This issue of The Owl explores what it means to be a nontraditional student who is trying to finance an Ivy League degree in the 21st century. As our alumni know well, the sacrifices are significant, and the efforts, at times, Herculean. For many GS students, paying for a Columbia education is the most serious challenge they will face during their time on Morningside Heights. In the current economic environment, the challenges are more daunting and the difficulties greater than at any other time in the history of the School of General Studies.

Fortunately, GS is positioned well to withstand these difficult times. The School continues to solidify its place as the nation’s premier undergraduate college for nontraditional students. For much of its history GS has been a well-kept secret, with a student body drawn primarily from the New York metropolitan area; now, however, GS is truly a national school, with all 50 states represented in an increasingly select, exceedingly diverse and talented student body. At no other elite university are nontraditional students—now estimated to comprise roughly 73 percent of all college students—so fully integrated into the larger undergraduate community, a distinction most evident in the classroom.

The enhancement of the GS undergraduate experience has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in financial aid. Seventy percent of GS students receive financial aid, and the amount of institutional aid given yearly to GS students has nearly tripled over the last decade. For the current academic year, GS announced a 17-percent increase in financial aid that targeted students with the highest demonstrated economic need and substantial loan debt. Yet, even with this considerable increase in funding, our students must still find external, and frequently expensive, ways to supplement their GS scholarship.

As The Columbia Campaign aims to enhance financial aid to meet these challenges, I am reminded that it is only with your ongoing support and generosity that we can continue to attract the best and brightest nontraditional students regardless of their financial circumstances. As a concrete sign of the progress we are making, I am happy to announce that two GS families—Larry Lawrence ’69 and his wife Sally, and one family that wishes to remain anonymous—have pledged 3 million dollars as a matching challenge fund for new GS scholarships. Our gratitude to these alumni is immense, but we also need each of you to help if we are to achieve our goal, the dramatic enhancement of financial aid.

Enjoy the 2009 issue of The Owl and thank you for your continued support.

With warmest regards,

Peter J. Awn
P.J. Bodnar knows something about responsibility and sacrifice. The 34-year-old former police officer from Half Moon Bay, California, was wounded in the line of duty and suffered permanent nerve damage in both arms. Unable to serve, with three children under the age of five and a wife in graduate school, Bodnar knew he needed to complete his education if he wanted to support his family and pursue his dream of re-entering public service. That’s why he enrolled in 2007 as a full-time student in the School of General Studies, the finest liberal arts college in the country created specifically for students with nontraditional educational backgrounds.

That’s also why he’s so frustrated — not with the uncontrollable circumstances that led to his forced retirement from a job he loved, but with a financial aid system that seems intentionally designed to make his life even harder than it has to be.

Like 70 percent of General Studies students, Bodnar receives financial assistance — from the university, from the federal government, and from private lenders — to pay for his education and living expenses. And, as it is for many GS Students, that assistance is simply not enough.

Like anyone else seeking financial aid, Bodnar submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form that was used to determine his financial need. But last year, he came up nearly $20,000 short, and had to put roughly $10,000 on his credit cards, which charge interest at a rate anywhere from 18-30 percent. This year, despite receiving one private loan, one federal loan, one federal grant, and an institutional scholarship, Bodnar figures he’ll be another $12,000 in the hole — in part because the financial aid system is geared toward helping traditional students aged 18-22 years old who enjoy parental support, rather than nontraditional students like him.

“They don’t take into account that diapers are expensive, child care is expensive, commuting is expensive.” (Bodnar’s wife is earning a PhD in molecular biology at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and the family rents a house in Long Island.) At this rate, he expects to be $80,000 in debt by the time he graduates; not a great place to be for a family man in his late 30s with plans for law school and a career in public service.

Bodnar is not alone. A series of events — some welcome, like the full integration of General Studies into the Columbia undergraduate curriculum; some not, like the skyrocketing institutional expenses that have inflated college tuition costs across the country — have conspired to make a Columbia undergraduate education more expensive than ever before. Despite the tremendous strides that GS has made in improving the overall educational experience for nontraditional students at Columbia, the financial aid and fundraising mechanisms that make such an education possible for adult and returning students have not kept pace with the changing economic environment. As a result, student debt loads are ballooning, and many students face unappealing choices.

Some, like Bodnar, fear that pursuing a first-rate education may mean that they won’t be able to afford to send their own kids to college. For others, it means that other dreams will have to be deferred. This spring, General Studies Student Council President Brody Berg expects to graduate with a degree in computer science — and somewhere between $100,000 and $150,000 in debt. A former software developer for Microsoft with a passion for literature, Berg looked forward to broadening his intellectual horizons at one of the world’s premier liberal-arts institutions. Yet his academic options are tightly constrained by his looming debt obligations. “The debt load has an effect even as I register for classes, because I know that I’m...”
sional courses to working adults beginning in 1904. Following World War II, the G.I. Bill transformed the model of a closed under

dergraduate system, as older students began entering college in record numbers. The School of General Studies had its origins in that

revolutionary moment, and it became a freestanding college with its own faculty, admissions, and advising structure. Initially,

progress was gradual: "When I was going through General Studies 40 years ago, it was more like a continuing education kind of

feeling rather than being a full-fledged undergraduate at Columbia," Feagin recalls. But by the 1980s, most General Studies stu-
dents were taking the same basic curriculum as Columbia College students. In the 1990s, the School of General Studies shed all of its

nondegree continuing education programs except for the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program, and began moving toward closer

a cademic alignment with Columbia College, offering an identical curricular experience to nontraditional students — a process that

Peter Awn, dean of the School of General Studies, describes as being 95 percent com-

plete. "No other Ivy League university has a freestanding college that fully integrates nontraditional students into its undergradu-

te program," he says with obvious pride.

Yet that integration has come at a cost. General Studies students now attend the same classes as other Columbia undergradu-

ates and enjoy access to the same world-class facility. As a result, they are also being asked to pay the same tuition — just over $1,200

per credit hour, or roughly $36,000 annually for a full-time course load. (This does not include living expenses, which the Univer-
sity estimates at over $18,000 per year, but which might reasonably be far higher for many nontraditional students, who are not

guaranteed University housing and who of
ten have families to support.) At first glance, this seems only fair: you get the same educa-
tion, you ought to pay the same money. But in this case, financial parity is an illusion and

entirely, due to the relative size of the col-

lege's endowments, since tuition revenue also contributes to the discount rate. In both

areas GS is focused on achieving parity with

Columbia College; at present, however, GS

students must shoulder a larger portion of their educational costs — and unlike most

traditional students who are expected to re-

cive financial support from their parents, they must typically do so alone, often while

supporting families.

Not surprisingly, that discrepancy is a source of consternation to many General Studies students. Given the fact that they

now enjoy the same education and pay the same tuition fees as other Columbia students, many wonder why they shouldn't also have

access to the same pool of funds. As Bodnar

puts it, "If we are going to have to pay the same for credit hours, we should have access to

the same endowment." Fortunately, as Feagin explains, sharing the wealth between

colleges is not so easy. "Virtually all of those

endowment funds have been designated by

the donors for specific purposes," she

says. “Almost every financial aid donation is made to the school from which the donor graduated. Because of those donor restric-
tions, it's not a University decision that we are shutting GS out.”

As important as the discount rate is, how-

ever, it is not the only factor affecting General

Studies students. There is also the matter of

how student financial aid is calculated in the first place.

The Department of Education uses the

Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or

FAFSA, to determine the amount of money

that a student's family can be expected to

contribute to their education. The financial

aid office then subtracts that sum from the

estimated cost of attending college in order to

determine the student's financial need. So

far, so good — for a traditional student, at least.

The FAFSA works well when the applicant is

18 years old, has virtually no income or ex-

penses, and can expect at least some parental

support. For a thirty-something student with

his or her own kids to feed who must aban-
don a paying job in order to attend

GOV'T STUDY

COVER STORY

Cover Photo

P.J. Bodnar, Brady Berg (Photos by Alan Oring)

Cover Story

COV"
classes, however, the FAFSA offers only a glimpse of an exceptionally nuanced picture. With fewer institutional funds available to them and a raft of hidden or unrecognized costs, many General Studies students must turn to private lenders to cover their expenses. Yet as the current financial crisis worsens, more and more private lenders are pulling out of the educational loan business, further restricting students’ options.

