THE OWL
The Alumni Magazine of Columbia University School of General Studies

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?
ENTREPRENEURS AT GS

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER:
GS UNVEILS A NEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
I am pleased to present to you the latest installment of The Owl, the alumni magazine for the School of General Studies. This issue of The Owl highlights the dynamic energy of the new General Studies Alumni Association, recently launched after more than a year of planning, along with so many of the wonderful happenings at GS.

Alumni leadership, in concert with University alumni relations officers, worked tirelessly to conceptualize and design an organization that reflects the strides that our college has made over recent years. “We are All in This Together: RALC Transforms into a New GSAA,” explains the initiative’s evolution, and ultimately, its goals. To reach those goals, the GSAA seeks your participation—whether that means through attending events and Reunion, participating in career-related panel discussions, acting as an alumni representative at New Student Orientation, or leading Giving Day social media campaigns. Your participation and contributions will build the GSAA community and strengthen the School of General Studies for years to come. Together, we have and will continue to build a vibrant GS—one that attracts the world’s best nontraditional students and produces successful graduates who excel in an array of professions.

Case in point is the issue’s cover story, “If Not Now, When?” This story chronicles a number of alumni in different fields who have excelled as entrepreneurs. GS has long been an academic haven for the untraditional, but it is also an inspiration point and launch pad for new careers and entrepreneurial, life-changing endeavors.

Proudly, GS also continues to be a leading transition point for those seeking a career in medicine. The article on page 18 describes a number of new and innovative initiatives undertaken to support our Postbaccalauriate Premedical Program students. In many ways, the Postbac Program has entered a new era—one that provides the best programmatic support from matriculation through graduation and beyond.

In addition to the celebration of your work, as detailed in “Alumni News” and that of recent graduates as exhibited in the Class Day galleries and “New Grad Notes,” I want to highlight the extraordinary strides we have made in fundraising over the past ten years as illustrated in the Giving section. Your generosity has led to $33 million dollars raised via The Columbia Campaign—$8 million beyond our initial $25 million goal. This has helped to increase the School’s scholarship pool from $3.7 million dollars in 2003-2004 to $17.1 million dollars in 2013-2014. And on Giving Day this year, the GS Annual Fund raised over $250,000 in one day—more than what was raised in one year by the Annual Fund, just ten years ago. These successes allow GS to ensure that the dream of a Columbia education will continue to be a reality for nontraditional students from all walks of life for years to come.

Clearly evident is the impact of your generosity and partnership, and I want to take this opportunity not only to express how grateful I am for your support, but also how honored I am to have been able to lead the School of General Studies to this moment in our history—a moment that marks how far we have come and together, and how much further we can go.

With warmest regards,

Peter J. Awn

Dean
GS has always been a haven for military veterans and retired dancers and performing artists, yet in recent years it has also become a switchyard for entrepreneurs with an intellectual bent.

**BY ALEXANDER GELFAND**

I f not now, when? That was the question facing Aaron Hagedorn ’05 one morning in 2008. At the time, Hagedorn had a job as a researcher at a financial firm in Manhattan, and while he had managed to follow orders for five years as a helicopter rescue swimmer in the Navy before returning to school, the idea of working for someone else held little long-term appeal. That might have had something to do with his family history: Hagedorn’s grandfather had been a serial entrepreneur, and most of the Hagedorn clan had worked in the furniture and appliance store he established in southern Indiana. In any case, the opportunity to do something different seemed tantalizingly close at hand. Each weekday, as Hagedorn walked to the subway station near their East Village apartment, they passed a shoe repair shop that looked like the perfect location for a Central European-style coffeehouse modeled after the ones in Maxianova’s native Slovak Republic.

Now, suddenly, the repair shop was shuttered, the space was for rent—and the moment of truth had arrived. The couple dressed up a business plan, and armed with Maxianova’s annual bonus, a veteran’s loan from the Small Business Administration, and the assistance of partners Alex Clark and Lenka O, they launched Ott Café. (Ott is German for East, as in the Ostblock, or Eastern Bloc, evoked by the old Communist posters on the walls of the café.)

The first three or four months were brutal, with Hagedorn and Clark slinging java from behind the counter 12 hours a day, seven days a week. As the café matured into a mainstay of the lower Manhattan coffee scene, however, the partners were able to hire others to handle the barista duties. Today, Hagedorn spends most of his time working from his apartment, where he can concentrate on developing the business. Hagedorn’s story might sound like a fairytale for grown-ups: military veteran from the Midwest graduates from Columbia and builds a successful business on a dream and a lot of hard work. But it’s not as rare as it might seem, at least not for GS alumni. The college has long eyed prospective students in much the same way that a venture capital firm might treat a promising start-up, investing in those who want a nontraditional path to an Ivy League education, and giving them the flexibility and support they need to achieve their goals. And it tends to attract students with a similar appetite for risk. Students for whom the decision to attend Columbia often involves confronting the same question Hagedorn did—if not now, when?—and making the same leap of faith.

Some of those students begin their entrepreneurial careers after leaving GS. Others arrive in Morningside Heights with fairly deep resumes, and treat the School as a kind of academic oasis where they can broaden their intellectual horizons without having to put their careers on hold.

Scott Brinker ’05, for instance, had already secured a place in tech history by helping to build one of the most important computer and telecommunications companies of the pre-Internet era. In the mid-1990s, when Brinker was a high school student in South Florida, he began coding multiplayer adventure games for Galacticon, the company behind The Major BBS, a prominent commercial bulletin board system. (Galacticon sold the modems and software required to let multiple users communicate via computer before the advent of the Internet.) Soon after, he established his own BBS and software development company; five years later, he dropped out of the University of Miami, agreed to a formal merger with Galacticon, and went to work for the company full-time, becoming president and CEO by the time he was 21. In the late 1990s, Brinker refashioned himself as an Internet technology consultant and cofounded ion interactive, a web development agency whose roster of clients included Siemens and Office Depot. Nonetheless, when he enrolled at GS, he hadn’t yet ponied up.

The former programming prodigy arrived at Columbia with a bit of a math phobia, and his first foray into theoretical computer science—a class with the renowned mathematician and computer scientist Jonathan Gross—“scared the bejesus” out of him. Terror was soon replaced by fascination, however, and Brinker took every course in the subject that
After a while, Fabian Pförtmuller concluded that he did not want to spend the rest of his life as an event manager. “What would be the social impact of that?” asks the former political activist.

Gordon’s trajectory from physician to personal-care innovator might seem rather circuitous, but it is all par for the entrepreneurial course. “Sometimes, life takes you on a path that you don’t fully plan in advance,” he says, articulating a concept with which many GS alumni are familiar. “The truth is,” he adds, “in business and entrepreneurship, nothing works according to plan—and that’s the first thing you learn.”

Judging by the long, varied, and still evolving career of Elaine George, ’85, it may also be something that you never stop learning. Fueled by biochemistry but also by subjects like art, music, and anthropology, George was disappointed by her initial college experience; she dropped out of class the day she arrived, came back with a sunburn on top of his head, and decided to drop out of college. “But I knew I was meant for something better,” says Gordon, who was born and raised in a small town in the American West. “It gave me an appreciation for how deforestation has affected wildlife.”

Elaine George graduated from med school with more debt than cash, the experience of trying to start a business on his own was “frightening as hell.” Nonetheless, armed with nothing more than a credit card with a $10,000 limit, Gordon soon had his first venture up and running: Nios Spa, a hair removal clinic. Gordon then used the revenue generated by Nios to fund two additional businesses. The first of these, Noya, comprises a line of all-natural kosher lip balms—a product category that existed in Israel, but remained foreign to the American market. The second, Nios Shield, is a line of SPF-rated sunscreens, a product category that existed in the United States, but remained foreign to the American market.

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he did not go straight into the frozen-treat business. A strong science student with an interest in the stock market, Snyder spent the year after high school working as a margin clerk on Wall Street, then enrolled in the Colorado School of Mines to study engineering. A summer trip to Italy between his freshman and sophomore years sparked a gelato obsession, however; and though he returned to New York to continue his studies at Brooklyn Polytechnic, the die was cast. After pulling in a couple of cousins as helpers and raising $25,000 from family and friends, Snyder left school in 1984 to launch Ciao Bella, a wholesale gelato supplier in lower Manhattan.

Carving out a niche for the city’s first purveyor of small-batch, handcrafted gelato was not easy. Snyder had managed to secure space on a corner in the Lower East Side, and the shop and comes down seven days a week to lend a hand. (A former night-shift nurse, he is often seen wearing scrubs.) It has been a long, winding road from ice cream to finance and back again. But throughout, Snyder followed his bliss as best he could, letting his interests lead him where they might. In the end, his take on the late-stage success of Il Laboratorio could be read as a life lesson for entrepreneurs in general—and perhaps for anyone who is not quite sure where they are headed in terms of job or career, much less how they will get there. “You find your passion,” says Snyder, “and the money will find you.”

