We’ve all spent countless hours in cars. Have you ever wondered, “How does this thing work?” You could ask Michael Berry ’97, Shawn Kelly ’97, Andrea Martin ’96, and Michael Miller ’92, who all studied mechanical engineering in the University’s College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture (CETA). As engineers for carmaker Honda’s research and development facility in Raymond, Ohio, they are responsible for making sure vehicles are safe, efficient, and comfortable.

Michael Miller, who is in charge of testing everything from durability to ergonomics at Honda, got there first. He started his job immediately following graduation and has worked his way up through the company. Unlike many of his colleagues, including his fellow UHart alums, he wasn’t always interested in cars. In college, it was helicopters that had his attention.

Miller recalls that Sikorsky Aircraft was promoting a human-powered helicopter competition. He joined the project in the design phase and was tasked with trying to figure out how to build a carbon fiber shaft for the propeller.

“Did the human-powered helicopter ever make it off the ground?”

“Of no, we didn’t succeed,” Miller answers with a laugh. “I don’t know if anybody has. The way the calculations worked out, we would have had to have a world-class cyclist actually get in and power it.” Despite this, Miller says the hands-on experience, supplemented by lessons from the classroom, help him on the job to this day.

Just a few years later, when looking for someone with similar experiences to hire at Honda, Miller found the perfect candidate in fellow UHart graduate Andrea Martin. Martin’s acoustics studies with Professor Robert Celmer ’78 prepared her for her job, which focuses on a car’s noise and vibrations. Another thing she had going for her was having worked on cars, thanks to the University’s Formula SAE team, a student club that offers the chance to build a racecar for a competition sanctioned by the Society of Automotive Engineers.

“It was a great experience,” says Martin. “You have to do everything, from coming up with the initial concept, to designing it, to building it. We also had to worry about the cost associated with it. It’s real-world stuff. I do the same thing now that I was doing then.”

While competing with the Formula SAE team, Andrea Martin met Shawn Kelly, who ended up at Honda shortly after graduation. Kelly is a principal engineer and technical expert in charge of developing pedal, shift, and park braking systems.

“I think I grew up with a steering wheel in my hand,” jokes Kelly of his love for cars. “But then I went down a few different paths. For a while, I was interested in going into the arts, but I also had a lot of math and science skills. Once I got to the University, I realized I could use my creativity, my math skills, my science skills, and my passion for cars as an engineer.”

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In his 20-plus years at Honda, Miller has worked on a variety of products such as the Accord Coupe, the Acura CL, and the Honda Odyssey. Miller says, “When I see any of the vehicles I’ve worked on drive down the road, I feel a sense of pride knowing that I’ve been personally involved with products that hundreds of thousands of people have used.”

**THE FANTASTIC**

**FOUR**

**A QUARTET OF ALUMNI**

**KEEPS HONDA ROLLING**
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New Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology

This is the first year that the University’s criminal justice program is joined with sociology under the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. This move reflects the fact that there is a true balance between theoretical studies and hands-on work in the criminal justice system, says Albert DiChiara, director of the criminal justice program. On the theoretical side, students study the causes of crime, society’s attempts to control crime, ways to prevent crime, and how to think critically about the issues of crime and criminal justice. The hands-on work comes through internships with the Connecticut Judicial Department and the Department of Corrections, as well as research work in the field for the University’s Center for Social Research.

“The change in the department name recognizes the full scope of the department’s offerings and the collaborative relationships that exist between the two programs,” says Katherine A. Daughn, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “Criminal Justice is A&S’s third-largest major, with more than 100 students, and it’s only fitting that it is represented in the department name. This change coincides with moving the Center for Social Research back on campus (from the Asylum Avenue campus), and housing it within the Sociology and Criminal Justice Department,” she adds. “The center will expand its focus to include crime studies and increasing opportunities for students to get involved in the research. In this way, both sociology and criminal justice majors will benefit enormously.”

The year was 1964, and five decades later, Provost has become the first University of Hartford officer to graduate from the University of Hartford with a major in classical guitar. He went on to play guitar in the original Broadway productions of Promises, Promises and Grease; performed as a freelance session player on radio and television commercials, records, and movies; and was a composer for the NBC soap opera Another World.

