Letter from the Dean

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
FINANCING A COLUMBIA GS DEGREE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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 any of the extra expenses that I have,” he says, the exasperation rising in his voice. “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...
going to need an enormous income to pay off my loans," he says. "I'm attending one of the best universities in the world, and all of my choices are determined by what's going to get me a job." The terrible irony here is that, early in his Columbia career, Berg helped found hungermaps.org, a nonprofit that provides software to organizations that fight hunger nationwide. Yet Berg doubts that he will be able to pay off his debts on the income he makes helping hungry people find sustenance. "I am not alone in being forced to make the trade-off between paying loans and doing what I feel is the powerful moral imperative with my skills — to help those in more need than myself," he says. "Many students are also caught in this dilemma or even in the troubling quandary of being an older student forced to delay parenthood even longer while they pay back loans."

Without a doubt, graduating with that kind of debt is going to affect the choices you are going to make regarding what to do with your degree," says Susan Feagin '74, executive vice president for development and alumni relations. Like many General Studies administrators, Feagin, who is herself a GS alumna, acknowledges that GS students face financial hurdles that many other Columbia students do not. Yet she also points out that the reasons for this are complex. And while remedies are at hand, they will require time, effort — and a great deal of money.

At the heart of the problem lie two interrelated issues: the unique nature of the School of General Studies, and the equally unique nature of its students.

Historically, adult education programs segregated nontraditional undergraduates from the traditional undergraduate student body. That was the case with Columbia Open University, a continuing education program, which offered nightime professions courses to working adults beginning in 1984. Following World War II, the G.I. Bill transformed the model of a closed undergraduate 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 students 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 Postbaculareate Premedical Program, and began moving toward closer academic 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 complete. "No other Ivy League university has a freestanding college that fully integrates nontraditional students into its undergraduate 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 undergraduates and enjoy access to the same world-class faculty. As a result, they are also being asked to pay the same tuition — just over $1,200 per credit hour, or roughly $56,000 annually for a full-time course load. (This does not include living expenses, which the University 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 often have families to support.) At first glance, this seems only fair: you get the same education, you ought to pay the same money. But in this case, financial parity is an illusion and the true cost of a Columbia education is often much higher for nontraditional students than for traditional ones. 

To begin with, the amount of institution-related aid available to General Studies students — the amount of money that Columbia itself contributes to their financial aid packages — is far lower than the amount available to their traditional counterparts. On the surface, the reason for this is simple: while Columbia College enjoys a $200 million endowment, the School of General Studies has only $30 million in reserve. That's hardly surprising. Columbia College has been around for 250 years, while the School of General Studies has been in existence for only 60.

Furthermore, as Feagin explains, the University has not always done all it could to reach out to General Studies alumni for support. "For a very long time," she says, "there was a presumption shared by both the university and GS that once they graduated GS alumni were not going to behave the way that other alumni would," at least in terms of donating money. As it turns out, that presumption was entirely wrongheaded; alumni surveys overwhelmingly demonstrate that GS students feel passionately about the transformative power of General Studies. Nonetheless, says Feagin, the school has only recently begun to build a development organization that is a "concerted and effective" as the one employed by Columbia College.

The relative paucity of the GS endowment has a direct impact on financial aid, since less money is available to GS students in the form of institutional grants and scholarships. Financial aid professionals use the term "discount rate" to describe the amount of tuition funds that is returned to students in the form of aid. According to Curtis Rodger, dean of enrollment management and communications, the discount rate is roughly 40 percent for Columbia College students, but only 22 percent for General Studies students — a discrepancy that is principally, but not entirely, due to the relative size of the college'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 receive 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." Unfortunately, as Feagin explains, sharing the wealth between colleges is not so easy. "Generally all of those endowment funds have been designated by the donors for very specific purposes," she says. "Almost every financial aid donation is made to the school from which the donor graduated. Because of those donor restrictions, it's not a University decision that we are shutting GS out."

As important as the discount rate is, however, 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 expenses, and can expect at least some parental support. For a thirty-something student with his or her own kids to feed who must abandon a paying job in order to attend...
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, since it allows students to spend money when they have it, not when they don’t, as it has pitfalls. Although part-time enrollment makes it easier to manage educational expenses, extending the time spent in school creates additional in-the-box secondary and tertiary costs associated with being a student (rent, books, health insurance), by working and studying part-time one forgoes both the 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 Maximia 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, for example, 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 $56,000 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’m not 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 the financial aid office itself determines financial aid eligibility. Columbia College students, for example, are awarded aid under 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 before any need is assigned. As a result, students with nontraditional General Studies student would be “unworkable.”

What do you do with a 19-year-old student with two kids whose parents are still in over their heads? “The system is broken, and needs to be fixed,” says Bodnar. And therein lies the ray of hope in this otherwise bleak financial picture. The system is indeed broken, and it does indeed need fixing, but students and administrators alike are doing just that, seeking solutions at both the national and local levels.