Attending part-time is an attractive solution for some, but it allows students to spend money. But it, too, has its pitfalls. While part-time enrollment makes it easier to manage educational expenses, extending the time spent in school creates additional in-student and out-of-pocket costs associated with being a student (rent, books, health insurance), by working and studying part-time one forgoes both full-time income and a full-time coursework (which would allow for a quicker graduation date and quicker entry into the full-time workforce).

And, as Maxima Njoroge, a 36-year-old former dancer and part-time student considering a major in films studies or creative writing points out, less federal aid is available to part-time students than full-time ones. Moreover, taking the slow track — Njoroge expects to graduate in 2008, and has so far racked up only two-thirds of the credits she will need to graduate — does not guarantee that one won’t wind up deep in debt. Njoroge expects to accumulate approximately $36,000 in loans, some of them from private lenders. In the meantime, she works two or three jobs at a time, and shares an apartment with two roommates. “I’ve been living the kind of life I’d like as an adult who’s been out there in the working world,” she says.

Finally, there is the issue of how financial aid offices themselves determine financial aid eligibility. Columbia College students, for example, are offered a “full-need” funding model, meaning that merit does not enter into the equation, and all of a student’s possible funding sources — most notably, their parents — are considered. In effect, the need-based model a nontraditional General Studies student would be “unworkable.”

“What do you do with a 38-year-old student with two kids whose parent is still working for them?” asks Feagin. Ignoring parental income entirely wouldn’t work, either, doing so could equal making the school’s limited endowment more possible for support for a “27-year-old who makes $10,000 a year working part-time, whose parents are worth millions.”

Historically, the financial aid office has attempted to circumvent this problem by evaluating General Studies students primarily on merit, thereby sidestepping the thorny issue of assessing nontraditional academic need. As debt loads have swollen, however, it has become clear that this method is no longer enough.

Feagin says, exemplifies. Ten years ago, she established the Susan K. Feagin Scholarship Fund, and she’s been contributing to it ever since. With some $100,000 in the kitty, it now provides approximately $5000 a year in funding for a GS student.

Endowed scholarships like Feagin’s have allowed General Studies to increase its financial aid budget by 17 percent for the 2008-2009 academic year, pumping an additional $1 million into the pockets of continuing students with the highest demonstrated economic need and substantial student debt. Which is not to say that the job is done; far from it. Feagin wants to increase the endowment back to its $70,000 a year, adding in new students that may accumulate personally, as Feagin exemplifies. Ten years ago, she established the Susan K. Feagin Scholarship Fund, and she’s been contributing to it ever since. With some $100,000 in the kitty, it now provides approximately $5000 a year in funding for a GS student.

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Although Columbia College and General Studies share centralized resources such as faculty and buildings, most financial aid funds are drawn from each school’s endowment and gifts from that are school-specific, which means that increasing the GS endowment by giving back to one’s alma mater is a task that may align with one’s back to one’s alma mater.

As of July 1, 2008, Dean of the School of General Studies (GS) and Professor of Islamic Religion and Comparative Religion in the Religion Department Peter J. Awn began a three-year appointment as director of the Columbia University Middle East Institute. In his new role, which he will hold while continuing to serve as dean of GS and acting dean of the School of Continuing Education, Awn is responsible for overseeing the Institute’s mission of fostering an inter-regional and multidisciplinary approach to the Middle East region, focusing on areas of political, economic, and social issues.

New opportunities for social activism and community service called, “Columbia, Act on Facts.” This model, which is organized on a single page where every news story is linked to real-world actions that users can participate.

Since last March, attorney David Miller has been working with Robison pro bono, as a part of the Lawyers’ Alliance to assist in the 501(c)(3) process of the non-profit “Columbia, Act on Facts.” By next year, Robison is confident Frac- tor will provide a positive outlet for responsive to both daily events and news such as national disasters or wartime conflicts. “I think people genuinely want to help others, and Frac- tor gives them a simple tool to do so. This empowerment helps create communities centered on giving and hope. Our goal is that the website will become a marketplace for citizens and nonprofits who seek to meet community needs,” Robison said.

Robison’s idea for “Columbia, Act on Facts” formed after the Sept. 11 attacks, when he became more civically active.

“I was invited to a U.N. Millennium Development Goals conference, where I was surrounded by nonprofit leaders and high school students. Through the discussion of international needs, it struck me that one thing to expose people to what’s going on in the world, but another thing to give them a way to feed into the system, to interact,” Robison said.

“Columbia, Act on Facts” is just one example of Robison’s com- mitment to aligning endowments. In 2004, as a clinical dentist and doctoral student in musical arts, Robison founded the Musicians’ Alliance for Peace, which has sponsored more than 350 charity concerts and contributed millions of dollars to benefits raised money for hospitals, which contributed to his decision to apply to and enroll in the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program. He decided to take his successes using music for community outreach and apply them to understanding how he could physically heal people.

“I am very interested in human creativity and its positive impact on individuals and community health. Creativity through music has positively motivated me for the past 10 years, and now I am looking forward to learning about how the human body’s biological response to creativity can heal,” Robison said.
LISTEN, MAC: TAXI DRIVING AND THE SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES

BY ROBERT AST

In 1967 Brian Leary, editor of The Owl (then a student newspaper), wrote a column in which he argued that, as cab drivers, his colleagues used “to get the most money with the least effort in the most devious way.” Leary was not exposing a web of corruption or revealing the professional secrets of con artists; he was a New York City cabdriver.

Many of the tactics for increasing tips that Leary discusses are fairly innocuous: casually remarking on how cheap the last fare was, or otherwise creating an impression of being a disinterested fellow traveler rather than a professional driver; revealing the professional secrets of con artists; by the late 1960s that relationship had become rather frayed. Robberies were common and murders not infrequent; many cabdrivers refused to travel to predominantly African-American neighborhoods, which led to a major increase (from 300 to 8,000 over the course of the decade) in unlicensed gypsy cabs, known for traveling everywhere. Some younger drivers, like Paul Gibb ’70 (another Owl writer) made it a point to counter the trend. “There were even African-American and Latino drivers from my garage who would not go in some neighborhoods,” he recalls. “I was out to prove everybody wrong and spent 70 to 90 percent of my time in those neighborhoods.”

As Gibb points out, the “scariest thing was not neighborhoods,” but the state of the cabs themselves. Linden agrees. “There were more drivers injured by tires falling off, or boosting up, or brakes that failed, or steering that malfunctioned, than were killed or robbed by drug addicts. Still, rather than improving the cab, the newly formed taxi drivers’ union focused on having bulletproof dividers installed in cabs, against many drivers’ wishes. The protective shields ‘cut off your connection with the customer,’” Linden notes. “Rather than sharing the space, we were each isolated in our private space. … It affected our income in a major way. Once we could no longer establish a personal rapport with the customer, the tips became smaller.”

Time has only increased the alienation: today any interaction between driver and fare must transcend the newest imposition, a TV screen in each taxi, as well as cell phones and the probable linguistic barrier (according to the 2000 census, less than 10 percent of cabdrivers were born in the U.S.). But the sense of fascination with cabdrivers continues. Cabdrivers occupy a special place in the national mythology, as inside sources on the “real” New York or amateur philosophers always ready with advice. They have been (and continue to be) portrayed on film and television far more than any other service industry profession. While cabdrivers have primarily been supporting characters, stars like John Barrymore, James Cagney, Harold Lloyd, and Douglas Fairbanks Sr. and Jr. had lead roles as cabdrivers, and Taxi’s Robert DeNiro portrayed the gypsy cabdriver. Travis Bickle remains one of the most vivid characters ever committed to celluloid. Cabdrivers appear with similar frequency and variety throughout American literature, and hack memoirs, reborn as hack blogs, have remained a popular genre.

