A WINNING SEASON

Academy of Arts & Letters Honors Hunter’s Colum McCann page 3

Students and Faculty Amass a Record Number of Prizes and Scholarships
**In This Issue:**

Colm McCann

Inducted Into American Academy Of Arts and Letters

COLUM McCANN

Honored by the Academy of Arts & Letters, He Has a New Book for Young Writers

PHIL KLAY

A Call From Hunter’s Hall of Fame and a Guggenheim Fellowship

**PRIZES FOR PROFESSORS**

The list of dedications at the beginning of McCann’s Letters starts with a familiar name: Hunter President Jennifer J. Raab. “I think she’s done tremendous things for literature,” he says.

The admiration is mutual. News of McCann’s election to the Academy brought this response from President Raab: “He’s a great writer. And, as of April 2017, Klay is a member of the Hunter College Hall of Fame.”

**THE PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE**

At Hunter College, I am proud to say, the American Dream is alive and well as we propel our students, many of them immigrants or the children of immigrants, up the economic ladder. This long and honored history received national recognition when The New York Times published the results of a comprehensive survey of American colleges that enable students to better their lives financially. I am proud to say that Hunter placed high on that list. Hunter’s performance, in fact, so impressed Times Nobel-winning columnist Paul Krugman that he took to Twitter to make note of it and sing our praises (see below).

Princeton Review has designated Hunter “one of the nation’s best colleges for students seeking a superb education with great career preparation,” and listed us among the 200 schools in the nation that “give you the best bang for your tuition buck.”

This praise comes as no surprise. Hunter has always taken students from working-class and immigrant families—often the first in their families to attend college—and provided them with a first-class education at a price they can afford. That education opens the door to great careers, major roles in public life, and long-term economic security.

You have only to look at the year’s inductees into the Hunter Hall of Fame (page 20) to see how a Hunter education can lead to a highly successful life. Sylvia Weinstock ’53, for example, was a teacher until a master cook noticed her talents as a pastry chef. She went on to start Sylvia Weinstock Cakes, billing special orders for an international clientele.

I’m happy Sylvia could join us for Hunter’s Summer Party (see photo on page 13).

Mitchell Silver, MUP ’93, has risen to one of the most sought-after jobs in urban planning: commissioner of the New York City Parks Department, presiding over a vast array of parks, playgrounds, beaches and wilderness areas.

Elizabeth Wilson-Anstey ’93 is an assistant dean at one of the nation’s premier medical schools, Weill Cornell Medical College, where she plays a major role in increasing the diversity of the student body, thereby making one more invaluable Hunter contribution to fighting social mobility.

CUNY trustee Sandra Wilkin ’79 has proved yet again that there’s no stopping a Hunter woman. She’s CEO of Bradford Construction, one of New York’s leading woman-owned businesses, in a field where women were long thought to have no business. I was so pleased she was with us at Commencement to address our grads. (See photo on page 10)

 Carmelle Bellefleur ’82, M’94, went on to earn a PhD in nursing, to teach and to write—and to help bring desperately needed health care to Haiti.

Award-winning author Phil Klay, MFA ’12, is only 34, but he’s already packed in a lifetime of accomplishment. (Read our story on page 3.)

There are innumerable personal stories like these in the Hunter history book. And there will continue to be such stories—we will never turn away from our mission of opening doors of opportunity. It is an achievement in which the entire Hunter community can—and should—take pride.

I want to encourage you to stay up-to-date on all the programs, events and developments that keep Hunter on the cutting edge of American higher education. You can follow us on our Twitter feeds (including @Hunter_College and @HunterPresident), Instagram accounts (@HunterCollege and @HunterPresident), Hunter’s Facebook and Flickr page, and the Hunter website (http://www.hunter.cuny.edu). And please contact me at president@hunter.cuny.edu with any questions or comments you may have.
NARI WARD
Wins the Vilcek Prize and Lauches a Major Exhibition

A new art world in 1993 with Amazing Grace, a haunting installation in a former firehouse in Harlem. To construct the work, he painstakingly scavenged 365 abandoned baby strollers. Then he arranged them into the shape of a ship’s hull and dimmed the lights while Mahalia Jackson’s soaring recording of the gospel standard played in a loop. The sadness and loss of the empty baby carriages stood in poignant counterpoint to Jackson’s vocal paean to faith. Roberts Smith, writing in The New York Times, called the piece “both euphoric and elegiac, celebratory and grim.” Ward’s works, all composed of found objects, have been exhibited at the Barnes in Philadelphia, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Sun Splashed, a much praised survey of his work originated at the Pérez Art Museum Miami and is on a nationwide tour that recently included Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art.

Suzanne Farrin
Playing a Rare Instrument, Rome Prize Winner Brings Music to Rikers

Last winter, Suzanne Farrin, Hunter’s Frayda B. Lindemann Professor of Music, did a short stretch on Rikers Island. The distinguished musician/composer, who has just been awarded the Frederic A. Juilliard/Walter Damrosch Rome Prize for her composition The Hour of the Star, was in the infamous East River jail as part of the cast of the Amazon series Mozart in the Jungle.