Bodnar, for example, is working with the City of Washington, D.C. last spring with a delegation from the office of the President of the University to lobby Congress for increased federal financial aid. He intends to return next year with the same effort. Similarly, Marlin Artist ‘96, a former representative to the University Senate who graduated with more than $90,000 in debt and now works for Google, helped spearhead the drive to pass a National Tuition Endowment Act. The act was designed to create additional student aid by eliminating waste within the federal financial aid system — for example, by ending subsidies to private lenders. While the NTEA never made it through Congress, “almost all of the various loopholes we identified were addressed by other legislation passed in the past year and a half,” Arieh says.

As a former representative to the University Senate who graduated with a full-need funding model 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 $56,000 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’m not living the kind of life I’d like as an adult who’s been out there in the working world,” she says. More importantly, the system is broken, and needs to be fixed,” says Bodnar. And therein lies the ray of hope in this otherwise bleak financial picture. The system is indeed broken, and it does indeed need fixing, but students and administrators alike are doing just that, seeking solutions at both the national and local levels.

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In 1967 Brian Leary, editor of The Owl (then a student newspaper), wrote a column inquiring the public about the methods 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 cabbies; he was a New York City cabdriver.

Many of the tactics for increasing tips that Leary discusses are fairly innocuous: calling passengers by their first names, making small talk, offering directions, or revealing the professional secrets of con artists; he was a New York City cabdriver. Leary was not exposing a web of corruption to the public about the methods his students were driving cabs. By the late ’60s that relationship had become rather strained. Robberies were common and murders not infrequent; many cabdrivers refused to travel to predominantly African-American neighborhoods, which led to a major increase in unlicensed 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 blowing up, or brakes that failed, or steering that malfunctioned, than were killed or robbed by drug addicts.” Still, rather than improving the cabs, 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, cabdrivers continue. 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 for more than any other industry profession. While cabdrivers have primarily been supporting characters, stars like John Barrymore, James Cagney, Harold Lloyd, and Sidney Greenstreet (in The Maltese Falcon) and Sonny Bono (in the ’70s television show “ enuma”) have turned to this profession for the stress of driving a cab.

As Gibb observes, “Kid”—although hardly applicable to the medical school by driving a cab. In short, the minimum age for a hack license was lowered to 21 to 18, resulting in an influx of young, part-time drivers (including many with long hair, to the delight or consterna- tion of their fans, as The New York Times recently reported). As Graham Russell Gao Hodg- en’s journalists recount in “Taxi! A Social History of the New York City Cabdriver,” the history of cab driving is a series of demographic shifts: the first cabdrivers (or proto-cabdrivers) were African-Americans who operated horse-drawn carriages; by the 1840s they had been almost entirely replaced by Irish immigrants, a phe- nomenon that helped establish cab driving as a path to acculturation for later immigrant groups. The “taxi renaissance” that occurred during the late ’50s and early ’70s, the pe- riod when most GS students were driving, was also due to a demographic shift—not in age or ethnicity, but education.

Ken Linden’s statement that “there were more PhDs driving cabs than were employed at Columbia” is only a slight exaggeration; Hodges remarks that the drivers’ ranks were full of well-educated people who had turned their backs on the corporate world and finds similarities between the so-called “hippie cabdrivers” and the Depression-era “vin- tage,” former professionals who turned to taxi driving held obvious appeal for students. Another former Owl writer, Ken Linden ’71, left a career as a freelance writer and part-time director-producer to drive a cab while returning to school at GS; former Senator Mike Gravel ’56, applied for a license after returning to school at GS; former Senator Paul Wellstone (another writer) made it a point to counter the trend. (Another writer) made it a point to counter the trend.

The Catcher in the Rye

Robert DeNiro portrays a ‘50s-era Checker cab for a segment on the “Today” show. Unfortunately the cab, supplied by NBC, did not have functioning brakes; rather he nor his passenger Jonathan Adler were injured.

1. In a recent study Eleanor Maguire, a researcher at University College London, found that the posterior section of the hippocampus, a section of the brain devoted to memory and spatial navigation, was larger in London taxi drivers than the general public—proof that driving a cab can actually increase the size of one’s brain.

2. During his campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomina- tion, Sen. Gravel returned to Columbia behind the wheel of a ‘50s-era Checker cab for a segment on the “Today” show. Unfortunately the cab, supplied by NBC, did not have functioning brakes; rather he nor his passenger Jonathan Adler were injured.