At the end of the day, however, cab driving is simply a job, a fact that David Barrett ’75 recalns clearly. “My favorite customers were the prostitutes at the end of my shift who I would pack up on my way back to the garage and take them (two or three usually) back home in the Bronx or Brooklyn,” he says. “They were as happy to be finishing their shift as I was, and they always gave me a decent tip.”
"There are 'wide street' people and 'narrow street' people. Some people fear being blocked in on a narrow street and do not trust their own skills to avoid it, they take the (generally slower) wider crossstreet roads. Other people trust in their own skills to avoid getting blocked in by some school bus or whatever, and anyway figure whatever happens is God's will. I go for the narrow streets; Ali Bhui Aikbur" — Christopher Gray '75

"I was driving south on Eighth Avenue and about 120th Street. A young black couple was in the back of my car and they had been kissing the whole way. Suddenly they ducked down, which caused me to think they were getting really passionate—when I suddenly realized buildings were on fire all around me. A man dressed in a purple suit was desperately trying to wave me down as I stopped at a traffic light. He ran towards the cab and came close enough to say, 'Is that a white?' I decided at that instant not to stop and did not roll up the window or lock the door—assuming perhaps correctly that a display of fear would only make me more of a target. The light turned green and I sped down Eighth Avenue and Central Park West and dropped off my passengers. That was perhaps correctly, that a display of fear would only make me more of a target. The light turned green and I sped down Eighth Avenue and Central Park West and dropped off my passengers. That was perhaps correctly, that a display of fear would only make me more of a target.

When I turned on the radio and learned that Martin Luther King Jr. and his wife's protest, for a superb driving job. I was grateful for the narrow streets. They wanted to go to the Upper West Side, through Central Park west and dropped off my passengers. That was perhaps correctly, that a display of fear would only make me more of a target. The light turned green and I sped down Eighth Avenue and Central Park West and dropped off my passengers. That was perhaps correctly, that a display of fear would only make me more of a target.

Fei ture

Dispatches

"The Owl: Why did you decide to study medicine after completing a degree in political science?"

"Jeff Oestreicher: I always felt medicine was ultimately the end I was aiming for when I graduated from college. There were, however, a handful of other things I was interested in, and I wasn't ready to commit my life to any one single thing such as medicine.

I loved history and politics, and my first job post-college was researching for a series on the History Channel. My second job was working for a Congresswoman in Washington, D.C., around the time of the 2004 Presidential Campaigns. My boss was kind enough to help me get a job on John Kerry's campaign, which was one of the greatest experiences I've ever had.

Why did you choose Columbia University Prebaccalaureate Premedical Program? How has it helped prepare you for what's ahead?

I wanted to live in New York City, and Columbia's Postbac Program had the best reputation in the country. After visiting the campus and speaking with current students, I learned the Postbac Program was the oldest program of its kind and by all accounts prepared you extremely well for med school. A handful of Postbac alumni even told me that the first two years of med school were significantly easier for them than some of their classmates. The second year of biology covers an entire year of biochemistry, which is unique to Columbia.

How did you attain the position working for Dr. Oz?

I received a forwarded email from one of the Postbac advisors advertising a producer position for Dr. Oz. They were looking for a writer with a deep interest in science and medicine. I vividly remember getting the email at 11 p.m. on a Sunday night and writing a letter that same night explaining how I worked as a writer before starting the Postbac Program and hoped to pursue medicine.

The job appealed to me because it combined writing, which I loved to do, with wellness, medicine and public health; areas I hoped to pursue in the future. Everything happened very quickly. I met him the following Friday, and I was hired the next week.

Describe your role working for Dr. Oz.

I am employed by Harpo, Oprah Winfrey's production company, and I produce Dr. Oz's 'Oprah and Friends' show in addition to writing and researching for Dr. Oz's appearances on the 'Oprah Winfrey Show.'

I read and write a lot; I scour newspapers, medical journals and book reviews looking for people with important and fascinating new ideas and insights about wellness, medicine, science, healing, etc. After deciding on a particular guest, I help Dr. Oz prepare for the show by distilling ideas and insights in ways that make it easier for the audience to incorporate new ideas and practices into their own lives. We love these actionable items, things someone can implement into his or her own life after turning off the show such as a new food, a new approach to thinking about spirituality, an exam they request from their doctor, or a new mind-body practice like tai chi, for example.

I have for him as a person, and his mission is to empower people around the country to be their best health advocates. I feel very lucky to be a part of it. He has more energy and passion than anyone I've ever met—I mean that very literally. But he's also so kind and decent, someone you just love to be around.

I sincerely hope to stay in touch with him, and I'm excited that we'll be at Columbia together. I think he'll even give some cardiothoracic lectures to my class.

Jeff Oestreicher is currently a student at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University.

To read the extended interview, visit ehe2001@columbia.edu/pathos.

From the Postbac program, to which events did you accompany Dr. Oz?

I loved going to some book-tour stops with him when his last book came out. It was fun to meet some of the Oprah/Oz audience. An older woman approached me at one event to say her husband and two sons refused prostate screenings until all three learned from an Oprah show that prostate cancer is nearly 100 percent survivable if detected early. I don't know if it was the prostate exam discussion or the image I had of three men watching Oprah together, but for some reason that's a vivid memory of mine.

6: Dr. Oz: Someone you look up to? Will you still stay in touch with him while studying at Columbia?

I can't overstate the respect and admiration I have for him as a person, and his mission to empower people around the country to be their best health advocates. I feel very lucky to be a part of it. He has more energy and passion than anyone I've ever met—I mean that very literally. But he's also so kind and decent, someone you just love to be around.

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General Studies Alumni of Class Years Ending in 9 and 4 Are Invited to Alumni Reunion Weekend

June 5 – 7, 2009

GS alumni will participate alongside Columbia College, Barnard College, and Engineering alumni in a weekend of activities.

For more information, contact

Erin Friesen, W8, assistant director for alumni relations, at 612.915.7495 or for details visit wcs.columbia.edu/reunion
“This line is for veterans,” was a comment Evelyn Crumlish Kandel ’58 often heard as she waited at Columbia’s Veterans Affairs window in University Hall to collect her GI benefits. “I am a veteran,” she would reply, much to the surprise and delight of her fellow servicemen-turned-students. It was the mid-1950s, and Kandel felt proud that she was one of the only women at Columbia University who could proclaim “Semper Fi,” and own it.

Kandel recalls a chaotic childhood of moving from place to place, wherever her father’s work took them. Despite her interest in painting and an inclination to be an interior decorator, she lacked the funds for college tuition, so she decided to enlist in the Marine Corps and see some of the world. The military suited her so much so, I would put my shoes until they were like glass.”

Kandel completed basic training in Parris Island, S.C., and was stationed in the office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps in Arlington, Va. She started as a clerk-typist, but eventually was tapped for public relations and recruitment work. In 1952 her portrait was featured on a Marine Corps recruitment poster, a veteran affairs brochure, and a stamp commemorating women’s 10 years in the armed forces. “One of the posters appeared in Times Square, and I was one of a handful of women interviewed for a television spot about our time in the service,” Kandel professes.

Eventually at age 22, Kandel was ready to re-enter civilian life. She returned to New York, where she enrolled in the School of General Studies and paid her tuition with funds from the GI Bill. While at GS she studied psychology and took advantage of the opportunity to revisit her interest in sculpture and painting as well as discover a new talent for writing poetry, however, upon graduation in spring 1958, she put her poetry into a portfolio and took a job with the Civil Scouts of America, training volunteers to lead troops around the region.

Later that year Kandel married. Life seemed to be settling down, yet within two years, after the birth of her daughter, Kandel’s husband was stricken with cancer and died. The Marine in Kandel rose to the occasion, and in order to support her infant daughter she started teaching second grade at Lang Island school.

A year later she married Robert Kandel CC ’52, her late husband’s business colleague. The new couple had two sons together, and the stability of family life enabled Kandel to revisit childhood and college interests. She started to paint as a hobby and studied privately and enrolled in classes at the Art Students League and the School of Visual Arts. Once her children were old enough, Kandel returned to school for a master’s degree in school psychology, but after earning 15 credits she realized she really wanted to immerse herself in art classes in order to become an art teacher. She landed an internship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s parent-child program and began teaching at local community centers and the YMCA to gain more experience.

In one year, Kandel took 30 credits of art courses. Creating a self-imposed boot-camp, she threw herself into learning how to teach art history and various media: sculpture, print making, and painting. She eventually received her teaching certification, and in 1985 she began a position at Portledge School in Locust Valley, N.Y., where she taught seventh to ninth grade and served as the chair of the art department. Her career as an artist and a teacher of art took flight, and Kandel went on to teach at Portledge School for 14 years.