By the time he sold the company in 1989, Jon Snyder was selling gelato to some 60 restaurants and generating revenues of approximately $200,000; but he was also thoroughly burnt out, and had little desire to ever handle an ice cream scoop again. (The new owners turned Ciao Bella into a national brand, and moved the company’s headquarters to New Jersey.)

By then 25 years old and unsure of what to do next—“there was some mourning to do,” Snyder writes in his book, “Ciao Bella was really my life,”—Snyder knew that he wanted to stay in the city. He also wanted to finish his education. So he turned to GS, ultimately completing the college’s combined program with the Columbia Business School. There followed seven years in the financial services industry, first at Lehman Brothers and then at ABN Amro. But Snyder was not happy trading equities, and his old entrepreneurial urges eventually began to reassert themselves. It was not until the events of 9/11, however, when his brother narrowly avoided the collapse of the World Trade Center, that Snyder’s own “if not now, when?” moment arrived, and he felt compelled to open another business in Manhattan—and to return to his roots in ice cream.

Thus was born Il Laboratorio del Gelato, which follows in the wholesale footsteps of Ciao Bella—the company supplies more than 500 restaurants in Manhattan and Brooklyn—but adds a hip retail storefront on Ludlow Street. Though Snyder says he embarked on his second act in the gelato business with limited expectations, Il Laboratorio does more than $2 million in annual sales. And it is another family affair: Snyder’s sister helps with the books, and his mother, now 80, lives in an apartment above the shop and comes down seven days a week to lend a hand. (A former night-shift nurse, she is often seen wearing scrubs.)

At June’s Alumni Reunion, School of General Studies Dean Peter J. Awn announced a development that has been a long time in the planning stages and that will benefit current and future students enormously. The Recent Alumni Leadership Committee (RALC), the highly active group that has mentored hundreds of current students and spearheaded so many GS alumni programs and events, has been renamed the General Studies Alumni Association (GSAA). Not only is there a new name, but there is also a more formal structure and a succession plan to draw more alumni into its ranks.

Like a vibrant plant pushing against the confines of its pot, RALC had outgrown both its name and its informal structure. Those most active in RALC, including its co-chairs Chris Riano ’07 and Alex Vial ’09 and alumni Mason Beard ’04, Richie Space ’05, and Justin White ’03 all graduated nine to ten years ago—hardly the most “recent” alumni. As a result, School of General Studies leadership together with active alumni and administrative officers of the Columbia Alumni Association Office of Alumni Relations recognized it was time for an upgrade: Columbia University Senior Director of Alumni Relations Jill Marie Galas Hickey said of RALC, “There wasn’t a deep bench of potential leaders. We had roughly twenty volunteers—one to three committee heads, and we needed to create a sustainable succession plan. Now we have one, and now we have the ability to grow the people we have and to think about the people we don’t have, and get them involved."

Transforming incoming students into active alumni will be a much easier task for the GSAA than it was for the fledgling RALC. “The history of GS is not one of 65% of GS students now attend full time, which has built a sense of class cohesion. “All of the sudden, the student council began to appoint class presidents and give them serious money to run events."

The desire to be integrated into undergraduate student life is what fueled RALC’s formation in the mid 2000s. As GS students, many RALC members fought to pay the same student activity fees as other CU students for the right to participate in campus life as equals (A triumph detailed in a 2005 Owe story, “Student Life Evolves”).
Military veterans Richie Space ’05 and Justin White ’09 because RALC’s first co-chairs in 2007, roles they held for six years. Space concurred with Beard on the importance of those GS alumni-student interactions. “Part of the impetus for building the alumni group is the idea of mentoring. As a veteran coming out of the United States Marines and four years of college, I went through my own bumps and hurdles, and any time I see students struggling, I try to pair them up with alumni.”

By 2011, RALC’s continued engagement with current students through mentoring at New Student Orientation and networking events during the school year caught the attention of Peter Aron and Office of Alumni Relations administrators; they knew they had a vital resource in the cadre of RALC members. Janet Griffin, Associate Director of Alumni Relations, was charged with cultivating this group and was bowled over by the members’ energy and sense of purpose. “A project I thought was going to take two to three years took a matter of months.”

After her initial meeting with RALC and its then-current co-chairs Chris Riano and Alex Vial, she said the group immediately got to work. For example, they re-branded the annual Recent Alumni Reception renaming it the Mid-Winter Mixer, enhanced the event’s publicity with a more attractive email invitation, and conducted personal outreach to draw people’s interest. “Attendance went up 30% that year,” said Griffin.

“It was just really exciting to watch it all come together. At the next meeting, everyone was excited to start new projects and continue the momentum that had begun at the Mixer. We redesigned the monthly newsletter, revamped our orientation panels, and had RALC recruit people to run panels on careers, job hunting, and other professional concerns.”

“They owned these projects,” said Griffin.

For current GS students, RALC’s efforts to engage them have been a real boon. In fact, students enrolled today, said Griffin, “are shocked” to learn that when these alumni were students, they did not have all the resources that students have now. Alumni who graduated five to ten years ago, Griffin explained, recall how, as students, they created post-graduation planning programs at a grassroots level with few resources. That may have been the case during their time as students; however, it is important to note that before RALC was established, there existed a core group of active GS alumni who operated the first GS alumni association that had been established sixty years ago, aptly named General Studies Alumni Association (see “Back Then Too, Owls Gave a Hoot,” page 13).

Today’s students likely take for granted all the panels, mixers, and funds that RALC produces to foster student and alumni-centric events. It seemed only natural, then, that in 2012, Alumni Relations administrators and Dean Ann decided to expand RALC’s mission to serve the extended GS alumni community.

Office of Alumni Relations administrators and RALC members alike consider Dean Awn’s passionate involvement as key to RALC’s smooth transition to the new GSAA. Mason Beard, who this year replaces Alex Vial as the GSAA co-chair to serve alongside Chris Riano, said, “It’s amazing how much time Dean Awn has devoted to the conversations.” For his part, Awn points to larger forces at play on campus that make it an opportune time for GSAA formation.

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has been enrolled at GS since fall 2013, so he is personally invested in the school’s success and contribution to the greater university community.

Within GS, Awn points to the ever higher caliber of admitted students. “We’re attracting an incredible group of people who can handle full-time loads and handle them incredibly well.” While the uptick in full-time GS students makes them a more cohesive group, it also presents challenges. Awn admitted, “A really interesting quirk of GS is the students enroll with 40 to 50 credits. They often graduate in two years, taking full semester terms, too, so they don’t have time to think, ‘What am I going to do for a living?’ As a result, there’s a real urgency in trying to get incoming students not only to engage one another in a meaningful way, but also to almost immediately engage them with alumni.” The next challenge is to capture the attention of Postbac Premed Program students and alumni. As Awn pointed out, once they start on their path as medical students and then doctors, they have very little time to devote to engagement. Yet, as with the undergraduate population, Postbac Premed alumni involvement with current students is highly
beneficial and rewarding for both parties.

Adopting a concept pioneered and executed extremely well by Princeton University, according to Awn, GSAA will build a new organization where students and alumni will form long-term relationships with alumni from the beginning of their Columbia journey through their lives as members of the worldwide Columbia community. The idea of a “Columbia journey” is a powerful one for GS alumni. At the planning meeting, said Awn, “Everyone talks about this deep connection with GS, identifying it as a journey that not every place can duplicate, but GS seems to be the exception.”

The alumni board passionately leads and dedicates ambassadors to enhance the GS experience for alumni from the beginning of their Columbia journey through their lives as members of the worldwide Columbia community. The idea of a “Columbia journey” is a powerful one for GS alumni, and at the planning meeting, said Awn, “Everyone talks about this deep connection with GS, identifying it as a journey that not everyone can duplicate, but GS seems to be the exception.”

New GSAA Committees Inviting Alumni Engagement

In reinventing the Recent Alumni Leadership Committee (RALC) as the new General Studies Alumni Association (GSAA), Dean Peter Awn, Alumni Relations Senior Director, Marie Galas, Hickey, and Associate Director Janet Griffin—along with alumni leadership—created the following committees, each one representing opportunities for students and alumni to interact and be engaged with GS:

ANNUAL FUND
Together with the Development staff, members of the Annual Fund Committee will be ambassadors for giving to and investing in GS. They will serve as leadership for campaigns such as the Annual Fund and Giving Day.

AWARD
The Awards Committee will create and maintain a portfolio of GS and University-wide citations for which GS alumni may be eligible, such as the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) Medal and the University’s Medal of Excellence. Alumni members of the committee will research and nominate fellow alumni who they believe deserve accolades for outstanding service to the School and beyond.

COMMUNICATION
With a mission to ramp up the social media activity that RALC initiated, the Communications Committee will address all means of messaging, not only about events, but also about news, career development, and community development.

OUTREACH
The Outreach Committee will aim to engage students and alumni in career panels, orientation panels, and other career-related programs. Members of the committee will help identify and cultivate future alumni leaders and build awareness about the alumni community among current students.