3. Clifford Odets’ groundbreaking play Waiting for Lefey was inspired by the violent 1934 taxi strike and remains the most vivid portrait of the Depression “virtuoso” J.D. Salinger’s The Catcher in the Rye—in which Holden’s quest to find out what happens to the Central Park ducks in winter puts him against cabdrivers with preposterous explanations—also offers a fairly accurate, though far less flattering, picture of contemporary cabdrivers.

Ten years after The Catcher in the Rye was first published, a trade publication conducted a survey of cabdrivers to find out what they actually thought happened to the Central Park ducks. Many came up with scenarios that surpassed Salinger in ridiculousness. In fact, nothing happens to the ducks—they simply stay in the park—but perhaps the most appropriate response was given by one driver: “Listen, Mac: this license is to drive a cab—not to be no information booth, for Christ’s sake.”
I was driving south on Eighth Avenue and about 120th Street. A young black couple was in the back of my cab 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 see that I already had passengers, so he ran back to the curb. I heard a voice say, ‘Is that a white?’ I decided at that instant not to panic 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 when I turned on the radio and learned that Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated in Memphis. "I was not at the Olympics, I was not in the theatre district one evening. Perhaps I should have been. I should have been somewhere where I could have helped. But I was not. I was on the street, in my cab, just doing my job."

Jeff Oestreicher

"I was still 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. In the second year of biology covers an entire year of biotechnology, which is unique to Columbia."

Jeff Oestreicher

"Oprah Winfrey Show."

"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 best way to serve. 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."

Jeff Oestreicher: "I learned 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 Congressman 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 ever had."

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Jeff Oestreicher: "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 into 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 viewing one of the shows 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."

Jeff Oestreicher: "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."

Jeff Oestreicher: "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/panion.

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YOU WERE the key
YOU WERE my guide
FOR ALL I AM
AND STILL HOPE TO BE
YOU WERE THE KEY
THAT OPENED THE DOOR
TO THE FEAST OF IDEAS
-EVELYNE KANDEL

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, upon graduating from Scarborough High School in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y., 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 Kandel: "I liked the spit and polish aspect of the service," she says. "So much so, I would buff 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 professed.

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 GI benefits. "I am a veteran," she would reply, "so much so, I would buff my shoes until they were like glass.

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 programs 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 18 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, masks, paintings, and assemblages. Over time, evoking the talent she discovered while at Columbia, she was inspired to write words and phrases on her pieces. Eventually the phrases turned into poetry, and the poems moved away from the artwork and onto paper.

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, Kandel 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 philosopher'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.
INCORRUGOUS ON THE DOCTOR'S WALL.
ONLY ONE IS SMILING BROADLY.
THE OTHERS SLOWLY LEAK THEIR SMILES
UNTIL IT IS NEXT TO THE LAST FACE.
WINCING AND FROWNING,
YET IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE
TO FOCUS ON THIS RAKEABLE 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 MOURNED THEM.
LEAVING THEM TO LOOK AT A CHART OF SMILEY FACES.
MOCKING THEIR PAIN.

-EVELYN (CRUMLISH) KANDEL

Published in Lucifer, 2005
Honorable Mention: International Contest
CLASS DAY 2008

PHOTOS BY DAVID WENTWORTH

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.

CLASS DAY GALLERY

1. Jacqueline Wayans and family.
2. Reunion class representatives Heather Byrne ’88, Marcia Wunsch ’93, Jackie Gruen–Bulhar ’93, Hermia Nelson ’94, Eli Casdin ’03, 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.
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 Lawrence ’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 DeMaria ’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. Marcia Wunsch ’93 and Jackie Cesarz-Bodnar ’93.


(Photos 4-13 by David Wentworth)
THE 1754 SOCIETY

The 1754 Society honors and acknowledges alumni and friends of Columbia who have made plans for the University through trust, estate, or other future gifts. Named for the year in which King's College was established, 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; or • named Columbia as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan.

1754 SOCIETY HONOR ROLL:

Carrie and Steve Adelman ’83
Anonymous
Patrick J. Aquilina and Richard R. Gray (friends)
Dr. Gloria S. Brundage ’51, ’52 JRN
Mrs. Vernor W. Hughes ’70, ’77, ’80 GSAS
Deanna Wagoner ’75, ’76 GSAS
Joan P. Kain ‘59
Charlotte Mayerson (friend)
Margaret McNeil
Sylvia Ruckens ’64
Joan P. Kain ‘59
Jacqueline W. Keesling ’83
Sara Rosenblatt ’59 P ’55 and Mrs. Barbara Klare
Brian Leeroy ’89
J Nina Liederman, PhD, ’58, ’64 GSAS
Nancy Faldo Lynes ’64
Nancy Marano ’96
Charlotte Mayerman (friend)
Murphy L. Nathan, ’27
Mildred and Paul M. Rady ’47, ’49 GSAS
Charlotte Rush Runken ’72, ’74, ’80 GSAS
Sylvia Rudnick ’64
Irene A. Schmid, ’72
Douglas Sloan ’85
Wendy Power Spaldmam ’74
Hovang Vazker ’50
Dinae 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 Stu A. Carter at 212-851-7671 or 380-338-1294 to officially join the 1754 Society, or to discuss any other questions you have about gift planning at Columbia University.