In 1990 Kandel earned an MA from Long Island University and received a Skidmore College High School Art Teacher Fellowship. For the next 13 years, she returned to Skidmore for three weeks each summer to make art alongside other teachers from around the country. The resources at Skidmore – studio space and feedback from colleagues – enabled Kandel’s art to flourish. She created sculptures, artist’s books, minkas, paintings, and assemblages. Over time, evoking the talent she discovered while at Columbia, sachievsky, and writing with poet Marianne Moore,” she says. “It was an exciting time with a packed schedule. I worked very hard for four years.” Columbia gave Kandel the opportunity to revisit her interest in sculpture and painting as well as discover a new talent for writing poetry, however, upon graduation in spring 1958, she put her poetry into a portfolio and took a job with the Civil Scouts of America, training volunteers to lead troops around the region.

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Today, Kandel exhibits her art in many shows and is also a published poet in various journals and anthologies. She is often invited to read her poetry at venues throughout Long Island and is the host of monthly poetry readings at the Graphic Eye Gallery in Port Washington, N.Y. A lifelong learner, Kan- del continues to take poetry courses and is a member of two writing groups.

“The Marine Corps gave me the discipline to take advantage of the education afforded by the School of General Studies and, importantly, the GI Bill, which made it possible for me to afford it,” she says. “The School of General Studies opened my mind to the intricacies of a symphony, to a clear understanding of chaotic modern European history. I marveled at the brilliance of a physician’s thoughts and created stories and poems, one of which was just accepted for publication (50 years later!). GS made me curious to know, to learn and experience all the hidden joys only a well-educated mind can know.”

Pain
On a chart of smiley faces, incongruous on the doctor’s wall, only one is smiling broadly. The others slowly leak their smiles until it is next to the last face winced androwning, yet it seems impossible to focus on this fragile joint when there is much greater pain robbing bodies, torturing minds.

The world is filled with leftovers – soldiers from old and new wars living in a world that wounded them, leaving them to look at a chart of smiley faces mocking their pain.

– Evelyn (Crumlish) Kandel

Published in Lucidity, 2005

Honorable Mention: International Contest
CLASS DAY 2008

1. Grads cheer on their fellow classmates as they receive their diplomas.
2. Dean's Citation winner Stephen Harris.
3. Dean Peter Awn with Dean of Students Mary McGee.
4. Salutatorian Aviel Marrache.

1. Jacqueline Wayans and family.
2. Reunion classes representatives Heather Byrne '88, Marcia Wunsch '93, Jackie Guest-Bechard '93, Hermia Nelson '91, Eli Casdin '93, and Craig Harte '98 processed into the ceremony.
3. Lauren McFall and family.
4. GS Class Day Speaker and 2008 Columbia University Medal of Excellence winner Alicia Graf '03.
5. Valedictorian Joel Beal.

All alumni are invited to celebrate Class Day on May 18, 2009. For more details, visit www.gs.columbia.edu/classday.
The School of General Studies continued to experience record giving to the GS Annual Fund during the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Gifts totaled $523,332, an increase of 30 percent over the previous year. The GS Class of 2008 also set records, donating a total of $15,400—nearly $4,000 more than the previous year.

The GS Annual Fund is the school’s primary vehicle for alumni giving and an important way for alumni to commemorate their GS experience. Each gift is appreciated, no matter the size. Gifts to the GS Annual Fund may be designated to the following areas:

- General support to underwrite the dean’s top priorities
- Financial aid
- PALS (Program for Academic Leadership and Service)
- Postbacalaureate Premedical Program

**CLASS DAY REUNION COMMITTEE**

Jennifer Beaumont ’83
Heather Byrne ’88
Jackie Cusarz-Bohn ’91
Eli Casdin ’93, BUS ’03
Christine A Chapman ’78
Edward Coll ’73, BUS ’76
Anne Cottone Conze ’73
Victor Fidel Escamilla ’93
Patricia Gaven ’96
Judith Gerberg ’96
Reverend Dorothy Greene ’98
Craig Harte ’98
Whitney Kelting Keen ’73
Lawrence David Kopp ’93
Brian Leary ’98
Barbara Voorhis Levy ’48
Nancy Lewis ’78
Hermina Nelson ’98
Betty-Jane Scheff ’93
Lawrence Spector ’63
Marcia Winatich ’91

**RECENT ALUMNI LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Matas Arith ’96
Dina Bateman ’07
John Black ’04
Torah Bontrager ’07
Robert Caldwell ’07
Jimmy Chau ’05
Adeem Crowley ’03
Katie Daily ’03, TC ’05
Marguerite Daniels ’05
Stephan Davis ’06
Nicole Gallant ’05
Karma Hara ’05
George Hodge ’07
Elizabeth Hollister ’07
Tal Keinan ’04
Shere Kegon ’07
Elena Melamed ’06
Chad Miller ’07
Iovsodin Natsaev Oyegun ’04
Christopher Riano ’07
Emilio Rodriguez ’07
Porez Sair ’07
Amy Shadden ’07
Richard Space ’05
Jessica Thompson ’07
Douglas Webb ’05
Justin White ’05
BUS ’07
Beatrice Winner ’07
Akiva Zablocki ’07
Jessica Negron Zoppoli ’06

**GSVOLUNTEERS**

Elizabeth Beerman ’98
Bettina Bepler ’57
Arthur Bingham ’84
James Connolly ’01
Katie Daily ’93, TC ’05
Isabelle Dufour ’94
Patricia Gaven ’96, LS ’85
David Gorman ’94
John Howard ’92
Shannon McDonald ’90
James Mageras ’91
Guy Maurice ’84
Elizabeth Neumann ’96

**PHOTO GALLERY**

Photos from events including the April Thank You Reception at the Colony Club, the Recent Alumni Leadership Committee party, Class Day Reunion, and the Tavern on the Green Annual Fund event.

1. Chef Jacques Pépin ’70 (standing) hosted a luncheon at the French Culinary Institute to thank Dean Peter Awn (center) for his ten years of service to the School of General Studies. Joining in the celebration from left: fellow chef and friend Jean-Claude, Senior Associate Director for Development in the Arts & Sciences Sandra McNutt, Anne Conze ’73, Larry Laurence ’69, and Associate Director for Development in the Arts & Sciences Scott Meserve.


3. Recent alumni gathered for a festive reception on February 13, 2008.

4. Friend of GS Brandon Blaylock, Marilyn Charlot ’96, and guest Joel Ruffin.

5. Katherine Slazak ’80, Christel Bieroth-Rock AL ’70, ’81, Phyllis Shirokane ’74, and Deborah DiMaria ’93.


8. Patricia Gaven ’63, Brian Leary ’68, and Reverend Dorothy Greene ’68.

9. GS Reunion Chairperson Anne Cook Conze ’73 and Whitney Kelting Keen ’73.

10. Christine Chapman ’78 and Nancy Virginia Lewis ’78.


12. Marcus Winatich ’93 and Jackie Cusarz-Bohn ’91.


(Photos 4-13 by David Wentworth)
Brian Morton ’58 knows how powerful a Columbia education can be for nontraditional students. As a Korean War veteran looking to earn his college degree, he chose the School of General Studies, even though it meant that he had to work odd jobs and continually search for cheaper housing in order to cover the cost of attendance. But his belief that the educational opportunities were worth the struggle was so strong that in 1963 he convinced his future wife, Jacqueline, to leave her secretarial job and pursue a master’s in French—even though she was a young single mother. Both Brian and Jacqueline Morton went on to receive their PhDs from Columbia in French and Romance philology.

Thanks to a generous donation by the Mortons, the struggle for older students—single parents, in particular—will now be easier for future generations who seek to continue their studies, and change their lives, at GS.

For years, the Mortons have planned to establish a scholarship fund for single parents through a bequest of retirement assets, which, because of tax benefits, allows them to increase the size of their gift without greatly affecting bequests to family.

“It can be a real turn-around time,” Jacqueline says of the decision to go back to school. “If you’re alone with a child and you want to do something new, it’s very difficult. We thought this scholarship fund would be a very worthwhile thing to do.”