PROGRAMMING
Alumni members of the Programming Committee will be instrumental in recommending content venues and target audiences for events. Each member will sponsor or assist with the production of one event annually in addition to helping promote programs. Members will help develop engaging happenings outside the tri-state area.

JOIN US!
It is a new era for the GS community. Those interested in participating in the General Studies Alumni Association (GSAA) and the committees listed above are encouraged to contact:

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BY NANCY BRANDWEIN

Back Then Too, Owls Gave a Hoot

Many students—and recent alumni—don’t realize that The Alumni Association of the School of General Studies (GSAA) was founded in 1948 and established as a non-profit organization in 1949. Alumni such as Barbara Voorish Levy ’48 and Mrs. Helen Gilbert Baer ’50 (for whom Lewisohn Hall’s Baer Room is named) cultivated a robust and active organization. In fact, Baer received the alumni medal in 1960 for her contributions to the School.

According to Philip Ehrlich ’88, president of GSAA from 1994-1998, there were 21 members of the original board, and amazingly, though names and faces changed, that number of involved individuals held constant for 50 years. The GSAA was in a unique position as an entirely independent organization, which, nevertheless, was totally supportive of the School. Ehrlich thinks it amazing that for many years there was only one dedicated staff member, Carol Burton, who handled alumni relations and development. Yearly dues enabled the GSAA to raise enough money to not only endow a yearly scholarship that was established by former president Lucille Roussin, but also to pay for a yearly mailing and host social and educational events such as lecture series. Ehrlich cites memorable speakers such as Nobel Prize winner and father of modern brain science, Eric Kandel and the immensely popular history professor James Shenton. On one memorable evening astronomer Neil DeGrasse Tyson (host of the re-tweaked hit television series Cosmos), then a Columbia grad student, took a group of GS alumni up to the Pupin Hall observatory where he showed them the rings of Saturn.

The Owl also got its start through GSAA funding. Melissa Bell ’91 and Kate Mellow ’91, a playwright and content developer, was editor from 1993-2000. She remembers walking the proofs to the printer in Journalism Hall, and says a highlight for her was compiling the Alumni Notes because GS graduates followed such interesting paths. Ehrlich, for instance, went from philosophy to art; his 22 inch polished bronze owl sculpture, dedicated in 1996, presides over the GS student lounge and can be seen from the Lewisohn foyer.

Over its history, the group accomplished many successes, yet ironically, Ehrlich says his principal achievement as president was helping the effort to integrate the group’s operations with the School’s enhanced alumni relations program, therefore paving the way for increased investment in the University-wide Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) and eventually, for today’s re-launch of the GS Alumni Association. “Although we became inactive as an organization, several of us remained active as individuals,” said Ehrlich, who regularly participates in events sponsored by the CAA and annually, along with GS Alumni Association Scholarship founder Roussin, attends the GS Scholarship Reception and other events where they proudly meet the recipients of the group’s commemorative scholarship.

Two former GSAA presidents Philip Ehrlich ’88 and Lucille Roussin ’50 at the 2014 Alumni Reunion in May.
“What’s the fun of being traditional?” asked Gergana Pancheva ’12 when she addressed more than 100 alumni and guests on Saturday, May 31 during the 2014 Alumni Reunion Cocktail Reception and Dinner. “I want to break the rules,” she said, as she described her journey from being a non-English-speaking Bulgarian immigrant to a Columbia GS graduate and now Vice President at a private equity placement group. Gergana’s journey was one of many stories highlighted at this year’s all-class reunion held Friday, May 30 and Saturday, May 31 during the 2014 alumni Reunion Cocktail Reception and reception. Over 100 alumni and guests addressed more than 100 alumni and guests throughout the weekend, Reunion Chair Elizabeth Hollister ’07 encouraged the more than 240 alumni from graduating classes spanning from 1948 to 2014 to, like Gergana, share their stories by creating hashtag-phrases that described their GS experiences. Hashtag-phrases such as #Reunited, #AlwaysWelcome, and #CsuvedMeMyLife demonstrated the diversity of the GS alumni community, as well as a common thread—that their nontraditional paths converged at GS, where they sought a world-class education that would transform their lives.

Transformation was another powerful theme of the weekend, as Dean Awn and leadership of the Recent Alumni Leadership Committee (RALC) rolled out the new General Studies Alumni Association (GSAA). During his remarks at the Dinner, Dean Awn introduced the nascent organization as a way to strengthen GS’s alumni and student community and its fundraising efforts. Furthermore, GSAA co-chairs Mason Beard ’04 and Christopher Ramos ’07 invited attendees to “continue their GS stories and get involved.”

Saturday’s dinner was just one highlight of a Reunion that was packed with lectures, discussions, and social events. Another was Saturday morning’s Talks Across Campus when Pulitzer Prize-winning author Anna Quindlen ’74BC led a session that garnered much discussion by attendees who reported feeling “fired up” by the lecture that addressed how much progress women have made in American society over the past 50 years. At another talk, DeWitt Clinton Professor of History Eric Foner ’63CC, ’69GSAS discussed “The Emancipation of Abraham Lincoln,” a topic that captured the interest of many history buffs.

At the Dean’s Luncheon, more than 85 alumni gathered in Faculty House’s Skyline Ballroom to socialize and learn about the state of the School of General Studies. Dean Awn thanked members of the Recent Alumni Committee for their commitment and tireless work for GS. He recounted the successes GS has had in recent years raising funds for student scholarships, and he laid out his vision for building upon the School’s strides toward offering a world-class education to all deserving nontraditional students. He also discussed issues that have recently been in national news: the call to warn students about triggering content in the classroom and the discourse on sexual assault and misconduct on college campuses, and, importantly, steps Columbia is taking to address them.

The afternoon’s Mini-Core Courses featured classes such as Contemporary Civilization: Is It Right to “Nudge?” with humanities professor Patricia Kitcher and Frontiers of Science: Saving the Forest for the Trees led by Don Melnick, professor of conservation biology.

More than thirty alumni gathered at the GS-sponsored veterans reception where alumni leader Richie Space ’05 and Dean Awn celebrated the 71 veterans that graduated from GS in May 2014 as well as that the University has raised close to $70,000 from a campaign that will support the student-veteran community for years to come.

A favorite event for many attendees was the nighttime Skyline Reception and Dance. The weather was perfect, and alumni and guests from every Columbia generation enjoyed an all-school gathering on the Plaza with Low Library lit in blue flood lights and Butler Library glowing over South Lawn.

For the first time since 1973 and since the return of the NROTC to campus, a NROTC cadet, GS graduate Abigale Marie Wyatt ’74 was commissioned as a U.S. Navy officer on May 22, 2014 in Low Memorial Library Rotunda at Columbia University in the City of New York. More than 100 guests, including family, friends, educators, administrators, and Naval officers attended the historic ceremony that celebrated the achievements and bright future of Ensign Wyatt.

The ceremony opened with the presentation of the official party and an address from Columbia University Provost John H. Coatsworth and Professor Peter J. Awn, Dean of the School of General Studies, who introduced Rear Admiral Dan Cloyd, U.S. Navy, Captain Ted Graske (ret) ’99CC, U.S. Navy, presented the Presentation of the Sword. All the speakers focused on Ensign Wyatt’s impressive achievements, as well as the importance and historical significance of the relationship between Columbia University and the U.S. Navy. The commissioning then became official with the Reading of the Commissioning Scroll and the administration of Oath of Office by Captain Matthew Loughlin, Columbia University NROTC director. Ensign Wyatt was joined by family and friends for the Installation of Insignia. For the first time since 1973 and since the return of the NROTC to campus, a NROTC cadet, GS graduate Abigale Marie Wyatt ’74 was commissioned as a U.S. Navy officer on May 22, 2014 in Low Memorial Library Rotunda at Columbia University in the City of New York. More than 100 guests, including family, friends, educators, administrators, and Naval officers attended the historic ceremony that celebrated the achievements and bright future of Ensign Wyatt.

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GS DEDICATES OFFICIAL SCHOOL FLAG

By Allison Scola

On Wednesday, December 11, 2013, students and alumni of Columbia University School of General Studies held a dedication ceremony on the northeast corner of Lewisohn Lawn where a new flag symbolizing School of General Studies pride is now flying. The flagpole and flag were a gift of the Class of 2013.

Spearheaded by former General Studies Student Council Vice President of Policy Nikki Morgan ’13, the flag initiative was a way for the Class of 2013 to give back to GS. “The flag represents the banner under which incredibly diverse walks of life converge. It acts as a guide showing GSers that they have a clear place on campus and in the Columbia community,” Morgan said. “I wanted to leave something behind for future students that encapsulates this unique journey—that something says, ‘You are part of this community.’”

The flag bears the letters G and S and the School’s official seal that was designed by students in 1930 and re-designed by alumnus Philip Ehrlich ’88 in 2001. Its placement on the Morriscide Campus, in front of Lewisohn Hall, marks the home-base for Columbia’s students who have followed a nontraditional path towards a traditional education. Ultimately, however, it demonstrates students’ strong school spirit. As Dean of Students Tom Harford wrote in an email to the GS community, “The flag represents students’ pride in their college.”