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THE 1754 SOCIETY

THE 154 SOCIETY

“The 154 Society and the Core”

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 wrote 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 for undergraduate studies. 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 dean of 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 unfeasible to complete the Core and the requirements for a degree without going over the same material, so 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 acknowledgment of these differences, the current GS Core is designed to be flexible, with distribution requirements that students may fulfill with a number of courses in specific disciplines rather than particular courses. All GS students, however, have the option to take the closely defined CC Core, and many have embraced the opportunity. “The GS sections of Lit Hum and Contemporary Civilization are full every semester,” Solomon said. “It would be interesting to see, as a pilot program, if the same demand is there for several more sections.”

Like the establishment of both the GS Faculty and the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, the closer academic alignment with CC is both a significant and not altogether surprising development. As part of the Nativ Program, Simeon Cohen ’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 externally beneficial to the town in terms of what was physically constructed, but a truth that would sustain 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 pursuits. As part of his experience, Cohen spent one semester living in Jerusalem. He is now enrolled at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, which he hopes to explore further through his specialization in geriatric public health and preventive medicine.

“Experiencing simply taking a break from academia can be helpful, too,”肢体 Zellner ’11 remarks that he was important for him to “slow down the strain that he had accommodated over the past twelve years of education,” making him “more motivated to learn and work” when he entered college.

But 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, fails to part of the story for students in the Joint Program between Albert A. List 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, Simeon Cohen ’11 spent four months in the Negev desert in the south of Israel in the town of Yerucham, an impoverished set-
1955  
**Henry Nelson** 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.*

1958  
Martha Zelotti [(formerly Joyce Miriam Spiegel)](http://www.martha.zelotti.edu) is a professor of history at the Calumet campus of Purdue University. Her fifth book, *The Most Recent Book by Retired Fordham University Professor Zelotti’s Epic Frescoes at Cataio: The Obizzi Family Memorial* was published in February by Fordham University Press. Although highly regarded in his own time, the artist Giovanni Battista Zelotti is unknown today in large part because his greatest works had remained hidden from view for centuries. The Obzii family commissioned the fresco cycle—which illustrates the history of the family—from Zelotti’s studio in Venice. The frescoes, which include scenes from the life of Jesus, were completed in 1555.

1960  
**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. “Youngish, buoyant, and idealistic ... in the crime Babyolena of aprés la guerre,” at the 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 knew I had arrived at the right café,” 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 *Come, come!* ‘What are your qualifications?’ I said, ‘well, that’s how it was then, not very formal. ‘I knew I had arrived at the right café,’ 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 *Come, come!*

1962  
**Karen Ambramow** 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.

1972  
**Katrina Vazquez** is the new curator of the Museum of Northwest Art in La Conner, Wash. She previously served as the curator of the Whatcom Museum of History and Art in Bellingham, Wash, and as a program coordinator at the University of Washington’s Art Museum Center.

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 Smart Mother’s Guide to a Better Pregnancy How to Minimize Risks, Avoid Complications, and Have a Healthy Baby,* a new book by LINDA BURKE-GALLONO, MD, MS, was published in September.

1986  
**Stories Telephone* has published three new novels: *The Goddess,* an international thriller set in post-Soviet Israel; *The Jukebox* by a mystery thriller around a series of unsolved 30-year-old murders; *Forty-Dice,* a mystery thriller featuring “the seamier streets of New York,” and *A Dangerous New Port.* All are available from retail and online booksellers. A trial prosecutor in the Brooklyn district attorney’s office before going into private practice, Trybulek now divides his time between Paris and “two acres of Connecticut tranquility.”

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

The McCarty-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, what a time to be 21,” she wrote later. She began to circulate petitions and do “various ad hoc protests,” she said.

“Could what they have done to me? I had no job to lose. My father was even a Republican. I wished that those investigators were tapping my phone—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 Dixie—which 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 somebody like me needed,” she said. During her time at GS she married, gave birth to two children, and made the most of her opportunity by taking her way into graduate courses. “I was in the country,” she said, “but a little bit of the best in the country, or one of the best— laying claim to 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, ‘That’s how that’s how that’s how it was then, not very formal. But it was an amazing, if you had a clue what you were looking for’ I had a better education than my contemporaries had had at the Kunderfia or Bryn Mawr.”