As a graduate student Jacqueline taught both GS and Columbia College students and holds a special fondness for GS students. “They never ask if something’s going to be on the exam,” she notes. “They’re so happy to be learning. They’ve made the decision to get their own education, and they get so much out of it.”

Where There’s a Will...If you have included Columbia in your estate plans, the Office of Planned Giving would like to invite you to join The 1754 Society.

Contact the Office by telephone at (212) 851-7873 or (800)338-1294 and by email at gift.planning@columbia.edu.

THE 1754 SOCIETY

The 1754 Society honors and acknowledges alumni and friends of Columbia who have made plans for the University through a will or living trust, estate, or other future gifts. Named for the year in which Columbia was chartered, the Society recognizes the vital role benefactors have played over the centuries in the University’s emergence as a preeminent educational institution and the role they play today in ensuring its continued excellence.

Columbia welcomes you to the 1754 Society if you have:
• included Columbia in your estate plan through a will or living trust.
• created a charitable remainder trust, administered by either Columbia or another trustee, which names Columbia as the remainder beneficiary.
• entered into a charitable-gift annuity agreement with Columbia or invested in one of Columbia’s pooled income funds.
• named Columbia as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan.

1754 SOCIETY HONOR ROLL:
Carrie and Steven Adelman ’83
Anonymous
Patricia J. Aquilina and Richard R. Gray (friends)
Dr Gloris S. Braydich ’61, ’61
Eda D. Boxer ’55
Sue County Clark BC ’81, ’89
Harry G. DePietro, M.D. ’76
Jean Wilford Fox ’81
Dr Frances P. Gallion ’66, ’78 GSAS
Thomas M. Garret ’60
Charles Grappe ’54
Mrs Vernon W. Hughes ’70, ’77, ’80 GSAS
Alexander Jovovich ’53, ’55 GSAS
Joan K. Parn ’59
Jacqueline K. Kasehing ’83
Dr Rhiala ’89, ’89 GSAS
Mrs Louis P. Sills ’55 and Mrs Barbara Krave
Brian Lacey ’69
J Nina Liebermen, PhD ’58, ’64 GSAS
Nancy Falen Lynch ’66
Nina Marano ’16
Charlotte Meyerson (friend)
Mary L. Nathan ’54
Mildred and Paul M. Raby ’47, ’49 GSAS
Charlotte Rush Redline ’75, ’77, ’77, ’80 GSAS
Sylvia Rudnick ’64
Elena A. Schmidt ’72
Douglas Stan ’81
Wendy Powers Spallanzani ’74
Noeve Vorter ’50
Deanna Wegner ’75, ’76 GSAS

Did we leave you out? If you qualify for membership in this prestigious society please let us know so that we can invite you to special member-only events and add your name to our Honor Roll. Please contact Stina A. Carter at 212-851-7571 or 8:00-338-1294 to officially join the 1754 Society, or to discuss any other questions you have about gift planning at Columbia University.

THE 1754 SOCIETY

THE 1754 SOCIETY

Few eyebrows were raised by the 1946 announcement that University Extension would become the School of General Studies. Columbia’s newest undergraduate college, stories in both the New York Times and the Columbia Spectator were little more than copies of the same press release. Five years later the official establishment of the General Studies Faculty received much more fanfare: the Times stated that Columbia’s “more or less neglected child” would finally “attain maturity,” while Time magazine ran a story on “the most ambitious institution of its kind.”

The GS Faculty was composed of the same individuals who had been teaching in the school for years, so the differing reactions likely owe more to Louis Hacker—who became GS’s first dean in 1951—and his flair for publicity than to any substantive change. Still, the new formal organization did elevate GS’s standing both inside and outside the University, while at the same time insuring that its students would follow academic paths that were similar to, but ultimately distinct from, those of Columbia College students.

Instituting separate faculties for each school also created an obvious redundancy, particularly since many professors held appointments on multiple faculties and students were able to cross-register for courses, and by 1957 the University had already begun to investigate the administrative overlap. Later, four decades of reports culminated with the decision to merge the faculties of Columbia College, General Studies, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of International and Public Affairs to form the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, which held its first meeting in 1991.

With the unification of the faculties nearing its 20-year mark, the evolution of a more coherent academic experience for all undergraduates has come far indeed, with departments now offering one standard undergraduate degree for all. But one particular difference remains.

“We remain open to the usefulness and beauty of the Core Curriculum and its power to help shape an intellect,” said Andrea Solomon, associate provost and academic affairs for GS, “but we’re still mindful of the fact that most of our students arrive at Columbia with some college experience. It can be unfair to complete the Core and the requirements for liberal arts without going over old ground. Many of our students have cultivated sophisticated perceptions unique to their more mature experiences—in the military, on stage, on Wall Street—and they can be a considerably different phase of their intellectual development.”

In acknowledgement of these differences, the current GS Core is designed to be flexible, with distribution requirements that students may fulfill in a manner that suits them in much the same way that courses differ from one another.

A gap year—a year-off between high school and college—is often presented as a time of discovery, an opportunity for participants to learn more about themselves by encountering the new and unfamiliar. This description, however, often only part of the story for students at the Joint Program between Albert A. Lasn College of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the School of General Studies.

Joint Program students who spend a gap year in Israel immerse themselves in a society that shares their religion and cultural heritage but which is also very different from the American society they have left behind. Nearly 20 percent of the Fall 2008 entering class took a gap year in Israel, with most participating in formal programs such as Nativ (Hebrew for “path”) or Young Judaea, which offer the opportunity for exploration within a structured environment.

As part of the Nativ Program, Simcohen Cohin ’11 spent four months in the Negev desert in the south of Israel in the town of Yerucham, an impoverished set- tlement composed largely of Russian and Moroccan immigrants. Cohen notes that the influx of young people volunteering in schools and working at soup kitchens was “not only extremely beneficial to the town in terms of what we did construct, but in truth helps the town’s morale. It was undoubtedly one of the most rewarding undertakings I have ever had the privilege of participating in.”

New surroundings can also help to clarify academic interests. As a high school student in Israel, Cohen describes a visit to a kibbutz in the middle of the desert. “We went inside and found a whole town of students, all between working on a kibbutz and living in the town itself. Sheer survival was the primary ingredient. They helped her discover her ‘intersection of medicine and Jewish studies,’ which she hopes to explore further through studying the history of art and public health and preventive medicine.

Cohin’s experience, simply taking a break from academia can be helpful, too. Jody Zellman ’11 remarks that it was important for him to “blow off the steam that had accumulated over the past twelve years of education,” making him “more motivated to learn and work” when he entered college.

But a gap year’s greatest success may lie in equipping participants to reach outside their own community.

“I was able to see how my education was not just a degree on paper, but a practical degree that I can use to help others,” says Illuminated student, Alejandra Rodriguez (1754) ’11. “I want to dedicate my time to helping out other people, to help others through my education.”

The Columbia-Lehigh Gap year program was founded by Lehigh University president John H. Simon and Dr. Joseph F. Klein of the American Gap Association in 1980. Both the Lehigh University and Columbia programs are the only gap year programs affiliated with a major university. The program provides an opportunity for students to explore their academic and career interests in a community setting and to live, study, and work alongside other students.

Columbia is the only university with a gap year program that is affiliated with a major university. The program provides an opportunity for students to explore their academic and career interests in a community setting and to live, study, and work alongside other students.
Alumni
NOTES
EDITED BY ROBERT AST

1955
Henry Neiser is a painter, photographer, and former art professor who retired from the University of Maryland in 1996. For the last two decades, his creative activities have been directed toward the making of on-site ceremonial structures inspired by Native American culture. He has studied Native American traditional medicine and is the author of The Man Who Knew The Medicine: The Teachings of Bill Eagle Feather.

1972
Karen Abraham runs a marketing communications firm and serves as Avon’s spokesperson for its “Corporation to Cottage” initiative. She is the author of Birthing the Elephant: A Woman’s Guide to Overcoming the Big Challenges of Launching a Business, as well as the earlier books How to Succeed on Your Own and The Art of Winning Foundation Grant. She speaks frequently about women entrepreneurs, small business, and career trends, and lives in Montclair, N.J. with her husband and son.

1974
Bill Zavatsky has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2008-2009 to write poetry. His most recent book, Where X Marks the Spot, is available from Hanging Loose Press.