Speakers at the ceremony included School of General Studies Dean Peter J. Ann Deschamps ’81, Chair of the Recent Alumni Leadership Committee Christopher Riano ’97. Members of the Class of 2013 along with 2013 Senior Class President Angelica Hoyos and Nicole Morgan were in attendance.

On Campus

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DAVID CHAMBLOSS JOHNSON

One could argue that David Chambloss Johnson’s academic career started in 1965 when he was just 16 years old. The Vietnam War was raging in South East Asia, and at home in East Tennessee, a battery of questions provoked the high school student.

“My father was a highly ranked captain in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was supportive of the War in Vietnam, and I was not,” recalls Johnson, Professor of Political Science and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Political Science at Columbia.

Johnson remembers several discussions over many years with his father where they disagreed with each other. But for Johnson, it was not simply enough to disagree. Having come from a family where every adult relative he knew was a lawyer, he had to understand why his opinion differed from his father’s and be able to explain it. So, at the prompting of his high school studies teacher, he read about the history of the War. But his inquiry did not end with a book or two.

Johnson proceeded to survey 1000 people about their attitudes regarding the Vietnam conflict in order to form his own opinion and feel secure in his discourse. “My father was a New Deal Democrat and ex-soldier. Like many from his generation, he trusted his government to make good decisions—I was taught in civics classes to have faith in government too, but the War in Vietnam was a huge failure with regards to loss of life, energy, and resources,” recounts Johnson who, at the same time, was grappling with the other significant social issue of the 1960s: the civil rights movement.

“I was from the American South. We had legal segregation when I was growing up, which created an astonishing impression on me. It was the biggest issue of my youth,” says Johnson who, as a result of exposure to such social discord, today writes and teaches classes on social justice.

Although he was a college student at Harvard and Swarthmore during the 1960s’ historic anti-war and civil rights demonstrations, Johnson saw higher value in forming a strong understanding of the issues, versus participating in rallies. “I’m an intellectual. I’m interested in ideas and the world. The better you understand the world, the better you can solve its problems. My inclination is to understand the issues, and with that, I can help other people understand the issues and give rise to solutions,” says Johnson who brings that resolution to his writings, research, and work with students.

Since joining the Columbia faculty in 1986, Johnson has challenged undergraduates to inquire and discuss social thought through courses such as Contemporary Civilization, Political Theory, Theories of Justice, and Justice, all of which consist of elements of thought history, theory, law, legal cases and writings, and applied political theory. His objective as an educator is to encourage his students to understand the issues and people understand the issues and give rise to solutions,” says Johnson who brings that resolution to his writings, research, and work with students.

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POSTBAC PREMED PROGRAM ENHANCES
BENEFITS AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

BY NOAH KUTZY

Despite being the oldest and largest program of its kind in the United States and having a placement rate of up to 90 percent in American medical schools, the Columbia University Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program continues to pursue new ways to enhance the support and opportunities it offers to students in order to help all Columbia Postbac succeed in their premedical and prehealth pursuits. This includes adding more academic advisors and glide year advisors, expanding mentoring and coaching programs, adding new linkage programs to an already robust roster, and forming new graduate program agreements, all of which continue the program’s unparalleled level of commitment to premedical and prehealth students.

“We are constantly seeking ways to support and provide for our students as they pursue their careers in the medical field,” Senior Associate Dean for the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program Victoria Rosner said, “I feel that the recent additions we’ve made establish the depth of our commitment to our students and their success.”

Specialized Advising for Medical School Application

The program recently added Assistant Dean of Students Glenn Novack as a specialized advisor helping prepare students for medical school interviews and connecting them with ideal Glide Year opportunities such as clinical and research work, academic degree programs, and international fellowships. His addition to an advising team staffed by the senior associate dean and four dedicated, academic advisors means the Postbacc Premed Program now has an even greater ability to help students meet their intellectual and career goals.

A Growing List of Opportunities

Beginning this spring, Postbac students have the opportunity to apply for the Combined Postbac Premed-MS in Human Nutrition Program, offered in partnership with the Institute for Human Nutrition at Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons, or the Mailman School of Public Health Accelerated MPH Program. These programs, along with the Combined Postbac Premed-MS Bioethics Program help students enrich and diversify their premedical education prior to enrolling in medical school.

The new combined master’s programs come on the heels of new linkage agreements with Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University College of Dental Medicine (the only dental linkage program in the nation), Weill Cornell Medical College, and New York University School of Medicine. Along with the Program’s ten additional linkage agreements, they enable qualified Postbac Premed students with a strong interest in one linkage school to accelerate the application process and potentially matriculate in that school in the academic year upon completion of the orgo/bio year, foregoing the Glide Year.

As these and other additions and enhancements show, the Columbia University Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program’s dedication to its students’ success has never been greater.

POSTBAC ALUMNUS FEATURE: DR. DAVID T. SCADDEN ‘76

BY ALLISON SCOLA


Adding the great insight from the world’s leading authority on ants is particularly appropriate when one considers the path and successes of fellow Harvard professor and physician-scientist Dr. David T. Scadden, MD ’76PPBM.

Dr. Scadden, who attended the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program after graduating with a degree in English from Bucknell University in 1975, is a practicing hematologist/oncologist who focuses on bringing stem cell biology to patient care. His research and practice are centered on the stem cell niche to attain novel therapies for blood diseases. Scadden is currently the Gerald and Darlene Jordan Professor of Medicine at Harvard University, Director of the Center for Regenerative Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, Co-Director of the Harvard Stem Cell Institute, Co-Chair of the Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology at Harvard University, and former Chief of Hematologic Malignancies at Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center. He holds over 20 patents, and therapies based on his research and work are utilized to treat blood diseases and cancer patients with anemia deficiencies.

As a child, Scadden loved science. His father fostered his interest by building him a lab outfitted with a chemistry set in the family’s basement. However, once he reached high school, the Bergen County, New Jersey native found science to be tedious. Literature, on the other hand, captured Scadden’s imagination. “It brought to life elements of the heart and head and history in ways I hadn’t previously imagined. Literature also awakened in me an interest in the craft of writing,” remembers Scadden, who, while at Bucknell, wrote his senior thesis on the poet W. B. Yeats.

“Doing scholarly research on Yeats and having to distill it down to something readable for my thesis advisor was a concept-builder for me. It proved that I could take on big challenges. As a result, while still at Bucknell, I wanted to see if I could get reinvigorated with the sciences, so I took a few math classes to test myself. I loved coming from the world of ambiguity to the world of clarity and of right and wrong in mathematics,” recalls Scadden.

“I thought, ‘I would really enjoy getting back to the sciences,’ but then my task was to sort out how one could craft a life out of the love of the humanities and use those principles as a way to pay the rent.

“Medicine was a way to do that. Scadden enrolled in the Columbia Postbac Premed Program and saw it as a rigorous way to test himself. He found success and enthusiasm for biology and the principles of how life is organized. He also volunteered at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and in the emergency room at Columbia Medical Center. “It was a test of whether or not I could enjoy being a caregiver and help people with acute need. It all felt right,” he recalls.

While a student at Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, Scadden thought he would become a clinician, not a researcher. But what he found was that his background in the humanities not only enabled him to sympathize with patients and their families, but also gave him a valuable foundation for successfully processing research. “I felt capable of being able to take complicated situations and break them down,” Scadden says.

When his mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer while Scadden was an intern, he realized that hematology and oncology were areas where he wanted to make a difference. Now, over 30 years later, Scadden has clearly done just that, not only with his groundbreaking research and work as a physician, but also as a teacher. For most of his career, Scadden has taught medical students and postdocs, but in addition, for the past six years, he has lead a freshman seminar at Harvard that bridges literature with science.

“The creative challenge of medical research is not immediately visible to people, and I thought if I connected with students early, they might be more encouraged to stay with the inherent joy of thinking about how the body works,” says Scadden.

Each semester twelve first-year students enroll in Blood: From Gory to Glory, a course that examines blood as represented in texts ranging from ancient Greek classics through modern ones, such as Dracula, and then explores the science associated with blood. Students study this “giver and taker of life” through many lenses—those of ritual and religion, good versus evil, and then through that of the microscope, for after considering how blood is represented throughout history, students then go to the lab to conduct experiments to understand blood’s power in the medical realm.

Scadden’s message to students: For as long as there has been human life, there has been an evolving understanding and curiosity about this substance and “we are all part of the discovery process.”

It is that sense of curiosity and analysis—one that Scadden has held since he was a young man—combined with his desire to share it with not only his students, but also with his colleagues and patients, that make him not only a wildly successful scientist, but also a poet, in the truest sense of the word.

A Postbac Premed Program student with his advisor.