In fact, it was the informal atmosphere of GS’s early days that fostered classroom interactions that would have been impossible elsewhere—particularly in the writing workshops given by Martha Foley, one of the founding editors of Story magazine. “Martha Foley had discovered Norman Mailer, Carson McCullers, Terry Southern, and Malcolm Lowry, and she was absolutely incredible with her 1920s tartanette and cigarette holder,” Probst Solomon said. “Carson had been her student, and Martha would drag her in to talk to the class. Carson wore a tie or collar, and he would draw 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.”

“i t’s interesting because what’s been acknowledged has been Columbia College that period, people like the Norman Podhoretz and Lionel Trilling They suffered from a kind of ‘we have few’ ethos: they weren’t quite by example, not Harvard or any Harvard guy. We were a white-shoe, and they didn’t recognize that what they had in their grasp was a dynamite, changing, changing culture that would have, as part of it, more Jews.”

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-World War II Europe. She was also to teach writing and is currently on the graduate faculty at Sarah Lawrence College, where, following the example of Martha Foley, she forces her students to bring in one rejection a week.

This year she became the first North American woman to be honored with Spain’s most prestigious journalism prize, the Frances Cerecedo Prize. But, upon mention of this or her other recent awards (United Nations Women Together, 2006; Antonio de Sancha Prize, 2003), she quickly points to those who are being honored: “You don’t plan these things, you know,” she said. “The narrative isn’t just right. One thing I learned was that you can never count on the market. Writer where’re thrown in jail don’t enter history— they’re not writers. But writers can become known History’s not fair.”

1990  
**Mara Cohen Iannidies**’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 Ship for Sunrise* 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).
1976

Marvin McFeaters

Marvin McFeaters 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 Street after my interview, having a beer and waiting for the train to come, back to the dorm,” he says. “I was wearing a three-piece charcoal-gray suit that I had made in Hong Kong when I was there on R&R. I know Columbia’s acceptance of me had changed my life forever, and for the better.”

A veteran of the Vietnam War, McFeaters 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 his college 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 catalogues: ‘The excitement of liberal arts well taught in small classes.’” McFeaters recalls.

“Columbia always had an influence on me, no matter what I was doing,” McFeaters says. “I met my future wife, Evelyn, at Internationa- l 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 to 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- and full-time, while also working in business and serving in the U.S. Navy Reserve at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, McFeaters 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 an insurance and investment broker, he has been an active member of the Columbia alumni and U.S. veterans’ communities. In 1980 he chaired a University fundraising effort and from 1981 to 1982 served as vice president of the Columbia University Club of Washington, D.C. In 1982 and again in 2008, he marched with other veterans to celebrate the dedication and 25th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, respectively.

McFeaters has been an active member of a number of veterans’ groups, including the Catholic War Veterans Post 1652 in Falls Church, VA., where he met his wife Rob Gibson, a professional sailor, and their two sons.

1996

DOROTHY RUSSELL PAUL is the author of Counter Culture: The Life and Work of Visionary Writer William S. Burroughs, which was nominated for a National Book Award in 1972, and Met- stop Dostoevsky, a memoir of life in Russia during the collapse of the Soviet Union that was published by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux in 2003. A former Fulbright scholar, she also served as Distinguished Professor in Writing and Comparative Literature at St. Petersburg State University.

1998

ED NEAPOLI is a playwright and screenwriter. His first play produced in New York, Junior Prom, was directed by Herbert Berghof. He has written for the CBS drama Criminal Minds and has served as a Teaching Artist in the New York City public schools and on the faculty of the Columbia High School Summer Program.

2000

DAVID ROY CONNELLY is the new director of the Drama department at the British Inter- national School in Shanghai. His wife Natalie (they were married in August) is the new head of the English as an Additional Language department.

2001

ATTY VICTOR-MAES has produced a new “Collectors’ Forum” for WPBT Art Radio. Her Spring 2008 program featured anthropologist David Graurer, who discussed the psychology of the object.

2001

REBECCA (KNOO) MAGRON performed for her second consecutive year at The American Shakespeare’s Actors in America, at Boston’s Huntington Theatre for a two-week run in January and February 2008.

In May Jordan ROSENBLUM graduated from a PhD program in religious studies at Brown University during the Fall 2008 semester where he served as the Balzer Assistant Professor of Rubbistics at the University of Wisconsin-Madiso- n. For the Spring 2009 semester he moved to Cambridge, Mass. to serve as a Starr Fellow at Harvard University.

2002

DEGRACIAS NYITZONIK is the author of “Hell in paradise” is Deo Nyitonzika’s de- scription of his home country of Burundi, which was named the world’s most miserable country by di- scovery by the World Bank in 2006. A place of striking natural beauty, Burundi has endured colonization, decades of misrule by dictators, and, most recently, a 13-year civil war between Hutus and Tutsis that, by its conclusion, had resulted in over 300,000 deaths and the dis- placement of nearly a million Burundians. The war also had disastrous effects for the coun- try’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 fig- ures, the average life expectancy for a woman is 47, for a man, 42.