1982
The Smarter Mother’s Guide to a Better Pregnancy: How to Minimize Risks, Avoid Complications, and Have a Healthy Baby, a new book by Linda Burke-Galloway, MD, MS, was published in September.

1986
Stephen Ferry has published three new novels: The Gnomeland, an international thriller set in post-Sept. 11 America; The Ides of June, a mystery revolving around a series of unsolved 30-year-old murders; Forty-Deco, a mystery-thriller ranging from “the seamy streets of New York” to “the skyscrapers of New York’s own little Portland.” All are available from retail and online bookstores. A trial prosecutor in the Brooklyn district attorney’s office before going into private practice, Ferry now divides his time between France and “two acres of Connecticut tranquility.”

1989
Kathleen Mole is the new curator of the Museum of Northwest Art in La Conner, Wash. She had previously served as the curator of the Whatcom Museum of History and Art in Bellingham, Wash., and as the program coordinator at the University of Washington’s Art Center.

1990
Barbara Probst Solomon

“Let me make one thing clear,” the writer Bar- bara Probst Solomon says, “in that era there was no such thing as finding yourself or following your own path. You were a dropout, you were not distinguished in any way.”

Coming of age in New York as World War II was ending, after high school Barbara Probst did not follow her classmates to college; instead, she went to Europe with somewhat indefinite plans—until she met a young novelist named Norman Mailer. “Youngest, buoyant, and idealistic … in the circle Babyloons of aprugs ile guerre,” as she later recalled, Mailer invited her to “uh sort of, spring a few people from a Franco jail in Spain.”

Probst, leapt at the opportunity “for a little girl who wanted to see postwar Europe, I know I arrived at the right call,” she said. The escape attempt succeeded and was quickly followed by other exploits, including an excursion to the American Occupation Zone in Germany all detailed in her memoir Airing Where We Started.

Ultimately, however, it was her everyday life in Paris that exerted a more profound influence. “You don’t learn anything in two weeks on some kind of extraterrestrial adventure,” she said. “It was what came after that was important: seeing the exiles and refugees, watching the old Anarchist leaders die. By the time I got back to America I was myself plus somebody else.”

The McCarthy-suffused America to which she returned in the early 1950s was also markedly different from the one she had left: many of her friends were married, and fear of reprisal kept most of the American Left quiet. “Jesus is Christ, a what a time to be a Jew,” she wrote later. She began to circulate petitions and do “various ad hoc protests,” she said. “What could they have done to me? I had no job to lose. My father was even a Republi- can. I wished that those investigators were tapping my phone —then they would have to listen to my silly conversations about Saks Fifth Avenue.”

She also attempted to resume her education but quickly discovered that “there were not that many options if you were a little bright and off the beaten track,” she said. And, though she was only a year or two older than most college students, her life experience clearly set her apart: “I had seen Dachau—was not exactly equipped for Barnard.”

An acquaintance told her about the School of General Studies, and she immediately registered. “General Studies was just what some- body like me needed,” she said. During her time at GS she married, gave birth to two chil- dren, and made the most of her opportunity by taking her way into graduate courses. “If you were up to Federico De Onis, who was the chair of the Spanish department—which was the best in the country, or one of the best—and asked if I could take his class. He said, ‘What are your qualifications?’ I said, ‘Well, I was in the Spanish opposition,’ and he said, ‘All right, you’re in the program now’.”

“That’s how it was then, not very formal. But it was an amazing place, if you had a clue what you were looking for: I had a better educa- tion than my contemporaries had had at Yale, at Radcliffe or Bryn Mawr.”

In fact, it was the informal atmosphere of GS’s early days that fostered classroom interac- tions that would have been impossible else- where—particularly in the writing workshops given by Martha Foley, one of the founding editors of Story magazine. “Martha Foley had discovered Norman Mailer, Carson McCull- lars, Terry Southern, and Malcolm Lowry, and she was absolutely incredible with her 1920s tartanette and cigarette holder,” Probst Solom- on said “Carson had been her student, and Martha would drag him to talk to the class. Carson was sort of shy, so she would drag him in Tennessee Williams. At some point Arthur Miller wandered in—who could have more riches than that?”

“This was a totally unfashionable school that, if you knew where to look for it, had the best of the best of the best. None of this was recognized at Columbia—we were just seen as the money cow—but look what was going on there.”

“IT’s interesting because what’s been ac- knowledged has been Columbia College of that period, everyone like Norman Podhoretz and Lionel Trilling They suffered from a kind of ‘we have this’ ethos: they weren’t quite by Yale, not Harvard or from who’s thrown in jail don’t enter history—they’re not writers. But writers can become historians.”

After GS Probst Solomon continued to work as a journalist, keeping one foot in the U.S. and another in Europe and gaining renown for her prescient analysis of post-Communist change and the example of Marta Foly, she forces her stu- dents to bring in one rejection a week.

This year she became the first North American recipient of the 1990 Masa Cohen Inamandee’s® first novel was named finalist for the 2007 National Jewish Book Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature. Set in 15th century Greece, A Shot for Sunshine explores the interactions of two distinct Jewish communities through its dual protagonists, a refugee from post-Inquisition Spain and the son of a wealthy Greek Jewish fabric merchant. Excerpts are available on the publisher’s website (www.jewishpub.org).
2001

DEGRATIJA NYITZIKOVA

"Hell in paradise" is Deo Nyitziokova’s description of her home country of Burundi, which was named 2007’s country of the year by the World Bank in 2008. A place of striking natural beauty, Burundi has endured colonization, decades of war, and now, most recently, a 13-year civil war between Hutus and Tutsis that, by its conclusion, had resulted in over 300,000 deaths and the displacement of nearly a million Burundians. The war also had disastrous effects for the country’s economy, and over half of the population now lives on less than a dollar a day. According to the World Health Organization’s latest figures, the average life expectancy for a woman is 47, for a man, 42.

Following the 2006 ceasefire, however, a few bright spots have helped to bring about a more encouraging than village Health Works, a health center that Deo founded in his home town, the rural village of Kiguso, in 2005. When he left 11 years earlier, fleeing the civil war, Deo had no idea if he would ever return, or see his family again. “We were separated when the war started,” he says. “I had no idea where they were. It’s one of those situations where you are the only person in the room. I didn’t feel that it was that bad, but it’s a perfect place where people who were all just running away.”

Deo found his way to Rwanda via DRC, where he worked in the streets of Harlem. Through the intercession of some new friends a family adopted him as a surrogate family. "It was a job, and he worked a series of odd jobs and delivered groceries to chip in. "Working 15 hours a day, or even being home and not working at all,” he says. “It’s one of those situations where you are the only person in the room. I didn’t feel that it was that bad, but it’s a perfect place where people who were all just running away.”


2000

ANNA KATRINE MEIXER has produced a new “Collectors’ Forum” for WPSI AM Radio. Her Spring 2000 program featured anthropologist David Graubert, who discussed the psychology of the old.

2001

MARVIN McFEESTERS

Marvin McFeasters nostalgically recalls the moments after his School of General Studies admissions interview in January 1969: “I remember sitting in the Iron Horse Bar of Pennsylva- nia State after my interview, having a beer and waiting for the train to come back to do the job interview. D.C.” he says. “I was wearing a three-piece charcoal-grey suit that I had made in Hong Kong when I was there on R & B. I knew Columbia’s acceptance of me had changed my life forever, and for the better.”

A veteran of the Vietnam War, McFeasters served with the United States Navy River Patrol Force in the Republic of South Vietnam from May 1967 until December 1968. As a boy he had lived in Bangkok, Thailand and Beirut, Lebanon, where he studied at the American Community School. Before going to Vietnam, he had visited Columbia and knew that the education the School of General Studies offered, along with the resources of New York City, would complement the liberal arts curriculum he had experienced in Lebanon and the discipline he had learned in the Navy. “I was struck by a phrase in the School of General Studies catalogue: ‘The excitement of liberal arts well taught in small classes.’” McFeasters recalls. “Columbia always had an influence on me, no matter what I was doing.”

McFeaters says “I met my future wife, Eyelma, at Interna- tional House. My military veteran friends at the Business School helped to frame my thinking. I discovered the poems of World War I poet Wilfred Owen at Butler Hall and read them on my own. The creative writing courses I took at Columbia included a good deal of military fiction. The interfaith tradition on campus helped me to grow spiritually. And student movements such as SDS provided a counterpoint to my own experiences in Vietnam.”