Lorain Carneauxville, TC ’02.
Class Day 2013

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL DIVITO

1. GS salutatorian Damian Harris-Hernandez
2. Class Day procession
3. Mahogany Wright and family
4. Marissa Gavin and family
5. GS Class Day speaker Nicholas Dirks, chancellor designate of the University of California at Berkeley
6. Howard Fishman and the Biting Fish Brass Band perform for GS graduates
7. GS salutatorian Benjamin M. Shababo with his wife and daughter
8. Dean Peter J. Awn celebrates with GS graduates
9. Sciences Po Dual BA graduates Margot Renant, Corentin Charlès, and Nur Arufe
10. Christopher Riano ’07 (Co-Chairman of the recent Alumni Committee) with Alumni Key Award recipients Kevin McWilliams and Brian Driscoll
11. GS salutatorian Tiekka Tellier
Postbac Premed Class Day 2013

Photos by Michael DiVito

1. Columbia Postbac Premed graduates at Class Day
2. Tyler Lapachin delivers the student address
3. Richie Dubey and Instructor Lise Hazen, Biological Sciences
4. Dr. David Newman, director of clinical research in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, delivers the keynote address
5. Dean Peter J. Awn congratulates Postbac Premed Program graduates
6. Senior Associate Dean Victoria Reumer (Right) with (from Left) Ashley White-Stevens, Eugene Carragee, and Allison Lockwood
7. Katie Picewrak (Center) and her husband with Professor Deborah Mowshowitz
8. Postbac Director and Associate Dean Andrew Sanchius (Right) with Walter Klyce and Phoebe Johnson-Black
9. Postbac Premed graduates from the Premedical Association celebrate their achievements at Class Day
10. John Andrews, Stephanie Sutter, and family with Student Affairs Officer Mike Allen
Class Day 2014

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL DIVITO

1. Salutatorian Gabriel Jackson addresses the graduates and guests
2. Graduates listen
3. Christopher Reins '97 (Co-Chairman of the General Studies Alumni Association) presents the Alumni Key award to recipient Ryan Kendall
4. Hua Tong (CityU Hong Kong Joint Degree Program Grad) and Saroj Siegler (Senior External Liaison Officer, City University of Hong Kong)
5. Biting Fish Brass Band leads the procession
6. Rakan Altouq (Left), Andre Bautista (Middle Left), Richard Baldassari (Middle Right), and Yiling Bao (Right)
7. Aries Dula Cruz '09 and Elegance Bratton '14
8. Gale Brewer '97, Manhattan Borough President, addresses the graduates as their Class Day keynote speaker.
9. Valedictorian Ido Haimi addresses the audience
10. Kasey Lockwood (Left), Alexander Owusu (Middle), and Adam Abin (Right)
11. Luke Kvirikadze and Lile Gelashvili with their son
12. Robert Britt (Left), Atetegeb Worku (Middle), and Elie Bleier (Right)
Postbac Premed Class Day 2014

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL DIVITO

1. Outgoing PMA Board Walter Klyce, Eugene Gavagne, Dante Winkler, Phil Harck, Allie Lockwood, Ashley White-Stern, Davis Verde
2. Class Day Speaker Dr. Linda P. Fried
3. Student Speaker Evan Joiner
4. Shimon Jacobs, Allie Lockwood, Jaime Rojas, Matthew Acip survivors, Davis Verde, and Elizabeth Evans
5. Monique Hedmann-Maxey, Instructor Lise Hazen and guest
6. Dean Peter J. Awn, Ashley White-Stern and family, along with Associate Dean Victoria Rosen
7. Desiree Oydea and Dean Peter J. Awn
8. Kei Taryama and Postbac Director Andrew Sunshine
9. Associate Dean Victoria Rosen
Born in Alberta, Canada, Lisa Coast is an international model who has worked for such companies as Betsy Johnson, Chanel, Elle, H&M, Gaultier, Tommy Hilfiger, and Juicy Couture, and who was featured twice on the cover of Vogue Italia. While a student at GS, Lisa took classes full-time while continuing to model, and in 2012, she received the Herbert L. Lehman Prize for Excellence in History. A member of the Phi Beta Kappa society, Lisa was also awarded the Olga H. Knoepke Scholarship and graduated summa cum laude. Since graduation, Lisa has been raising her newborn baby girl.

Born in Jamaica, April Jackson has also lived in France and England, and was named the valedictorian of her senior class at the Royal High School in Bath, U.K. In 2008, April was named Miss Jamaica Universe, and she completed a national education board at the request of the Prime Minister. Shortly thereafter, she established Giro Children’s Future, a charity that provides development-aid for children worldwide. At GS, April was a member of the Caribbean Students Association and participated in “Paris Then and Now,” the creative writing program's study abroad program in France. She also kept busy by writing a memoir and cookbook, and in April of 2011, she completed the Paris Marathon, raising nearly $6,000 to donate to the Child Development Agency in Jamaica. After graduation, April will continue running her charity while launching the Savoir Jamaica Supper Club, an enterprise that will bring international chefs to Jamaica to cook exclusive dinners around the island.

Aryeh Primus started his undergraduate career at Brandeis University, but dropped out to work in the high tech industry. He was employed by a number of startups, and eventually landed at Hewlett Packard, where he worked as a software evangelist, promoting products to customers at conferences and other events. In 2009, Aryeh took a year off from work, but quickly got restless. A friend told him about GS, and because he had always wanted to finish his degree at a top-tier institution, he decided to apply. As a student, Aryeh made his mark by teaching a lecture entitled “Una y Advanced Networking” for the computer science department. A member of the GS Honors Society, Aryeh graduates magna cum laude with a degree in economics and statistics, and a concentration in computer science. After graduation, he enrolled at Oxford to pursue a master's in computer science.

One of 63 U.S. veterans who graduated from GS in 2013, Dan Lagana, who was born in San Salvador, El Salvador, served two tours of duty in Iraq and received the Bronze Star Medal for performance and leadership. During his time at GS, Dan was very involved in student life, serving as President and Board Member of the U.S. Military Veterans of Columbia University from 2009-2011, raising $25,000 for the organization, and participating in successful congressional lobbying in D.C. for the Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act. He also served as Student Council Treasurer and Finance Delegate for the General Studies Student Council from 2009-2011. Dan was one of six students in 2011 to be selected for the Spirit Award, the highest leadership award at GS. In the fall of 2012, Dan completed an internship at the White House. Since graduation Dan has pursued a career in public service.

Tiekka Tellier left high school early to pursue ballet, eventually joining the Houston Ballet in 1988, where she became an acclaimed professional ballerina. After a 16-year career that included performing leading roles for royalty, presidents, and diplomats around the world, she decided to pursue the college degree she had always wanted. Prior to enrolling at GS, Tiekka studied at Borough of Manhattan Community College, and as a GS student, she took classes while juggling the responsibility of being a working single mother to a special needs child. Tiekka was named salutatorian of the Class of 2013, and also received the Lichtheim-Starchon Scholarship Award. A member of the GS and Phi Beta Kappa honors societies, Tiekka graduates magna cum laude with a degree in art history, which she hopes to use to pursue a career in the arts, perhaps working with special needs children. In the meantime, she will continue to teach ballet.

Born in Manchester, England, and raised in East Jerusalem, Palestine, Nur Arafeh took a uniquely international path to GS. Nur, who was named class valedictorian at the Lycée Français de Jerusalem, was awarded a full scholarship to attend Sciences Po in Menton, France, where she focused on Middle Eastern studies and was eventually offered the opportunity to participate in the Dual BA program between Sciences Po and GS. At GS, Nur was involved in Students for Justice in Palestine and the Tikkun Association, and is also a member of the GS and Phi Beta Kappa honors societies. After graduation, she enrolled at Cambridge University to pursue a master’s degree in development studies, and plans to enroll in a doctoral program shortly thereafter. Longer term, Nur hopes to return to Palestine to work for the Ministry of National Economy, helping to build a better Palestinian government.

GS/JTS graduate Sam Shuman has always been interested in politics. He began his college career at Northwestern University. During that time, he completed an internship for a U.S. Senator. He chose to continue his studies at GS because he wanted to attend a school that demonstrated concern about political and social issues taking place in the global community. Sam served as president of Gayava, the Jewish LGBT club, and also organized with Occupy Columbia. A member of the GS and Phi Beta Kappa honors societies, he is the recipient of the GS Dean’s Prize in Anthropology, an Ella Deloria Research Fellowship from the anthropology department, a grant from the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, and departmental honors. Sam graduated with a degree in Jewish women & gender studies from List College and a degree in sociocultural anthropology from General Studies. He hopes to apply for a PhD program in sociocultural anthropology in the next few years.

Born in Sugar Land, Texas, Mary Nwosuocha completed her bachelor's degree in comparative literary studies at Northwestern University before working for Nordstrom, where she helped high-end clients update their wardrobes or dress for special events. Shortly thereafter, her younger sister, who was still in high school and having trouble at home, moved in with her. The experience of having another person depend on her led Mary to realize she wanted to make a career out of helping those in need, and she enrolled in the Postbac Premed Program to prepare for medical school. As a Postbac student, she volunteered at New York Presbyterian Hospital as a videographer for the COACH program, an online medical education training tool, and also as a research assistant in their Pediatric Emergency Department. While she was volunteering in Brooklyn at New York Methodist Hospital’s Emergency Room as well as with the Kings Against Violence Initiative, a youth violence intervention, prevention, and empowerment program, Peter enrolled at Weill Cornell Medical College this fall and plans to return to his rural Maine hometown to practice family medicine.