Following the 2005 ceasefire, however, a few bright spots have begun to emerge: more encouraging than Village Health Works, a health center that Deo founded in his hometown, the rural village of Kigutsa, 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 miss your friends, you miss people with me, we were all just running away.”

Deo found his way to New York via Rwanda and now lives in the slums of Paris, and the streets of Harlem. Through the interces- sion of some new friends a family adopted him as a surrogate son, and he worked a series of odd jobs and delivered groceries to chip in. “Working 15 hours a day, or even being home doesn’t help much,” he says. “I just try to, given what I had just come from,” he says. In his spare time he studied English and eventually enrolled in Columbia’s American Language Program before applying to the School of General Studies. At GS he majored in philosophy and took premed courses. After graduation, he attended the Harvard School of Public Health, where he connected with Dr. Paul Farmer, one of the founders of Partners in Health, a public health organization known for its community-based approach. Deo began to work with Partners in health in Haiti and, later, Rwanda, Burundi’s northern neighbor. “I was the only person in the group who knew the language and culture, and knew how to talk to patients and bring them to the clinics,” he says.

“It was during a trip across the border to visit his family that the seed for Village Health Works was planted. “I knew that the country was miserable but had no idea that it was so bad,” he says. “It deeply affected me.” Citing a 2005 World Health Organization report, Deo notes that the total expenditure on health in Burundi is only 3% of its GDP, which in 2004 amounted to less than $20 per person. On average there is one doctor for every 34,000 inhabitants (the U.S. figure is 192 for the same number of citizens), and most hospitals lack even the most rudimentary equipment; many even become de facto prisons, where armed guards detain patients unable to pay their medical bills—direct re- sults, Deo argues, of the user-fee policies set by both the World Bank and International Monetary fund, which require countries accepting their aid to charge even their poorest citizens for services like health and education. As a result, “it is not surprising that many impoverished Burundians turn to traditional folk medicine practitioners, who rarely alleviate and often exacerbate their conditions.”

Clearly a new model was needed. After consultation with Dr. Farmer and his colleagues at Partners in Health, Deo founded Village Health Works, foregrounding the idea of community partnership in the center’s name. Three years later, the center is an un- qualified success: it has reached more than 16,000 patients in just its first nine months.

Twenty-two local women sit on a steering committee that as a group of former soldiers are building roads and bridges to connect the cen- ter to the rest of the country, after observing Village Health Works. Dr. Farmer, recipient of a MacArthur “genius” grant and the Conrad Hilton Humanitarian Prize, found “an unparalleled level of community participation.”

Of course much still remains to be done. Already demand for services outstrips the center’s capabilities, and pediatric wards are sorely needed, as is an ambu- lance. Deo hopes to be able to expand the center into a fully-fledged hospital and splits his time between Burundi and the United States, where he raises funds and works to forge connections with universities and other institutions. But Village Health Works—which some Burundians refer to, only half in jest, as “America”—has already brought a new spirit of hope to the country: “For so many children born during the war, all they know is misery, pain, and blood,” Deo says. “It’s such a won- derful thing to see people kept apart for so long because of ethnic divisions coming to- gether. It’s every man for himself. The people with me, for myself want to do good can make a huge positive impact.”

2002

STEVE HOFFSTETTER’s new album, The Delta is available in stores or may be downloaded from his website (www.steve- hoffstetter.com), on a pay-what-you-want basis. In August he made his late-night TV debut on the Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson. In March he earned his first byline for the New York Times, with a humor column about Project Franchise, an initiative that would allow fans to collectively own a professional sports team.

KEVIN FAYE LANEY was featured in a University ad campaign. A lifetime Harlem resident, he has been employed at Columbia for 18 years and is currently an administrative assistant at University Communications.
the misconceptions about Taiwan. Set in a bookstore, the world should now end China’s military & armament. Abraham Young recently released a book explaining regarding an essay he wrote in his junior year in the Premedical Program, and he is currently a first-year medical student at New York University’s College of Dentistry.

In 2006, Young’s book was released during his junior year in the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program, and he is currently a first-year medical student at SUNY Downstate College of Medicine.

The Weaks, a film produced by Felipe Murano and starring former GS student Famke Vandenbosch, received the Audience Award for dramatic films at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2008. The film was also screened at the Tribeca Film Festival and released commercially in July 2008.

2003
Dana Rutenberg performed in ‘Ladies’ Night’ at the Trumka 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.

Lawrence Johnson was recently in Korea working to foster peaceful relations between warring factions. She also worked on the Film Prop of the Devil Back to Eden, 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.

2005
On July 12, NBC Nightly News aired “What Lies Beneath,” a human interest segment reported by Yovan Ponomer regarding a new business venture 18 stories below the streets of Moscow—a renovated, pre-Stalin bunker that hosted tours, cocktail parties, and concerts in over 75,000 square feet of tunnels.

