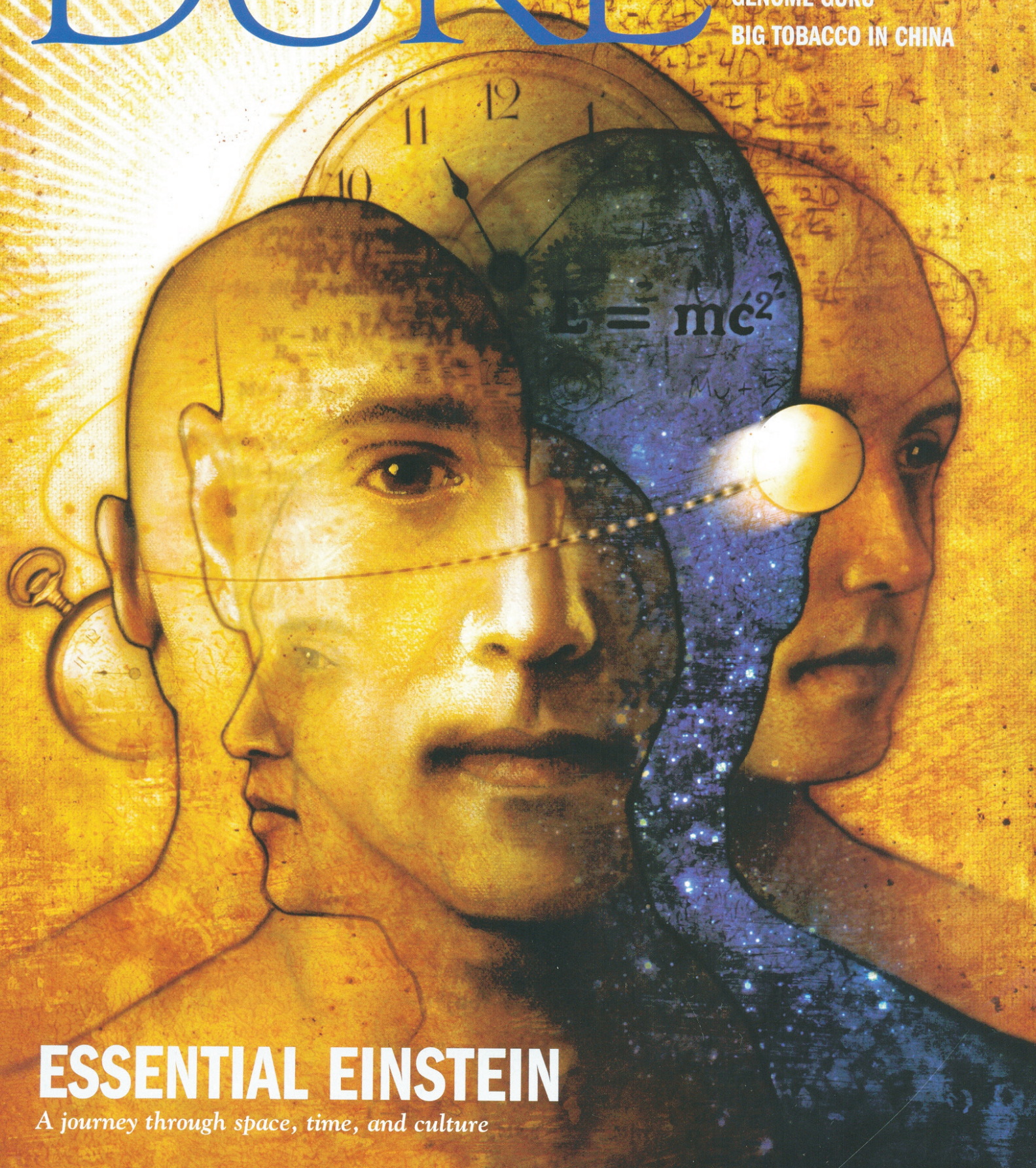


# DUKE

Magazine

JULY-AUGUST 2005

'LOVE' AND REALITY TV  
GENOME GURU  
BIG TOBACCO IN CHINA



## ESSENTIAL EINSTEIN

*A journey through space, time, and culture*

who received Virginia Tech University's 2004 XCaliber Award for excellence by a team.

**Jane Roycroft Brasier** '80 is the senior business developer in eastern North Carolina for the geotechnical engineering, testing, and environment service firm S&ME Inc. She is based in Raleigh.

**Mack Thomas Ruffin IV** B.S.E. '80 was appointed assistant chair for research programs in the family medicine department at the University of Michigan's medical school. He is taking part in a major cross-institute project in cancer-prevention research for the National Institutes of Health.

**Bruce Jay Ruzinsky** '80, J.D. '83, a partner in the bankruptcy and litigation sections in the Houston office of the law firm Jackson Walker, was included in *Texas Monthly's* list of "super lawyers."

**David G. Sisler** '80 was awarded the 2004 Best General Counsel award in the solo category by the *Dallas Business Journal*. Based on nominations from the legal community, winners were selected by a panel of judges.

