

At center of court circus, the life lost

O’Keefe remembered as stalwart friend and family man

By Danny McDonald
GLOBE STAFF



Officer John O’Keefe died on Feb. 2, 2022.

BRAINTREE — By any measure, the few months that straddled 2013 and 2014 were a difficult and life-changing stretch for Officer John O’Keefe. His sister, Kristen, died from an aggressive form of brain cancer just months after her diagnosis. Eight days later, his partner and best friend at Boston police, Pat Rogers, took his own life. Months after that, Kristen’s husband, Stephen, died unexpectedly from a heart attack.

But it was O’Keefe’s response to such dark times that those who knew him say is a lasting testament to his character. He jumped to become the guardian of his niece Kayley, then 6, and nephew Patrick, then 3, morphing into a suburban dad practically overnight, helping with homework, driving to and from softball practice.

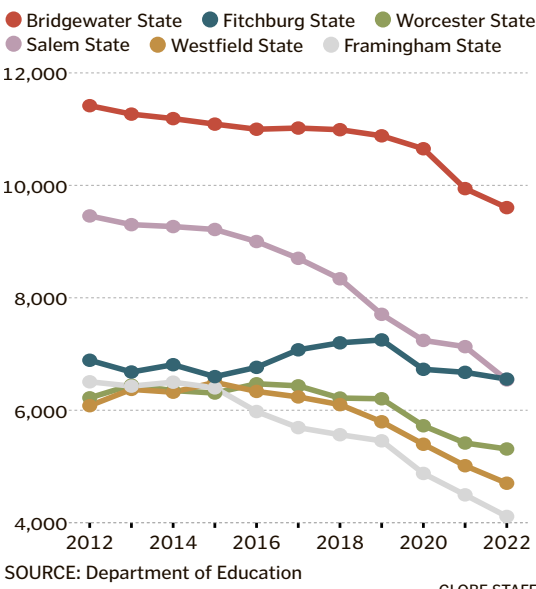
“He was a good man,” said John Jackson, a close friend of O’Keefe’s from college.

O’Keefe’s life was cut short, prosecutors say, when his girlfriend at the time allegedly ran him over and left him for dead in Canton during a blizzard in 2022 after a night of heavy drinking.

The court case has attracted national attention, and some fear that the memory of who O’Keefe was has been lost amid the circus atmosphere that for months has pervaded the Dedham courthouse where the trial

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Enrollment at state colleges has fallen since 2012



Lean times for workhorses of academia

Aid, new crop of students sought for public colleges

By Hilary Burns
GLOBE STAFF

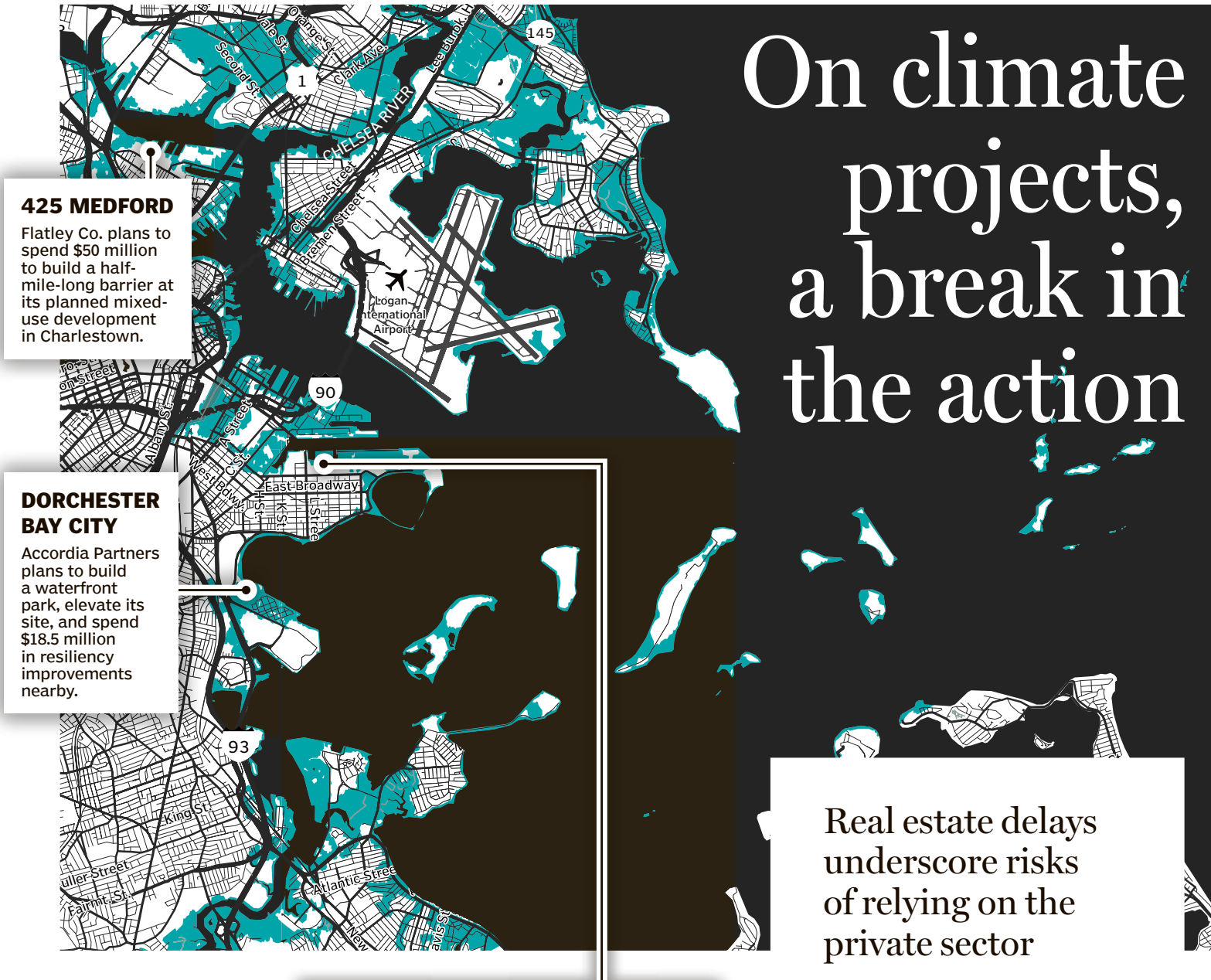
Operating in the shadows of some of the biggest brands in higher education, the state’s nine regional public colleges have trained generations of teachers, nurses, social workers, and others for essential jobs, offering a more affordable path to a four-year degree and professional career.