Richard Aboucach passed away in November 2007. He earned a degree in economics from Columbia College in 1965, and a Ph.D. in economics from New York University in 1978. He left a legacy spending most of his time in Korea. After his tour of duty ended, he worked toward a Ph.D. in economics at New York University before joining J. Aboucach and Sons, a family business founded by his father Jose in 1927. He served as president until the firm was sold in 1999.

Emily Biltz is a development writer at Bennington College. She is the author of a book in the world of poetry, and her work can be found in The Span River Poetry Review, the Jodine Poet–etry Journal, the Calamo Poetry, the Span River Sobriety Review: American New European Writing, and the International Poetry Review. She is one of the founders of Fault Magazine and, in the 1970s, edited a political and online literary journal that debuts each issue to a different human fault (www.faultmag.com).

Teri G. Bumgardner was recently interviewed about her escape from a restrictive Old Order Amish community in Ohio. A former author of The 4-Hour Workweek, the interview appears on his blog, www.fourhourworkweek.com/blog. Teri is currently working on a book about her experiences in addition to running the organization she founded, TKB Ventures, an opportunity area that works to connect individuals, businesses, and organizations in mutually beneficial situations.

David Friedlander has launched a monthly event series called Lucid NYC. The events find their inspiration in conferences as TED, EG, PopTech, as well as the symposium and lectures Mr. Friedlander attended during his time at Columbia. He wanted to create a similar intellectual and altruistic energy in a social, informal, ongoing basis (the affectionately calls it ‘a nightclub for nearly 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 mingling with like-minded others—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.

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.

Known for his eccentricities—such as living on a Chinese junk and cultivating a microclimate for his apartment’s rooftop garden—Mott was born in Flint in 1937. His father, Charles Mott, was a director of General Motors for 60 years, as well as its largest individual shareholder; throughout the 40s Stewart Mott famously drove a red Volkswagen with yellow flower decals and protested GM’s tacit support of the Vietnam War. After three years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he studied engineering, he hitchhiked around the world for a year and subsequently enrolled at the School of General Studies. He earned degrees in business administration and comparative literature and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He endowed the Harold Pagliaro Scholarship at GS, honoring one of his former literature professors.

Margaret Rippinger Milbrath ’74
Margaret Rippinger Milbrath passed away in January 2008. She grew up in Brooklyn Heights and married Robert Milbrath, her husband of 68 years, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, one of the many Latin American locales in which they lived. A former dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company, she also worked as a sculptor in clay and stone and was an active member of Connecticut’s inland Wetlands Committee and the Colonial Dames of America. Four years after her daughter, Dr. Susan M. Pelliza ’70, graduated from GS, Margaret graduated magna cum laude with a degree in Spanish studies.

Kate McCormick ’85
Kate McCormick, a writer on youth and educational issues, passed away in September. While earning a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the City University of New York, she served as a lecturer and was “widely regarded as one of the most inspiring teachers in the department and college,” according to former department chair William Craig. She served as the director of the City College Gateway Academy, the college’s orientation and advising center from 2005-2006. A regular contributor to the journal Educational Research and Social Justice, she was named its associate editor in 2006. Born in Kansas City, Mo., she graduated magna cum laude and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

The Harriman Institute of the School of International and Public Affairs.

IN MEMORIAM
RICHARD ABOUCACH ’53
Richard Aboucach passed away in November 2007. He earned a degree in economics from Columbia College in 1965, and a Ph.D. in economics from New York University in 1978. He left a legacy spending most of his time in Korea. After his tour of duty ended, he worked toward a Ph.D. in economics at New York University before joining J. Aboucach and Sons, a family business founded by his father Jose in 1927. He served as president until the firm was sold in 1999.

JERRY FORD ’57
Jerry 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 professionally run industry. The pre-eminent 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 models’ earnings, paying them on a weekly basis (previously models often waited long periods, even years, for payment). Ford was also the first agent to sign models from Europe and, in the 1970s, secured a contract with 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 Fords 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 Fords] a debt.”

EVA MINZ ’59
Eva Minz, entrepreneur and philanthropist, passed away in March 2008. Born in the Bronx in 1932, Ezra attended DeWitt Clinton High School but dropped out to join the Navy at the age of 16. Upon returning from service, he earned his G.E.D. 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 without being computer-literate and supported many Atlanta cultural institutions, as well as the Smithsonian and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and endowed the Fannie Minz Scholarship for Economies and Greens, honoring his mother.