Peter Chamberlin was ready for a change, and he wanted to work in a field that allowed him to directly impact the well-being of others. He decided on medicine as a means to pursue that goal, and enrolled in the Postbac Premed Program. During his second semester, Peter lost his mother to cancer, and while it was a heart wrenching experience, it reaffirmed his decision to pursue medicine as one of the most meaningful ways to help care for others’ suffering. While at GS, he volunteered in Brooklyn at New York Methodist Hospital’s Emergency Room as well as with the Kings Against Violence Initiative, a youth violence intervention, prevention, and empowerment program. Peter enrolled at Weill Cornell Medical College this fall and plans to return to his rural Maine hometown to practice family medicine.

SAVE THE DATE
Below are just two of the engaging events we have planned for this year: join the GSAA as we embark on a new era together!

MID-WINTER MIXER
FEBRUARY 12, 2015
ALL-YEAR ALUMNI REUNION
MAY 30, 2015
Visit gs.columbia.edu/alumni for the latest news, event information, and more!
Kristine Görgen to a graduate degree program to study history.

graduation, he has spent time traveling, and he
*Columbia University* student organization. Since
realize this development,” Everman said.

- conscious effort to develop three aspects of
well-rounded life.

his bachelor's degree the final step in pursuing a
ployed to S.E. Asia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. After
his time between meditating and doing chores.

- messenger in Manhattan in order to save mon
for several months and stayed in a monastery
-Himalayas -

"During my adult life I have made the
conscious effort to develop three aspects of
well, I am the artist, the scholar and the philosop
Elizabeth Norrell (or conversion)
emancipated himself -

"Throughout my adult life I have made the
making effort to develop these three aspects of
who I am the artist, the scholar and the philosop
he joined the U.S. Marine Corps during
in political science and hopes to use his
- EMT with the University's
- representing GS in
- to have open-heart
- of a rare disease
enrolled at GS -
William Tant -
 Raised in Germany

UMARU JALLOH ’14

On Oct. 2, 1992, with his brother on his shoulder and mother and sister close behind, Umarru Jalloh ran for his life as grenades exploded and bullets streaked by his head. Twenty-two years later, Jalloh, a 42-year-old Sierra Leonean refugee who has endured personal tragedies such as homelessness and school and community building, population health, and mental illness. He matriculated at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons this fall.

After working at Camp Wolfson and learning new skills from program management and wilderness survival, my desire to be a college-educated certified teacher was even stronger, and in the fall of 2006, I enrolled at Suffolk Community College (SCCC)—17 years after graduating from high school. I felt reborn,” Jalloh said.

At SCCC, Jalloh was a straight-A student and the president of the Phi Theta Kappa Society, an international honor society of two-year colleges and academic programs. His success at SCCC led him to apply to Columbia University School of General Studies for the spring of 2010. “When I enrolled at Columbia University, I struggled not only with health issues, but also homelessness. The School of General Studies, however, supported me through these tough times with tuition, housing and medical assistance. I made lifelong friendships; I always felt welcome; and I could not be prouder to be a GS alumnus and a member of the Columbia community,” Jalloh said.

After graduation, Jalloh would like to study the history of technology through a joint program at the University of Pennsylvania and the Franklin Institute Museum where he serves as a science fair volunteer. He has also worked to open an inclusive school in rural Sierra Leone called Fairy School to ensure all students receive a quality education.

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“I trace everything I've done so far professionally, back to GS,” said 2006 graduate and class salutatorian Pavan Surapaneni. “GS took a chance on me that no one else would—and for that reason, I joined RALC—and I now serve on the Board of Visitors.”

That “chance,” to which Pavan refers, is one to which many GSers can relate. Before enrolling at the School of General Studies in 2002, the now attorney was a high school dropout and troubled teen. After a life-altering experience, he sought help, earned his high school diploma at The John Dewey Academy, and found a new path. Once at Columbia and part of a community of diverse and dynamic students, Pavan worked harder than ever before, and it paid off. Upon graduation, he attended Harvard Law School.

Today, Pavan is an Associate at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, a leading law firm based in New York City. He landed a position there after serving as a Summer Associate during both of his summers breaks while in law school. After briefly meeting a partner of the firm at a job fair during his first semester in Cambridge, Mass., he was invited to join them for the summer. “They were interested in me not based on my Harvard grades—because at that point I hadn’t earned any. They were interested in me solely based on my work at GS,” recalled Pavan.

As an attorney, Pavan helps clients evaluate and allocate the risk of, and negotiate an unprecedented agreement with the Office of the Commissioner of Major League Baseball and Guggenheim Baseball Management, which eventually acquired the team, its media rights, and real estate that included Dodgers Stadium.

Such deals can be stressful and all-consuming, so to de-stress, Pavan heads to the hills—but not just any hill. An avid hiker and climber, Pavan takes day trips out of Manhattan up to the Hudson Highlands and Cold Spring, N.Y. to challenging sites like the one that hikers call Breakneck Ridge. Or during the colder months, he goes ice climbing in New Hampshire’s White Mountains. “I was born in Maine, so I was born to be in the mountains,” he said.

When Pavan has more time, he climbs some of the world’s tallest peaks. Every two years, after extensive training and preparation, he picks a new summit to conquer. To his credit thus far, he counts Mount Aconcágua in Argentina, Mount Elbrus in Russia, Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, and Mount Rainier in Washington State, to name a few. “This June, he took a month off from work to climb to the summit of Denali (also known as Mount McKinley) in Alaska, a vast wilderness of forest, tundra, rocky landscapes, and glaciers.

“When you're on the mountain, you must be in the moment. You must focus on each step to do it safely. And when you're able to stop, you look around at the stunning views and think, ‘Wow, this is beautiful!’ There’s no time to think about work and the stress it brings. You have to think about how you are going to take the next step,” said Pavan.

“Serving on the Board of Visitors is a tremendous opportunity to give back to the School that gave me so much. At the end of the day, given my past, I have a sense that I was granted a chance. I want to help other people to have that same chance.”

Pavan Surapaneni ’06

1953
The Judd Foundation, established in recognition of minimalist artist Donald Judd, refurbished Judd’s former residence in order to open it to the public as a museum featuring the artist’s collection of works by Duchamp, Frank Stella, Stuart Davis, and Dan Flavin. Additionally, the gallery will exhibit Judd’s own sculptures.

1962
Robert Lockwood wrote political thriller A Dragon Defeigned, which intertwines domestic politics, economic issues, and the rivalry between the United States and China. Previously, Lockwood held various political posts, ranging from Counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee and Army Colonel to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger’s chief speechwriter and Deputy Special Arms Control Adviser to President Ronald Reagan, all before becoming a Washington lobbyist for several Fortune 500 companies.

1963
John Tauranac, who led the Metropolitan Transportation Authority committee that created the iconic 1979 subway map (the basis for the map in use today), has independently produced an updated Subway map. Showing such useful details as what stations make you pay a second fare to change directions, this map also shows future lines, such as the 7 Line extension to 34th Street and 11th Avenue (planned to open later in 2014), and the Second Avenue Line (planned to open in 2016).

1965
Catherine Robbins’ book Of Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos) is a tale about contemporary American Indian life. Originally published last year, it is now in its second printing. Robbins is currently working on her second book, Nobodys Travels South of Rome, about Calabria, a region in southern Italy.

1967
Leni Miller recently had her first book, Finding Right Work: Five Steps to a Life You Love, published. With almost four decades of experience in professional job placement, Miller helps people find “right work” that is fulfilling and utilizes their talents.

Eli Zabar, son of the founder of Zabar’s specialty food market, now owns a number of gourmet cafés and specialty food shops throughout Manhattan, the most well-known being the Vinegar Factory and E.A.T.

1969
Susanne Braham is having several of her poems about widowhood published in two anthologies. On Our Own: Widowhood for Smarties and The Widows’ Handbook, which will feature a forward by Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

1972
Anne-Marie Brumm just published her latest book Honor Killing a Novel of Israel about a Mossad agent sent to infiltrate a Hezbol- lah camp by seducing the leader’s aging sis- ter. Brumm, already the author of a number of other books has lived in Israel for 15 years and is already planning her next book about a double murder on a state university campus.
**BERNICE BERGER MILLER ’53**

“President Eisenhower was my neighbor for a time,” wrote Bernice Berger Miller ’53 of her time at Columbia and, therefore, less anxious about what is facing them.

**LIVER TRANSPLANT: My Story**

By Bonnie Lee Black ’79

How to Make an African Quilt: The Story of the Patchwork Project of Ségou, Mali, published about how to Make an African Quilt is a memoir about Black’s time living in Segou, Mali teaching Malian women how to make American quilts as part of an economic initiative called the Patchwork Project, while simultaneously exploring the historic and contemporary issues in Mali. Black has written two other books. Somewhere Child, about her daughter was kid-napped by her ex-husband, and How to Cook a Crocodile, chronicling her other experiences in Africa.