After seven years of attending classes part-time and full-time, while also working in business and serving in the U.S. Navy Reserve at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, McFeasters earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors in English Literature. He and his wife relocated to Washington, D.C. where, in addition to working as a lawyer and investment broker, he has been an active member of the Columbia alumni and U.S. veterans’ communities. In 1980 he chaired a University of General Studies catalogue: ‘The excitement of liberal well taught in small classes.’” McFeasters recalls. “Columbia always had an influence on me, no matter what I was doing.”

2000

ALICIA VIAMONT-MEIXER has produced a new

With a grant from the Puffin Foundation, Renée E. D’Aoust is currently completing a new "Collector’s Forum" for WPSI AM Radio. Her Spring 2000 program featured anthropologist David Graubert, who discussed the psychology of the old.

2001

2000

2001

2000

2001

2000

2000

2002

Steve Hofstetter’s new album, The Past

Seizue of the Room, is available in stores or may be downloaded for free at www.stev-ehofstetter.com), on a pay-what-you-want basis. In August he made his late-night TV debut with the Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson. In March he was featured in a University of New York Times, with a rumor column about Project Franchise, an initiative that would allow fans to collectively own a professional sports team.

Kevin Past Legars was featured in a University

2002

C REATIVE W I N T E R S 2 0 0 8
the Harriman Institute of the School of International and Public Affairs.

The Weckness, a film produced by Felipe Mariano and starring former GS student
Fernanda Janssen, received the Audience Award for dramatic films at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2008. The film was also screened as the Tribeca Film Festival and released commercially in July 2008.

Dana Rutenber performed in "Ladies' Night" at the Tribuna Theater in Tel Aviv in June 2008. A dancer and choreographer, she was artistic director of the New York dance troupe The Red Hill Project before returning to Israel.

Leonard Johnson was recently in Kenya, working to foster peaceful relations between warring factions. She also worked on the film Prop the Devil Back to Hell, which chronicles the women's peace movement in Liberia. The film won the Best Documentary award at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival and was shown around the world on International Women's Day.

On July 12, NBC Nightly News aired "What Lies Beneath," a human interest segment reported by Yolanda Pomozesi regarding a new business venture 18 stories below the streets of Moscow—a renovated, pre-Stalin bunker that houses tours, cocktail parties, and concerts in over 75,000 square feet of tunnels.

Richard Aboucaya passed away in November 2007. He earned a degree in economics from Columbia in 1965 and spent more than 20 years working in the world of human rights and politics in Moscow. He was a founder of the Moscow Helsinki Group and was one of the first to call for the release of political prisoners.

Erika Mintz '59
Erika Mintz, entrepreneur and philanthropist, passed away in March 2008. Born in the Bronx in 1932, Erika attended DeWitt Clinton High School but dropped out to join the Navy at the age of 16. Upon returning from service, he earned his GED and enrolled at the School of General Studies, where he studied economics. After graduating, he worked for Goldman Sachs and moved to Atlanta in 1962, working as a financial consultant. In 1981 he founded Colorgraphic Communications, a computer company that pioneered the use of multi-screen display. He ran the company for two decades and was a philanthropist who supported many arts and cultural organizations.

Correction
An alumni note in the Spring 2008 edition of The Owl misstated the job title of Shanna Hocking '91. She is Director of Leadership Gifts for the University of Alabama.

IN MEMORIAM

Richard Aboucaya '53
Richard Aboucaya passed away in November 2007. He earned a degree in economics from Columbia in 1965 and spent more than 20 years working in the world of human rights and politics in Moscow. He was a founder of the Moscow Helsinki Group and was one of the first to call for the release of political prisoners.

James Ford '57
James Ford, co-founder of Ford Models, passed away in August. With his wife Eileen, Ford helped transform modeling from a somewhat disreputable, largely ad hoc assortment of individual jobs into a profession. He pre-eminently New York modeling agency for three decades and still one of the top agencies today, Ford Models was responsible for many of the industry's most significant innovations. Ford popularized the voucher system, in which an agency guaranteed its model's earnings, paying them on a weekly basis (previously models often worked long periods, even years, for payment). Ford was also the first to sign a national union and, in the 1970s, secreted the first exclusive brand contract (Lauren Hutton for Revlon), which helped precipitate the wave of escalating fees that created in the early 1990s. Most significantly, however, the Fordos pioneered a family approach to modeling, with many of their models staying in the family's East Side townhouse: "A generation of mothers and girls owe [the Fordos] a debt," writes Dennis Officello, a Ford model for six decades, is quoted as saying in Michael Gross's book Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women, which terms the Fords the "moral exemplars of modeling." Born in New York an illustrator, party consultant, and stage coach on its run to the London Stage Review, he attended classes at the studio of Noreen Dean Dresser.

David Friedlander has launched a monthly event series called Lucid NYC. The event's format is an intimate, intellectual and artistic evening in a social setting. Friedlander attended during his time at Columbia. He wanted to create a simlar intellectual and altruistic energy in a social, informal, ongoing basis (the affectionately calls it "a nightclub for nerdy do-gooders."). The events are anchored by an hour of 12-minute presentations; speaker topics range from futurist architecture to minimalist guitar to how to market in the age of non-consumerism. The rest of the evening is devoted to mixing with like-minded—other people who think watching lectures with a glass of wine constitutes a perfect night out. For more information, visit www.lucidnyc.com, or email David at dfriedlander@lucidnyc.com.
ANThony Carter grew up in a large family in inner-city Newark, N.J. After high school, he became a licensed professional electrician and served as a fellow to a team of electricians who restored rail service to lower Manhattan after the September 11 attacks. Prior to attending GS, Anthony attended Essex County Community College. Throughout his tenure at GS, Anthony was a Program for Academic Leadership and Service Scholar. He volunteered with the General Studies Student Council and provided a va- riety of outreach to the Harlem community. Carter, a father of two, is enrolled at Harvard University, but decided she was not yet ready to return to school, in 2004 he re-enrolled at GS. He moved to North Carolina where he became very involved with Phi Theta Kappa, an honor society for community college students, as an officer of her local chapter, as well as on the national and international level. During her tenure at GS, Mia stayed involved with Phi Theta Kappa, and eventually founded the Columbia University Phi Theta Kappa Alumni Association, the first senior chapter of Phi Theta Kappa in the Ivy League. Additionally, she was very involved in the community through NYCarees, and she also held a job at Columbia Law School. Mia is taking a year off while she applies to law school. She would like to attend George Washington University to study public interest law.

LYnDon PARK emigrated from Korea to Los Angeles when he was 10 years old. Prior to attending GS, he was heavily involved in screenwriting and attended Johns Hopkins University. At GS, Lyndon founded a group called the Blue Notebooks, which hosts panel discussions with literary figures who emigrated from Korea. In 1994, AKILlah WALLi, originally from rural central Florida, enrolled at Florida State University, but decided she was not yet ready for college. She decided to join the U.S. Army where she served as a chaplain assistant for five and half years. After she left the military, Akillah moved to California and held positions in the top New York City law firm, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates. In the future, Mia plans to continue her education and work towards a doctorate in comparative literature.

Lynda REARDON is one of 18 children. As a teenager he was a math wizard who took master’s level courses at MIT. After high school he moved to North Carolina where he mentored Bill Gates through a social contact—an introduction that led to an eight-year tenure with Microsoft. While working on Windows CE, Reardon conceptualized the idea for Microsoft Internet Explorer, which led him to direct the team that built the web browser. As a result, he is credited as the main creator of Internet Explorer and has been hailed as the architect of Microsoft’s involvement in internet and web technologies. In his role on the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), he has been instrumental in the development of programming tools XML and CSS. Consequently, he holds six U.S. patents. During a sabbatical from the technology world, he took part in a variety of volunteer projects through NY Carees, the Star Learning Center and Girls on the Run. Akilah is taking a year off of school, but plans to apply for master’s programs in either public or educational policy.