“Richard Provost is much more than a great teacher to me. He has been a lifelong friend and mentor for over 50 years,” Morris says. “After I retired from the music business, I began teaching guitar for the first time. It was easy, because all I had to do was pattern my teaching style after Dick: unlimited patience, kindness, and a great sense of humor.”

In addition to teaching, Provost has maintained a busy performance schedule over the years, both as a solo artist and as half of the critically acclaimed Goldsipel/Provost Classical Guitar Duo. Provost also is the author of five books on guitar technique, practice, and performance.

A lot has changed over the past 50 years, Provost says, especially in terms of technology. "Technology has made a difference in that you can record a student’s lesson and immediately play it back for them, and you can really speed up the learning process," he says. But one thing that has not changed is the talent and drive of his students.

"I am humbled by the success of this program, its students, and alumni, and the impact we have had on music education across the country," Provost said a an event held in 2014 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Hartford Guitar Department. "From day one, our students’ passion for classical guitar inspired me, and it continues to motivate me every day."

Provost’s legacy at The Hart School is continuing under the leadership of another former student: the award-winning classical guitarist Christopher Ladd AD’03, the current chair of the Hartford Guitar Department.

"It is difficult to put into words the effect that Dick Provost has had on my life and career as a performer and teacher," Ladd says. "I am honored to have had him as a teacher and to have him as a mentor, but somewhere in the last 15 to 20 years our relationship reached a turning point, and today I am equally honored to consider him my friend."

Nearly a decade after receiving his criminal justice degree at the University, Hartford Police Department Detective Steven Citta ’90 was back on campus this year to be recognized for a career achievement. At a Hartford Police Department (HPD) ceremony held in the University’s Wilde Auditorium, he was presented with the Chief’s Medal of Valor for “the intelligent performance of his duty and, at grave and imminent personal danger, engaging in successful combat with an armed and dangerous adversary.”

Citta had apprehended an individual who fled from a car during an attempted police traffic stop. When he located that individual on a nearby city street, the suspect turned and pointed a gun directly at him. Citta was able to wound and then arrest the suspect.

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It’s obvious that Citta has put to good use the major that attracted him to campus. He says he was always interested in criminal justice and envisioned himself as a law enforcement officer. So the University’s criminal justice degree program prompted the Charlton, Mass., native to enroll in 2001. Also appealing was the requirement that all criminal justice students do internships within the field.

“I really liked the idea of exploring the field while still a student,” Citta says. He did internships with the adult probation program in Bristol, Conn., and with the U.S. Marshall’s Office in New Haven, Conn. After graduation, he joined the HPD.

Citta says he found his internships quite valuable. “It was a great snapshot of different aspects of the criminal justice field,” he says. In the adult probation program, he saw how offenders adjusted to living under probation, and with the U.S. Marshall’s Office, he experienced the court system and the investigation process.

“Experiences like these can really help steer your career,” he says.

This internship component of the criminal justice program is compelling for many prospective students, according to Albert DiChiara, director of the program in the University’s College of Arts and Sciences, because they receive hands-on experience in fields where jobs are increasing.

“For example, as a criminologist, you have to spend time meeting with criminals,” he says. “So it is very helpful for a student to start that process with a mentor in an internship setting.”

The criminal justice program has strong connections with the state’s judicial system, particularly in probation services, where many students do their internships. The program also has a strong relationship with the HPD.

“Our department has a good relationship with the University, so we’ve done lots of programs there,” Citta says, adding that he comes back to the University on a semi-regular basis, including to work as part of the HPD detail at the University’s SpringFling spring festival.

Citta is currently a detective assigned to the State Intelligence Center, a task force that focuses on criminal intelligence and Homeland Security issues in the state. He is also a bomb technician on the department’s bomb squad. Citta has also been an instructor in six subjects at the police academy. He qualified for certification to teach at the academy because of his major in criminal justice and minors in sociology and psychology.

Citta says he regularly uses all of the wide-ranging skills he acquired at the University in his work. “From writing reports to being in a courtroom to interacting with people, the skills I gained really helped me professionalize my career. The courses I took gave me the tools to get the job done better.”

When Professor Richard Provost ’60 began teaching full-time at the University of Hartford, Lyndon Johnson was President of the United States, “Beatlemania” was sweeping the country, and UHart was just 7 years old.

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