But facing a sustained drop in enrollment, and short on funds to maintain campuses and state-of-the-art programs, these academic workhorses are approaching an inflection point: Will they have to consolidate, as has happened in other states? Or will Beacon Hill’s new investments in financial aid revive them to serve a new generation of students?

“Let’s not just wait for this to hit us as a crisis,” said Richard Freeland, a former state commissioner of higher education. “Let’s get ahead of it.”

Collectively, enrollment at the nine schools fell 21 percent between 2012 and 2022, to 41,000 from roughly 52,000. Enrollment is expected to contract even more rapidly after 2025 due to a dip in US birth rates.

The nine state colleges comprise six universities
COLLEGES, Page A16



On climate projects, a break in the action

Real estate delays underscore risks of relying on the private sector

By Erin Douglas
and Catherine Carlock
GLOBE STAFF

In a semi-industrial corner of South Boston’s waterfront, the century-old Boston Edison power plant stands, gutted and stripped, on land awaiting condos, labs, shops, and cafes. It will all be on land that’s been built up by 5 feet and protected by a bolstered, remade sea wall to defend both the multibillion-dollar development and the homes behind it from climate change.

But construction on the project, like with many others in Boston and beyond, has faced delays since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The global real estate downturn has made it harder than ever to finance massive private developments and constrained the city’s efforts to adapt to climate change. Several flood-protection projects like sea walls, berms, and elevated land are tangled up in the same large developments that now face slowdowns, with build dates made uncertain by global economic forces.

WATERFRONT, Page A14

Coming of age: Stephen King’s prom queen turns 50

In rare interview, author reflects on writing the seminal horror novel ‘Carrie’

By Mark Shanahan
GLOBE STAFF

It’s hard to fathom now, but there was a time when the name Stephen King didn’t mean anything. He was unknown, just some shaggy-haired fellow from Maine with a macabre imagination and a manual typewriter churning out stories with fanciful titles like “I Was a Teenage Grave Robber.”

But 50 years ago, on April 5, that all changed with the publication of “Carrie,” a twisted Cinderella story about a shy, spotty-faced teen who’s tormented by her fanatical mother and cruel classmates until — well, let’s just say she makes them stop. “Carrie” was King’s first published novel — he was only 26 at the time — and it became an enormous bestseller, the first of many in a remarkable career spanning 60-plus books with sales of more than 350 million copies. (King’s latest collection of stories, “You Like It Darker,” comes out May 21.)

So how did “Carrie” happen? It almost didn’t. To mark the 50th anniversary of Carrie White’s harrowing arrival on our collective nightstands, syllabuses, library shelves, and movie screens, we asked King and others, including prominent horror writers, readers, and longtime friends of the author, why, after all these years, “Carrie” still captivates — and

CARRIE, Page A12



More online
Use the QR code to access the online presentation, including recordings from the interview.

Covers of “Carrie” from 1974, ’76, and ’75.

GLOBE STAFF PHOTO ILLUSTRATION



At the ICA, Dominican-born painter Firelei Báez conjures rich tales — and hope — from the forgotten past.
SundayArts, N1.

Improvements are slow, but disabled travelers are seeing some advances in accessibility.
SundayTravel, N11.

Former Red Sox president Larry Lucchino was the last of a kind, writes Dan Shaughnessy.
Sports, C1.

You can make your home feel larger without adding a lot of space. See some ideas in the
Globe Magazine.



One then sun

Sunday: Cloudy, breezy.
High: 44-49. Low: 35-40.

Monday: Mostly sunny.
High: 60-65. Low: 43-48.
Sunrise: 6:16 Sunset: 7:17

Complete report, A24.
Deaths, A18-23.

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