**Tina Sherry Alster** B.S.N. '81, M.D. '86, a clinical professor of dermatology at Georgetown University Medical Center, is director of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery. She is the consulting dermatologist to Lancome and a member of Duke Medical Center's board of visitors. She and her husband, Paul Frazer, and their son live in Washington.

**Terri Lynn Mascherin** '81 received the 2004 Cunningham Carey Award from the Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and the 2004 Albert E. Jenner Jr. Pro Bono Award.

**Daniel Frank Pauly** '81, an associate professor in the division of cardiology at the University of Florida, was named the Stop Heart Disease Researcher of the Year by the Florida Heart Research Institute and the Florida chapter of the American College of Cardiology. The award provides funds for his research in heart failure. He and his wife, Rebecca, and their two children live in Gainesville, Fla.

**Peter A. Cotorceanu** J.D. '82 is an attorney in the international tax group at Baker & McKenzie in Zurich, Switzerland. He had been an associate professor of law at Washburn University's law school and in private practice in Maryland and Virginia.

**Jennifer C. Lovejoy** '82 is the dean of the School of Nutrition and Exercise Science at Bastyr University in Kenmore, Wash. She was a research professor and chair of the nutrition and exercise-science department. She and her husband, Robert Straughn, live in Bothell, Wash.

**Robert Evans Harrington** '84, J.D. '87 was recognized as a "diversity catalyst" at the Diversity in Business Awards luncheon sponsored by the *Charlotte Business Journal*. He is co-chair of Mecklenburg County Bar Association's Special Committee on Diversity.

**Foon Rhee** '84 was appointed city editor of *The Boston Globe*. He was the capitol/state editor for *The News & Observer* in Raleigh. He lives in Brookline, Mass.

**Susan La Nelle Trevarthen** '85 is a shareholder with Weiss Serota Helfman in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where she specializes in representing local governments in the fields of land use, planning, and zoning law. She is the author of the article "Advising the Client Regarding Protection of Property Rights: Harris Act and Inverse Condemnation Claims," published last year in *The Florida Bar Journal*.

**Joseph Duane Wargo** '85 co-founded the law firm Wargo & French with **Michael Scott French** '87, J.D. '90. The Atlanta firm consists of

## CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARDS

Alexander "Sandy" Mullin B.S.E. '61, M.F. '68

One might say there's more than one way to save a tree. You can save it in the traditional way—while it's still in the ground. Or you can save it on the back end, keeping its lumber from being wasted and making it less likely that too many more of its brothers will fall.

Sandy Mullin isn't technically in the tree-saving business, but he likes to believe his lumber-saving devices indirectly conserve forests. His interest in wood comes naturally: Mullin's father worked for the U.S. Forestry Service, supervising Jefferson National Forest in Virginia; his father's father was a logger in Northern Maine "back when they used double-bitted axes, not chain-saws," Mullin says with a laugh.

Mullin came to Duke in 1957 from Roanoke, Virginia, earned a civil-engineering degree, and met his wife and current company CEO, Coty Jones, at a Duke football game. After four years in Japan, paying back the Navy for his tuition money, he returned to earn his master's in the business side of forestry. For a few years, he taught at North Carolina State University, and, while he was there, got interested in technology that made better use of wood.

During World War II, the lumber industry applied mathematics to solve the problem of how to cut boards into smaller rectangles

most efficiently. "But the problem had never been solved when you consider a board with defects," Mullin explains. In the early 1970s, the company Mullin started with his friend Jim Barr began introducing computerized hardware and software that cut boards in just the right places, discarding knots and other defects, while saving as much of the good lumber as possible. Today, Barr-Mullin Inc., in Cary, North Carolina, creates technology used by lumber and furniture companies all over the world.

Barr ended up selling his share of the business to Mullin in the mid-Seventies and went on to found the software giant SAS Institute Inc. But Mullin stuck with wood, going on to create award-winning lumber optimizing and scanning devices such as the Mini-Max (1979), the Compu-Rip (1986), and CellScan (1994), which uses lasers to analyze the surface cells of wood for defects.

Without such technology, wood waste can reach as high as 50 percent per board. (The waste is chopped up for particle board or simply tossed out.) Mullin boasts that with his wood-saving technology, "it's not unusual for a company to increase yield by 5 or 10 percent."

"Sandy is one of the most innovative people in the wood-machinery business," attests Roy Rentschler, president of Indiana Dimension Inc., in Logansport, Indiana, who has used Mullin's products for fifteen years. The National Science Foundation has also seen the value in Mullin's work. Since 2002, the NSF has awarded the company grants totaling \$600,000.

Mullin's main market for his technology has moved where much of the furniture business has gone—overseas. He's traveled to South America, China, and Russia, where companies that make lumber and furniture are looking for a competitive edge. But there are also manufacturers in America that use the Barr-Mullin technology. "The only

thing that we can hope for is that our U.S. friends stay ahead of the curve," says Mullin, who plans to stay well ahead of the curve, too.

—Eric Larson

Larson '93 is a freelance writer living in Maggie Valley, North Carolina.