STEVEN MOTT ’57
Stewart Mott, described as “avant-grade philanthropist,” passed away in June. He founded the first branch of Planned Parenthood in Flint, Mich., heavily bankrolled the Presidential campaigns of Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern, and was included on Richard Nixon’s enemies list.
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 foreman 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 variety of outreach to the Harlem community. Carter, a father of two, is enrolled at Harvard University Graduate School of Education in pursuit of a master’s degree. In the future, he would like to form an educational institution that cultivates a positive environment for underprivileged youth.

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 and artists. Lyndon and his wife also had two daughters while he was a full-time student. Lyndon plans to take a year of the final first-year course before applying, and apply for law school. He would like to study international law at Columbia and eventually teach.

One evening prior to starting classes at NYU, MIA RAMOS was assaulted after leaving her job at a NYC Fordham store. Follow- ing the assault, she suffered from depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. After being involved with the criminal investigation, Mia shared her story on AbC’s The View and in Teen People magazine.

At 16 years old, NAOMI SOLOMON left high school, received her high school equivalency and set off to train for a professional ballet career in London. Naomi’s enrollment in the Central School of Ballet kick-started a five-year career where she performed in London, England, Scotland and the United States. 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, Naomi plans to continue her education and work towards a doctorate in comparative literature.

In 1994, AKILAH WALL, 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 Cares, 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 studies at GS. After the Sept. 11 attacks, Dave gave up plans for an education to help with rescue efforts with FDNY Rescue Company 3 at the World Trade Center. Determined to return to school, in 2004 he re-enrolled at GS. In 1998, he remarried someone he calls “the most incredible woman I’ve ever met,” but she passed away suddenly during final exams in 2002. Throughout his tenure at GS, Dave assisted the GS Office of Admissions as a tour guide for prospective students and student–taught at a Bronx high school. A father of three and grandfather of one, Dave is married, moved to the Middle East studies major, crossed the stage together at the 2008 GS Class Day. Today Insaf continues to run her insurance business and, in the future, would like to continue her education at SIFAS. Zaynah, who was recently married, moved to the Middle East to be with her husband.

In 1996, DONALD TAYLOR’s life was spanning 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 (PALSS) the scholar- ship enabled him to work only one job. During his tenure at GS, Donald became what he calls a “Malcolmologist” 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, after one year at 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 Zaynah was born, Insaf decided to enroll at GS part-time while continuing to run her insurance business full-time. Shortly thereafter, Zaynah, who worked with her mother in the family business, also enrolled at GS. In May, both Insaf, a political science major, and Zaynah, a Middle East studies major, crossed the stage together at the 2008 GS Class Day. Today Insaf continues to run her insurance business and, in the future, would like to continue her education at SIFAS. Zaynah, who was recently married, moved to the Middle East to be with her husband.

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APRIL
24-25, SUNDAY
Health and Wellness Series: High Tea Luncheon at The Carlysle
New York, NY
1 p.m.–4 p.m.
Sponsors: Columbia Alumni Association
The CAA Health and Wellness Series launched in 2006 with the mission of connecting Columbia’s alumni community with its leading doctors and researchers. Previous topics include autism, caring for aging parents, infectious diseases, and mental health.

ONGOING SERIES
Columbia Alumni Lou Shaly
606 Low Memorial Hall
4:30-5 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 The.CLS@alumni.columbia.edu. Refreshments served.
Donations of $5.00 are appreciated. Open to all.

March 10
Rilke's A Year Portion Now by Hannah Hilt
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 one into a diverse international culture. CAAL plays a vital role to share this resource with alumni. To join, visit CAAL online at www.cuarts.com/membership, or sign up in person at an event.

Friday, March 13
Brazilian Stories with Paquito D’Rivera
Tuesday, March 24
London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev
Tuesday, March 31
Yo-Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax, and Itzhak Perlman

Alumni Travel Study Program
The Alumni Travel Study Program allows Columbia alumni to combine learning and pleasures through domestic and international travel. The travel-study experience is often enhanced by the participation of Columbia faculty members. For more information, or to register, visit http://alumni.columbia.edu/attend/s4_1.html.

March 20–April 3
South Africa by Sue with Professor Marcia Wright
May 28–June 8
Hidden Treasures of Eastern Europe with guest lecturer Dr. Charles King
June 22–July 4
Baltic Sea and the Norwegian Fjords with Professor John Skippel
August 1–8
‘Di Galleria Kunsthal’ A Journey through New York’s Magnificent Italian Sea with Professor Kenneth Jackson
October 24–November 11
North Africa’s Mediterranean Coast through its Camaroes with Dean Potter Ann

COLUMBIA ALUMNI ARTS LEAGUE MEMBERS...
SUPPORT THE ARTS
Give Columbia students the arts opportunities you wish you had by joining CAAL with a tax-deductible donation of $25 or more.
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 (MiVets), an on-campus student group, approached Provost Alan Brinkley about the project in 2007. Pictured here are current MiVets 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)