



## **Napier News - Fall 2025**

### **An E-Newsletter for Friends and Supporters of The Napier Initiative at Pilgrim Place**

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## **2025 Napier Fellows in Action**

In April, Shakinar "Shark" Mutulili (Pomona College) and Natasha Yen (Pitzer College) were awarded \$20,000 project grants through The Napier Initiative. Shark founded the Freedom within Kenya Project to improve living conditions for children and mothers in two ill-equipped rural prisons. Natasha implemented the Youth Empowerment and Leadership Program at Little Rose Center in Soweto, South Africa, offering leadership and skills development workshops. These photos show our Napier Fellows in action, with their grants made possible through the generosity of donors to the Initiative.





**READ MORE ABOUT NATASHA: PITZER  
COLLEGE**

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# **Napier Fellow Paving Roads in Public Health**



*Contributed by Paul Turner,  
Napier Council Communications Chair*

Sable Fest's enthusiasm for epidemiology blossomed in a Nutritional Biology course at Scripps College, where she learned about the field of public health by presenting the findings of a study investigating the association between dietary fiber intake during adolescence and breast cancer risk. This interest led to a summer internship at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle, where she examined the impact of hormone-associated dietary patterns on premenopausal breast cancer risk and was determined to add Swedish health data to her epidemiologic toolkit. Learning about Sweden's unique health data led to a better understanding of the relationship between dietary patterns and sarcoidosis, an understudied chronic inflammatory condition disproportionately impacting African American and Swedish individuals.

"The Napier Initiative's commitment to fostering justice for all people ideally aligned with my mission to understand the social factors that may play a role in the association between diet and sarcoidosis," shared Sable, who was a 2023 Napier Fellow.

"Additionally, I was eager to learn more about the field of public health from Pilgrim Place leaders."

Sable appreciated how Pilgrim Place resident Pat Wall "went above and beyond as a mentor" during her Napier Fellowship. "Pat became a friend and cheerleader as I continued developing my research proposal. She shared her rich experience working in the field of public health, providing me with a perspective on public health leaders' dedication to health equity. She also highlighted the creativity required for developing public health solutions, and she helped me feel confident in my preparation for my proposed research, as well as areas in which I may want to grow. While I did not complete this research project in Sweden, my time as a Napier Fellow strengthened my commitment to pursuing a career in epidemiology."

After graduating from Scripps College, Sable returned to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center for two years as a post-baccalaureate research scholar. After this experience, she was determined to pursue a faculty research career investigating biological, structural, and social drivers of understudied chronic diseases and cancers, including endometriosis, ovarian cancer, and the long symptom burden of COVID-19 infection. Sable is now a first-year student pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) in General Epidemiology at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. In addition to gynecologic health outcomes, she is developing skills in social epidemiology by investigating factors related to COVID-19 infection and Long COVID. She will complete a Certificate in Social Epidemiology during the two-year MPH program and is planning to pursue a PhD in Epidemiology and a faculty research career dedicated to achieving health equity.



# In Loving Memory: Barbara Troxell



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of one of our Napier Founders, Barbara Troxell, who died serenely with hospice care in her Pilgrim Place Assisted Living apartment on Oct. 17, soon after her 90th birthday. We are grateful to Barbara for her many contributions to molding The Napier Initiative into what it is today, and will honor her with a tribute in our next e-newsletter.

## Napier on the Ground



On October 24, more than 50 friends and supporters of The Napier Initiative gathered to learn more about plans for this year, including an exclusive sneak peek of the proposals from the 11 Napier Fellows. With several former Fellows in attendance, the program included updates about the 2025 Fellow projects, as well as special tributes to Barbara Troxell, Jean Minus, Jack and Jill Stark, and Joseph Day with The W.M. Keck Foundation.



## Elders Share Their Fall Napier Course Experiences

*Contributed by Napier Elder Barbara Silversmith*

*Philosophy 151: Feminist Ethics* is a fascinating adventure, exploring how philosophical ethics widens in scope through the differing lenses of oppression and relationships, and in the context of caring. This course has 14 students from Scripps College and Harvey Mudd College, plus two elders. The 16 of us are divided into groups with rotating responsibility for preparing analyses of the readings. The readings are from a variety of sources (including journal articles and online presentations) since a textbook on this fast-emerging subject would be out-of-date by the time it could be published! The topics to be covered over the term are wide-ranging and highly engaging, including the ethics of reproduction, environment, immigration, healthcare, nonviolence, and artificial intelligence.

The undergraduate students are incredibly eloquent, and are quite open to the experiences of this 80-year-old Pilgrim. The instructor, Susan Castagnetto, invited us “senior” scholars to her home before the term began to help orient us. Dr. Castagnetto earned her Ph.D. in Feminist Ethics at Stanford.

I cannot find words strong enough to encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to push some cobwebs from your brain and to befriend some vibrant young people. It is all so very exciting—thanks to the Napier Initiative!

**LEARN MORE ABOUT SPRING 2026 NAPIER COURSES**



Contributed by Napier Elder Paula Hui

There couldn't be a more perfect intergenerational course than *Effective Learning Across the Lifespan*, taught by Claremont McKenna College (CMC) Professor Sharda Umanath. Initially offered in 2022 as the first Napier course at CMC, this course takes an in-depth look at how we learn best, how memory itself works, and how both change as we age. With 13 undergraduates and three elder co-learners in the fall 2025 class, the back-and-forth class discussion is lively, with the elders sharing their real-life experiences with aging. We discovered fewer differences than anticipated when it came to best and worst study practices: all confessed they crammed for exams (on the "worst" list)! Professor Umanath included the course in her National Science Foundation "early career" grant (awarded for 2021-2026), which was another "first" for Napier.

## In Case You Missed It: 15 Years of Impact



### 15 Years of Impact

2010-2025



#### Your Generosity in Action

The Napier Initiative celebrated its 15th anniversary in the 2024-2025 academic year, commemorating a significant milestone for this intergenerational learning partnership between Pilgrim Place and the five undergraduate Claremont Colleges. This report celebrates the Initiative's collective commitment to encourage creative ecological and social change over the past 15 years.

#### Since The Napier Initiative's Inception in 2010

**563**

Undergraduate students and elders took at least one Napier Course at the Claremont Colleges



Claremont Colleges undergraduate faculty members offered at least one Napier Course

**160**

**Napier Fellows**

benefited from a mentoring relationship with Pilgrim Place elders



**33**

**Projects**  
granted awards  
totaling \$449,000



**GIVE NOW**

# Creating More Intergenerational Connections

On August 18, Pilgrim Place celebrated intergenerational connections by welcoming the newest incoming Pomona College students to learn about the Claremont community beyond their campus. In collaboration with the College's Draper Center for Community Partnerships, Pilgrim Place residents engaged with these students through various activities and service projects. The day ended with a lunch to promote the Napier Initiative's Fellowships and Courses, as well as future volunteer opportunities on our campus.







Your tax-deductible contribution directly supports The Napier Initiative, including student projects, intergenerational courses, and mentoring. Gifts of all sizes make a difference and ensure these enriching experiences, now and in the future.

**GIVE NOW**



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