



EVERYTHING I LEARNED, I LEARNED IN A CHINESE RESTAURANT

By Curtis Chin, '90, Little, Brown and Company, 2023

Author Curtis Chin's, '90, arrival at U-M as an undergrad in the late 1980s was influenced by his parents' expectations more than anything else. Like many children of immigrant parents, the weight of Chin's family's sacrifices and their toil in the family's famous Detroit Chinese restaurant, Chung's, added up to his beginning college with a significant amount of emotional baggage. He would leave not only with a bachelor's degree in creative writing, but with a newfound confidence in himself and "a road map for life," as he writes in his debut memoir.

In "Everything I Learned, I Learned in a Chinese Restaurant," Chin tells the personal (and not always rosy) story of his family's life serving up platters of Chung's legendary egg rolls and almond boneless chicken, amid a fast-changing tableau of Detroit's movers and shakers in the 1980s (Mayor Coleman Young was a restaurant regular, sharing a dining room with reporters, drag queens, and anyone else hungry for a \$4.99 daily lunch special).

His narrative weaves in local and national events, including the civil unrest in Detroit and the Uprising of 1967, nine months after which Chin was born; the AIDS epidemic; and the brutal murder of Vincent Chin, who was a family friend; each of which shaped Chin's life as a young, gay Chinese American. His coming-of-age tale deftly addresses the ways he navigated racism and homophobia throughout his school years and young adulthood.

U-M alumni of a certain age will enjoy reminiscing about the Ann Arbor haunts that populate the last third of the book, including the bygone Nectarine Ballroom and Drake's Sandwich Shop, which functioned as a kind of second home restaurant for Chin.

Through it all, Chinese food and its way of bringing people from diverse backgrounds together becomes a central character in the book. Whether it provides comfort to Chin as he considers how to balance personal ambitions with family expectations, or it serves as the glue that binds a family together late at night after the closed sign turns, whose multiple generations have each faced their own trials and tribulations, the book offers a truly satisfying multicourse experience. —CYNTHIA J. DRAKE

Let Us Descend

By Jesmyn Ward, MFA'05,
Scribner, 2023

Set in the years before the Civil War, "Let Us Descend" follows Annis, a young enslaved woman who is sold south by her enslaver father. As Annis marches south, she turns inward for strength in this harrowing story of rebirth and reclamation. Jesmyn Ward, MFA'05, is a two-time National Book Award winner.

Attack from Within: How Disinformation is Sabotaging America

Barbara McQuade, '87, JD'91,
Seven Stories Press, 2024

Written by Michigan Law professor and NBC News and MSNBC legal analyst Barbara McQuade, '87, JD'91, "Attack from Within" breaks down the ways disinformation is impacting society. It includes a brief history of disinformation, an explainer of its tactics and why they work, and solutions for countering disinformation. Out Feb. 27.

Fashion Killa: How Hip-Hop Revolutionized High Fashion

By Sowmya Krishnamurthy, '06,
Gallery Books, 2023

"Fashion Killa" is the first anthology on hip-hop fashion, using exclusive interviews to examine the intersecting histories of hip-hop and fashion over the past 50 years. The book focuses on artists, designers, stylists, models, and other innovators who transformed their industries, commemorating hip-hop's contributions to fashion, music, and culture.