**Jean Foss: A New York Woman in the Nile**

By Jean Foss

Jean Foss wrote a book, Set Chrysler, and Stay of Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt, about the life of a young woman who married into the Roosevelt family and all the excitement that it entailed.

**John Morgan: The Last of the Wonder Windows**

By Ralf Hertwig

John Morgan recently had his latest book, The Last of the Wonder Windows published. Already the author of books Rational Mystics: Dispatches from the Border Between Science and Spirituality and Where Was God on September 11? Morgan is a science journalist and director of the Center for Science Writings at Stevens Institute of Technology.

**Brett Weinberg: The window cleaner who cleans windows he has cleaned over the years.**

By Brent Weingard

Brett Weinberg, who has cleaned windows in New York City for more than 35 years, was featured in The New York Times. Weinberg, who started his window cleaning business while at Pace University, writes about complex technical aspects of window cleaning, from harness rigs to cleaning solvents, as well as his numerous encounters with famous New York City personalities, as he cleans windows he has cleaned over the years.

**Yael Israel: The PricewaterhouseCoopers Director**

By Chris Dixon

Yael Israel joined PricewaterhouseCoopers as a Director in Practice in charge of a team working to optimize tax engagement strategies in investment management groups.

**Lisa Bennett: An art director with a passion for her medium.**

By Katherine Dufault, nee Fields

Lisa Bennett is currently the communications director for the Center for Ecoliteracy.

**Jay Amari: An entrepreneur and writer**

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Two of his scripts were nominated as finalists at the Actors Theater of Louisville National 10-Minutes Play Contest. He also has been a number in independent films and written several screenplays. Two of his scripts were nominated as finalists at the Actors Theater of Louisville National 10-Minutes Play Contest.

**Katherine Dufault (nee Fields): The festival founder and director**

By Anouk Markovits

Katherine Dufault (nee Fields) curated an exhibit of 40 abstract works at the Rye Arts Center, including several of her own. Over the past several years, Dufault has had her work exhibited at a number of venues around New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

**Joseph Jacobs: From being Native American and white.**

By Lisa Bennett

The youngest of four children and the first to graduate from high school, Jacobs describes how he graduated from Columbia GS and Yale before rediscovering his Mohawk identity.

**Janet Koch: A woman with a passion for her medium.**

By Katherine Dufault, nee Fields

Janet Koch is an editorial assistant and writer at Columbia—an experience that was quite some time ago, but for this transplant survivor, such moments of life are vivid and lived to its fullest. Author of three novels and now, Liver Transplant: My Story, after graduating from GS, Berger Miller raised a family, earned her MA in English from Florida Atlantic University and her PhD from University of Florida. She owned and operated a building company for 25 years in the antiques and collectibles business, and traveled widely. No doubt, that was quite some time ago, but for this transplant survivor, such moments of life are vivid and lived to its fullest.

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Miriam Kartch ’70

BY ALLISON SCOLA

As a piano student at Mannes Music School in the early 1940s, Miriam Kartch ’70GSAS, and 1980GSAS, was identified by Co-Director Clara Danoschke Mannes as having a gift for pedagogy, and thus began an inspired 70-year career as a music educator. “Ms. Kartch cares greatly for her students,” said percussionist and Mannes College of Music graduate Daniel Mallon, who was a student of Kartch’s in the mid-1980s. “I’ve been honored to know her for the past thirty years, first as her student, and now as a colleague on the faculty.”

Known for her dry wit and unconventional personal style, during the post-War 1950s, Kartch was ahead of her time. “In my day girls mar- ried to get married. I was married [at Mannes Preparatory and Extension School piano lessons], and then I was Director of the Prep school. I had a calling,” said Kartch.

One of her piano extension students was Vernon W. Hughes ’44 ’10GSAS, a PhD candidate in physics at Columbia. “He came to Mannes for evening lessons once we lived two blocks apart, we became acquainted and dated,” At the time, Hughes was interested in getting married Kartch had other ambitions. A few years later, in the summer of 1962, her then fiancé died sud- denly of a cerebral hemorrhage. The shock hit six months later, signing a countermeasure to her grief, a benefit Kartch was encour- aged by music theorist and then dean of Mannes Carl Schachter to visit Donald Harrison at the School of Graduate Studies, and George Wein. “I had to do something that nobody could take away from me, and that was education,” recalled Kartch.

GS appealed to her. She started taking one class a time, and even- tually two. “Completing my bachelor’s took me seven years because I could only do a little at a time,” Kartch said. “GS was a wonderful place— it was a mind-opening experience. We were all working hard to fit courses into our schedules. We were all really trying to enrich our lives.”

After completing her undergraduate degree, Kartch went on to pur- sue a master’s, and subsequently a doctorate in musicology at the Grad- uate School of Arts & Sciences (GSAS), during which she taught Music Humanities and piano at Columbia. They were in 1979 her recently wedded old boyfriend Vernon Hughes, by now Sterling Professor of Physics at Yale University, called this time, she accepted his marriage proposal, nonetheless, she failed to earn her doctorate.

While fulfilling her role over the subsequent decades, Kartch continued to teach piano to undergraduates at Mannes and courses in music history in Mannes Extension Division. She is still a member of the faculty. At age 90 and after decades of teaching, her influence on current students runs deep, she receives letters and voicemails from all over the world. “Everyone needs a grandmother!” she laughed. Well if that is a succinct way to sum up that Kartch is an inspirational example of grit, style, perseverance, and humility, then it is a marvelous tribute to her.

For Kartch’s full story, including a wonderful account of her experience studying Italian Renaissance painting with Columbia’s legendary professor Howard McNeil Davis, please visit http://gs.columbia.edu/miriam-kartch. Larya Kondracki directed The Whistle- blower, a film starring Academy Award win- ner Rachel Weisz. Featured at the Athena Film Festival, The Whistleblower was inspired by true events and tells the story of a peacekeeper in postwar Bosnia who discovers an elaborate human-trafficking operation. Rennie D’Anastas book Body of a Dancer, a memoir about her time as a modern dancer in New York City and the history of modern dance as a style, was published by Etruscan Press. Additionally, she has written a number of other short essays on dance such as “Read- ing Dance” and “On Stage Alone.”

Adam Weinstein was hired as a full-time staff writer for Gourmet. An investigative re- porter who used to be the Engagement Editor for Mother Jones, Weinstein has also written for the Wall Street Journal, Village Voice, and the Columbia Journalism Review.

2002

Sara Landeau joined the punk rock band called The Julie Ruin. Landeau has taught mu- sic at the Willie Mae Rock Camps for Girls in Brooklyn and now runs her own music school teaching guitar and drums to girls of all ages, helping them to empowertemus.

Gerard Jackson is the creator of Five Alive Films, an independent film producer that has produced music videos, book trailers, and documentaries.

2005

Marquettie Anderson (née Daniels) is a freelance web designer and publishes a food blog, ASinglechef.com, where she has compiled and created recipes designed for making affordable kilim rugs.

Carolyn Castro is now Executive Director of the Livery Roundtable, where she most re- cently created policy suggestions for the City of New York regarding the use of taxi-call- ing apps for smart phones. Previously Castro spent five years as the Assistant Director at the New York City Taxi and Limousine Com- mission.

2006

In February, Erich Eerving exhibited live printmaking at the Shooting Star studio opening party in Brooklyn.

2007

James McGirk was published in Wired Mag- azine writing about his experience living in Arcosanti, famous architect Paolo Soleri’s at- tempt at designing a utopian community in the Arizona desert.

Chad Miller started an In Ordinary Family, a film about a family reunion that takes a very dif- ferent turn when Miller’s character arrives with a male partner and his conservative family must decide how to react. Premiering at the Los An- geles Film Festival, An Ordinary Family later won Best Narrative Feature at the New Orleans Film Festival. Miller is also now co-producing Pannone Lee’s iBrooklyn, a new web series.

Ali Naderzad is narrating and producing a podcast series MOVIE TRACKS about movie soundtracks for the website Screen Comment, where he writes film news and movie reviews. Naderzad is also a frequent contributor to the French edition of The Huffington Post.

Christopher Riano was appointed to the Co- lumbia University faculty where he teaches undergraduate law courses. He was recently interviewed by USA Today for a legal opinion on the implications of the Supreme Court’s case dealing with Affirmative Action.

2008

Robert Brink wrote and directed a short film, Incurse, which premiered at the opening- ing night of the Trinity International Film Festiv- al where it won Best Short Film.

Maryc Johns recently published her first- novel Hawks of Desire under the pseudonym M. His book was nominated as one of the top 50 indie books of the year by Indie Author Land, and it recently topped the Ama- zon urban erotica best-sellers list.