At 16 years old, NAOMI SOLOMON left high school, returned to school, and enrolled at George Washington University, but decided she was not yet ready to return to school, in 2004 she re-enrolled at GS. She moved to North Carolina where she became very involved in Phi Theta Kappa, an honor society for community college students, as an officer of her local chapter, as well as on the national and international level. During her tenure at GS, Mia stayed involved with Phi Theta Kappa, and eventually founded the Columbia University Phi Theta Kappa Alumni Association, the first senior chapter of Phi Theta Kappa in the Ivy League. Additionally, she was very involved in the community through NYCarees, and she also held a job at Columbia Law School. Mia is taking a year off while she applies to law school. She would like to attend George Washington University to study public interest law.

Born in New Hampshire into a working-class, Irish-Catholic family, THOMAS REARDON is one of 18 children. As a teenager he was a math wizard who took master’s level courses at MIT. After high school he moved to North Carolina where he mentored Bill Gates through a social contact—an introduction that led to an eight-year tenure with Microsoft. While working on Windows CE, Reardon conceptualized the idea for Microsoft Internet Explorer, which led him to direct the team that built the web browser. As a result, he is credited as the main creator of Internet Explorer and has been hailed as the architect of Microsoft’s involvement in internet and web technologies. In his role on the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), he has been instrumental in the development of programming tools XML and CSS. Consequently, he holds six U.S. patents. During a sabbatical from the technology world, he lunch meeting with physicist Freeman Dyson inspired him to return to school to study physics. Thomas is enrolled at Duke University in a doctoral program in neuroscience.

In 1994, Akilah Walli, originally from rural central Florida, enrolled at Florida State University, but decided she was not yet ready for college. She decided to join the U.S. Army where she served as a chaplain assistant for five and half years. After she left the military, Akilah moved to California and held positions working with youth at the YMCA and at a local high school. As a GS student, Akilah was a Program for Academic Leadership and Service Scholar, and took part in a variety of volunteer projects through NY Carees, the Star Learning Center and Girls on the Run. Akilah is taking a year off of school, but plans to apply for master’s programs in either public or educational policy.

After serving the FDNY for more than 20 years, David Drury set his retirement date for September 12, 2001 with plans to begin his professional ballet career in London. Naomi’s enrollment in the Central School of Ballet kick-started a five-year career where she performed with companies throughout England, Ireland, Scotland, and the U.S. In 2001, after a 15-year break in her education and much success as a professional dancer, Naomi enrolled at GS where she studied abroad in Paris through the Reid Hall Program and continued to dance as part of the Adam Miller Dance Project. After graduating in May, Naomi began working as a paralegal at the top New York City law firm, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates. In the future, Mia plans to continue her education and work towards a doctorate in comparative literature.

In 1996, Donald Taylor’s life was spinning out of control. Shortly before his graduation from high school, Donald’s father beat him so badly he ran away and took to the streets. Donald pulled the pieces of his life together by employing his strong work-ethic and drive to overcome adversity. While working at Malcolm X Community College, his supervisor said she liked his creative writing and recommended he apply to GS. After one rejection, and focused work to strengthen his credentials, Donald was accepted to GS, and worked five jobs simultaneously to pay his expenses. Things changed when he was offered the Program for Academic Leadership and Service scholarship (PALS) the scholarship enabled him to work only one job. During his tenure at GS, Donald became what he calls a “MasterAnglophone” through research he conducted under Professor Nahum Chandler, an expert on Malcolm X. Donald was accepted to Eastern Illinois University and is pursuing a master’s in history. In 1981, one year after InsaF Abdullah immigrated to the United States from Palestine by way of Jordan, she gave birth to her first and only child, a daughter named Zaynab. After Zaynab was born, Ismael decided to enroll at GS part-time while continuing to run her insurance business full-time. Shortly thereafter, Zaynab, who worked with her mother in the family business, also enrolled at GS. In May, both Ismael, a political science major, and Zaynab, a Middle East studies major, crossed the stage together at the 2008 GS Class Day. Today Ismael continues to run her insurance business and, in the future, would like to continue her education at SIPA. Zaynab, who was recently married, moved to the Middle East to be with her husband.
MARCH
March is Women’s History Month.

12, THURSDAY
Women of GS Brunch
New York, NY
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Sponsors: Columbia Alumni Association and the School of General Studies.

This evening we honor businesswomen with a panel discussion featuring alumni who are at the vanguard of the business world. All are welcome.

26, THURSDAY
Women of GS Brunch
New York, NY
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Sponsors: Columbia Alumni Association and the School of General Studies.

This evening we honor women in the arts, mix and mingle with writers, dancers, visual artists, singers, musicians, and performers. All are welcome.

28, SATURDAY
Columbia Community Outreach Day – National and International
New York City and other participating cities
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sponsors: Columbia Alumni Association and the School of General Studies.

Columbia Outreach Day is a student-organized, student-run community service day designed to promote volunteerism. CAA and various school alumni offices and alumni regional clubs will participate to help bring an alumni service component to the day.

APRIL

15, FRIDAY
Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program Certificate Ceremony
Location: TBA
1-4:30 p.m.
Join GS as it celebrates the newest class of Postbac alumni.

18, MONDAY
South Lawns, Morningside Campus
All alumni are encouraged to come and celebrate the Class of 2009.

20, WEDNESDAY
Columbia University 25th Commencement
Low Plaza, Morningside Campus
10:10 a.m.

JUNE
6-7, FRIDAY-SUNDAY
Reunion Weekend
Graduates and reconnect with classmates and friends from your graduating class. Alumni with graduation years ending in 4 and 9 are invited back to campus for a fun-filled weekend of events. Contact Sheila Briggs-Tate, sad41@weslink.com, for information about registering on the Reunion Website.

ONGOING SERIES

Columbia Alumni Art League
606 Low Memorial Hall
4-5:45 p.m.
Sponsors: School of General Studies and Columbia Alumni Association.

The CLS meets monthly on Sundays in Low Memorial Hall to hold intellectually stimulating discussions on relevant literary works. For further information, email TheLoChambers@msn.com. Refreshments served. Donations of $5.00 are appreciated. Open to all.

March 10
Bikurim at Yarka Post Shiva by Heinrich Heil
April 26
A Handful of Dust by Evelyn Waugh
May 17
A Doll’s House by Henrik Ibsen

Columbia Alumni Arts League (CAAL)
The Arts Initiative at Columbia University was created in 2004 by President Bollinger to re-invent the role of the arts in the University, and the University's role in the arts. This effort now spans the campus, unconstrained by venue, department, field, or program, and reaches out into a diverse international culture. CAAL plays a vital role to share this resource with alumni. To join, visit CAAL online at www.caal.columbia.edu/membership, or sign up in person at an event.

Friday, March 13
Brazilian Samba with Paquita O’Riourke

Tuesday, March 24
London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev

Tuesday, March 31
So-Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax, and Itzhak Perlman

Alumni Travel Study Program
The Alumni Travel Study Program allows Columbia alumni to combine learning and pleasure through domestic and international travel. The travel-study experience is often enriched by the participation of Columbia faculty members. For more information, or to register, visit http://alumni.columbia.edu/travelstudies.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE PRESIDENT
March 20-April 3
South Africa by Sea with Paquito D’Rivera
May 28-June 8
Hidden Treasures of Eastern Europe with guest lecturer Dr. Charles King
June 22-July 4
Norwegian Fjords with Professor John Worsley
August 1-8
The Great Lakes: A Voyage through North America’s Magnificent Inland Sea with Professor Marcia Wright

Columbia Alumni Center
622 West 113th Street, MC 4525
New York, NY 10025

General Studies Alumni Relations: 212-851-7432 or gs alumni@columbia.edu
General Studies Annual Giving: 212-851-4168 or gs_annual.fund@columbia.edu
Remembering Columbia’s Fallen

On December 12, 2008 Columbia University dedicated a memorial to Columbians who lost their lives in the military service of our nation. The initiative to create the memorial and the website that complements it gained new momentum when past and present members of the U.S. Military Veterans of Columbia University (MilVets), an on-campus student group, approached Provost Alan Brinkley about the project in 2007. Pictured here are current MilVets board members Peter S. Kim ’09, Erika Gallegos ’09, Angel Quiles ’10, and Sean O’Keefe ’10.

To learn more about the memorial visit www.warmemorial.columbia.edu. (Photo: Char Smullyan)