bluff* and honored to produce this edition. It gave me hope in a very strange time and reminds me that the Pittsburgh we know and love will still be waiting for us when this is all over.