

but the landscape directly in front will undergo a facelift. When researching the building, Ann Beha Architects noticed that the original drawings of Houghton's entry differed from what was actually built. This, Ann Beha said, gave them the feeling that they could re-develop the area. Where there's now a small staircase and podium—typical of Georgian architecture—her firm has designed a fully accessible entrance with softly graded symmetrical walkways that meet at the entry door. The plans also include a small gathering place in front of the library and a central staircase.

"My bet is that everyone will feel that they can use the inclined walkways," Beha said in an interview, "because it's going to be a natural way of coming up to the building."

Today, wheelchair users must enter Houghton through Lamont or Widener, accompanied by a Harvard staff member, via an underground tunnel and a staff elevator. This issue was a key driver of the project. "We want to comply with both ethical and legal components of accessibility," Hyry said. "But more than that, we want to be a library that's open to all. And if you can't navigate a set of stairs, that's a very difficult thing."

Houghton's interior spiral staircase will remain the same, but the building gains a new elevator, its first for non-staff use. Anne-Marie Eze, director of scholarly and public programs, said librarians expected that finding space for a new elevator would be tough. It turned out, happily, that an elevator shaft was part of the original pre-World War II design, making installation surprisingly easy.

The library's lobby, which has remained roughly the same since its inception, will also undergo some changes with the goal of "enlivening" the space. Its eight encircling bookcases will be replaced by exhibitions displaying some of Houghton's holdings, with the objects changing throughout the year. And removing two of the existing bookcases, Hyry said, will let daylight shine through the lobby's two large windows. Currently, most of the light illuminates a locker room on one side, and an office on the other. "Research libraries have a sense of being very dark, and that's dramatic, but at times, with our weather in New England, you want to bring a little light in," Beha said. "Conservation standards have kept us very focused on managing light, but I think we're going to be able, as we study the options, to introduce a little more daylight into the spaces."

Future visitors will also notice a new se-

## HARVARD PORTRAIT



### Jason Luke

**After graduation,** Jason Luke '94 supervised Dorm Crew—the trash-disposing, bathroom-cleaning student employment program he'd worked for in college—as a stopgap before graduate school. Soon he was offered a full-time position in "Special Services." "What that really meant was doing anything anyone else did not want to do," he says. He cleaned carpets, refinished floors, and moved furniture, often overnight—assembling teams from nothing. Graduate school would wait. When former Commencement superintendent Allan Powers asked him to take over another team, Luke said sure, unclear on the expectations. The job: supervising 250 staffers and setting up for more than 1,000 events during Commencement week, Harvard's busiest of the year. No written instructions existed; the responsibilities, to be met alongside his regular duties, were merely explained to him. "I'd be at meetings with people about things that I was supposed to be doing, and I had no idea what they were referring to," he recalls. More than two decades later, Luke, now associate director of campus services, approaches his Commencement role with both excitement and exacting standards. "The students who are there, they're only going to graduate once. People only have one fiftieth reunion, one twenty-fifth reunion, one tenth reunion," he says. For Luke, life is all about relationships. In his office, a class of 1994 photo sits beside a shot of his daughter's basketball team—which he coaches—and souvenirs his staff have brought him from their home countries. Relationships are why he's co-chaired all his class reunions, and how he became one of nine classmates nominated for this year's Commencement chief marshal. "You can have bad days, you can have good days, you can have things that go well, don't go well," he says. But relationships, "that's the one thing that can be a constant in your life." —JACOB SWEET