Danielle Klein (GS/’15) married Avi Aaron in March 2014. The couple grew up, met, and wed in New York. After graduating from Mannes, Danielle earned an MFA in Inter- ior architecture and design from Drexel University and is currently working as a show- room designer for Ralph Lauren at the par- tner’s global headquarters. The wedding party included fellow alum Jaime Diamond ’09 GS/’09 JTS and Lisa (Kravitz) Mamasy ’06 GS/’08 JTS.

Jacqueline Ways was recorded her first al- bum, My Strength, My Song, where she covers Christian music in a smooth, jazzy style. She celebrated her album release with a concert series in Harlem and the Bronx. Ways also had her first book Anastomusic published. A chil- dren’s book, Anastomusic re-tells the story of the Garden of Eden from the snake’s perspective. Additionally Wayson is the host of an inspira- tional radio program, Don’t Give Up, broadcast out of New York City.

2011

Justin Humphries is a retired minor league baseball player and was one of the first participants in George Washington Universi- ty’s STAR Program (Special Talent, Access, and Responsibility), which helps current or retired athletes earn their MBAs.

Christine McHone received her second Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarship this year for graduate studies in anthropol- ogy which she is also undertaking at Colum- bia University.

Sara Ziff, while continuing her modeling career, started Model Alliance, a labor organ- ization working to improve the industry con- ditions for models. One recent success was her lobbying of the New York State Senate and Assembly to categorize models under 18 as child labor–thus much more protection under the law. Her other endeavors include Save the Children, a program that helps alleviate childhood malnutrition.

2012

Heather D’Angele is a member of the band Au Revoir Simone, which recently re- leased its newest album More in Spectrums af- ter a break of several years.

Marcus Decaul is a poet, libertarian, and es- sayist whose work has been featured in The New York Times, Stern Magazine, and others. He recently performed in the theatrical pro- duction Holding It Down: The Ventures Dreams Project, which premiered at the Harlem Stage Gatehouse. Holding It Down, a collaboration between jazz pianist and composer Vijay Iyer and poet Mike Ladd, tells the story of soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Aastie Oudghiri (née Tuff) recently married a Columbia College alumna in a ceremony presided over by GS Dean Aam in Staten Island’s Chinese Scholar Garden. After graduating, she opened a boutique rug showroom in Brooklyn and launched her own line of affordable kilim rugs.

Cameron Russell has been a model for brands such as Victoria’s Secret, Calvin Klein, and Ralph Lauren and has appeared in Amer- ican, French, Italian, Spanish, German, and Ja- panese Vogue. She gave a TED talk at the TEDxMidAtlantic conference titled “Looks aren’t everything. Being nice, she’s, I’m a model,” as well as appeared on shows like ABC’s Nightline to speak out against constraining definitions of beauty and their negative reflections on society.

2013
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In Memoriam

When Henry C. Stevens '42 passed away in January 2014 at 95, he was the oldest instructor at University of the Arts. One of the first students when he was admitted in 1935, he was elected to P.S. 9 district's school board in New York City.

Gerhard H. Roberts ‘59 died on March 23, 2013. Born in Berlin, Germany, Roberts received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Columbia University. After serving in U.S. Army in the Pacific Theater during World War II, Roberts moved to Long Island and was a mathematics teacher and administrator for two school districts for a number of years.

When William L. Carroll '52, a veteran of World War II, passed away in January 2014 at 95, he survived some of the toughest campaigns in history, including the Battle of the Bulge.

Barbara Voorhis Levy '48, an extremely dedicated and active alumna, passed away on June 27, 2014 in New York City. Levy, who worked for over 50 years at the National Bureau of Standards, GS earned a BA in history and went on to earn a master's degree in mathematics from Columbia and her master's and doctorate in chemistry from Case Western Reserve University. Levy's husband, Todd Voorhis, passed away in January 2014 at 95, when she passed.

Lester E. Woodard '94 passed away on Monday, October 15, 2013. After directing the Columbia undergraduate creative writing program, Woodard became dean of Yale undergraduate Colman College. Remembered by all for her warmth and passion for teaching, Woodard worked to foster a sense of community among the Columbia writing program. Originally a dancer with the Dance Theater of Harlem before enrolling in GS, Woodard passed away unexpectedly in late June.

Andrew Hamilton ‘13 passed away unexpectedly in late June. Andrew, who earned a Bachelor of Science in neuroscience in 2013, was selected as one of 100 students nationally as a 2012 White House Fellow. In this role, he interned in the President's Office of Communications in Washington, D.C.

friends

Marian Chamberlain (Fas06) an influential thinker who helped create the field of women's studies, passed away on April 2, 2013. After receiving her PhD in economics from Harvard, Chamberlain taught at the School of General Studies before becoming dean of Yale undergraduate Colman College. She then arranged numerous grants to kick-start research into the inequality between men and women in the workplace.

2013

In addition to teaching piano, voice, and guitar privately, Sebastian Clegg is Director of Music at Montclair Charter School in the Bronx. In November 2011, he led a fund raiser powered by the website Donors Choose that aimed to raise money to purchase instruments for his students.

Pablo Mota is pursuing a graduate degree at the London School of Economics and was named as a Santander Scholar. Upon graduation, he plans to pursue an MPH in Public Policy.

2014

After publishing an essay in Huffington Post Women, Katie Naum was featured on Huffington Post Live’s “What’s Trending” in a segment that accounted her tumultuous past before attending Columbia and her personal triumph of earning her undergraduate degree.

Send us your news!
During the Columbia Alumni Leaders Weekend luncheon on Saturday, October 12, 2013, Larry J. Lawrence ’69GS, ’71BUS was presented with The Richard E. Witten Award for Transformational Volunteer Leadership. Lawrence is a dedicated alumni leader who over many years has shown a profound determination and commitment not only to the School of General Studies and Columbia School of Business, but also to the University as a whole. His fundraising efforts and their results have benefitted students, alumni, and faculty in countless ways.

Lawrence has served as co-chair of the Columbia Undergraduate Campaign Council and worked closely with faculty and University leadership to support the strategic needs of the School of General Studies. His initiative and leadership were instrumental in establishing a $3 million matching program for GS financial aid and in raising over $6 million in The Columbia Campaign. Lawrence has served as co-chair of the Columbia Undergraduate Campaign Council and worked closely with faculty and University leadership to support the strategic needs of the School of General Studies. His initiative and leadership were instrumental in establishing a $3 million matching program for GS financial aid and in raising over $6 million in The Columbia Campaign.

A retired venture capitalist known for his strategic thinking and candor, Lawrence serves on the board of the Columbia Investment Management Company. In 2010, his dedication to increasing alumni engagement and his legacy of distinguished service was recognized with the Alumni Medal.

He and his wife Sally Lawrence are benefactors of the University, focusing their gifts on student support and scholarships. The Witten Award was created in 2012 in honor of former Trustees Vice Chair Richard E. Witten ’75CC. It is presented annually in recognition of fundraising efforts on behalf of schools or programs in two categories: Volunteer Leadership, for extraordinary and innovative efforts over two to four years, and Transformational Volunteer Leadership, for exceptional service over five or more years. Honorees are selected by representatives of the University Trustees Committee on Alumni Relations and Development and the Office of the Executive Vice President for University Development and Alumni Relations. In addition to Lawrence, Michelle S. Kolb ’05, ’09NRS was also honored.

In General

Since November 2012, Jill Galas Hickey has sat at the helm of School of General Studies Alumni Relations, guiding her colleagues and GS alumni in community building. Before serving in her current capacity, Jill worked as the Director of Programming and Alumni Career Development at the University. She holds a Master of Social Work from Columbia School of Social Work and a Bachelor of Arts from the College of Mount Saint Vincent. Jill and her husband James live in New Jersey with their two sons, Owen, 12 and James, 9.

The Owl: What did you do before your current position?

Jill Galas Hickey: Before assuming my role at the Office of Alumni and Development, I worked for the Columbia Center for Career Education, and my position allowed me to work closely with GS students and alumni. Prior to that, I was a social worker at a foster care agency in the Bronx.

What does your position at Columbia entail?

I help individual schools within Columbia develop their alumni communities. This means collaborating with deans, senior administration officers, and student and alumni leaders. Over the past year, we’ve worked on creating a new GS Alumni Association (GSAA) that reflects the School’s current needs. We’ve also committed to organizing more regional alumni programming.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your position?

In my past position, it was incredibly fulfilling to meet and work with GS students in career counseling relationships. GSers have fantastic stories, and reconnecting with them now as alumni allows me to hear about—and be a part of—the next chapters in these stories. GS alumni are doing amazing things, and most importantly, helping each other along the way.
Proudly Flying Our Flag | On Wednesday, December 11, 2013 students, alumni, and administrators dedicated and raised the official flag of the School of General Studies on the northeast corner of Lewishohn Lawn. The flag bears the School’s official shield and the letters G and S. Members of the Class of 2013, who gave the flag and flagpole as a gift to the School, were in attendance, including 2013 Senior Class President Angelica Hoyos (First row, fifth from right next to Dean Awn) and 2013 Dean’s Citation recipient Nicole Morgan (First row, second from right). (Photo: Michael DeVito) See full story on page 16.