For the third season’s premiere, the show’s fictional New York Symphony Orchestra visited Rikers for a performance of works by French composer Olivier Messiaen. Farrin was there to play the ondes martenot. Invented in 1928, the ondes martenot is an electronic musical instrument that produces eerie wavering notes. Farrin describes it as sounding “as if you crossed a cell, the human voice, and a radio signal.” Only a handful of people play the ondes.

Farrin heard a recording of “L’oiseau à l’éternité de feux,” a segment of the work she would perform at Rikers. Messiaen composed it in a World War II POW camp, scoring it for six ondes martenot. “Not long after hearing that recording,” Farrin says, “I woke up my husband to tell him that I was going to become an ondist.” So the producers knew whom to call: “To go into that prison was to see a humanitarian disaster,” says Farrin. “It’s very powerful to play this piece in a prison, confronted with exactly the topic of the piece. It was the most intense performance situation I’ve ever been a part of.”

Finished with her brief stint with the fictional New York Symphony, Farrin has been making strides with Hunter’s music program, which includes the real-life Hunter Symphony. “Hunter has historically had a very strong academic program in music,” Farrin says, “and now we hope to continue to nurture that strength as we develop into a center for musical performance and composition.” Along with an uptick in graduate enrollment since she joined Hunter, she has noticed, she says, “a blossoming of student composers in the past few semesters.”

Plans for the future include a June 2018 project called Pocket Operas, in which Hunter students compose 20-minute operas for Hunter singers and a guest ensemble.

— Angel Edwards

NANCY FONER
A Guggenheim, a Berlin Prize and a Book About Immigration

From Ellis Island to JFK: New York’s Two Great Waves of Immigration. The two new prizes will allow her to devote time to her next book, Immigration and the Transformation of America. The Guggenheim provides monetary support, and the Berlin is a residential fellowship that will enable her to spend three and a half months at the American Academy in Berlin.

The new book will reflect a change of focus for Foner: "A vast amount has been written on immigration in the last 100 years; I’m one of the people who has written it," she says. “Most of this literature is about how immigration has affected the lives of immigrants and their children. But there has been very little about how the immigrants themselves have been changing our society and culture. My new book will focus on that.

“In the U.S. now, 33 percent of the population is foreign-born. And if you also count the U.S.-born children of immigrants, we’re talking about a quarter of the population, about 80 million people. It’s had a very big effect — food, the culture, the music, the new religions.”

For an expert on immigration, there’s nothing like living in New York — and teaching in a college like Hunter. “This is the immigrant city,” she says. “And it’s wonderful to teach at Hunter because I can learn about immigration from my students. They’re wonderfully open about their experiences and the experiences of their parents. It fits right in with my writing and my academic life.”

BRANDON JACOBS-JENKINS
A Playwright’s Genius is Recognized With a MacArthur Fellowship

Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins, wrote Ben Brantley in his New York Times review of An Octoroon, Jacobs-Jenkins’s Obie-winning 2015 play, is “one of this country’s most original and illuminating writers about race.”

The MacArthur Fellows Program obviously agrees. Jacobs-Jenkins, a co-associate director (with Annie Baker) of the Ruta x Burton Goldberg M.F.A. in Playwriting at Hunter College, was named a 2016 MacArthur Fellow. He joins a distinguished list that includes Hamilton’s Lin-Manuel Miranda, a graduate of Hunter College High School, who won in 2015. Popularly known as “Genius Awards,” MacArthur Fellowships are awarded every year to writers, visual artists, scientists and other innovators. Recipients get $625,000 with no strings attached.

In its citation, the MacArthur Fellows Program said, “Jacobs-Jenkins’s subversive, fearless, and risky approach is challenging audiences to reconsider the integrated spaces we share and to reflect on opportunities for sympathetic connection.”

The “Genius” award came as a shock to Jacobs-Jenkins, who soon had to turn off his phone to escape the flood of congratulatory text messages— but he is striving to maintain a sense of normalcy.

Planning silly and returning to the classroom, he adds, is particularly proud to be part of the Hunter community: “I’m always inspired by my students and what they bring into class.”
I am the son of a plumber, the first generation American born. As Leon Cooperman ’64 spoke movingly about Hunter and the opportunities it afforded him, his eyes welled up. “Now,” he continued, “we feel privileged to give back.”

What Cooperman and his wife, Toby Cooperman ’64, gave back was an astonishingly generous $25 million to fund the Leon and Toby Cooperman Library. The occasion of his emotion-filled remarks was the ribbon cutting last spring for the sixth and seventh floors, a major part of that ambitious undertaking. It was, in fact, a season of ribbon cuttings for several resource-filled spaces, made possible by $17 million in funds raised by the Hunter College Foundation and $2.4 million from the New York City Council. The new spaces include the seventh-floor Klara and Larry Silverstein Student Success Center (which includes the rededicated Mary P. Dolciani Math Center, the Skirball Science Center, and the Rockwwetz Writing Center), the sixth-floor Bobbie and Lew Frankfort Education Library, and the sixth-floor Hannelore S. and Robert Bloch Commons. There’s also a new space on the sixth floor for the Dorothy Kryger Center for the Hunter Macaulay Program, and on the seventh for the Elizabeth Hemmerdinger Screening Center.

For Hunter students, the new spaces mean the future has arrived: studying and tutoring will now take place in areas designed for the 21st century. As Toby Cooperman put it: “We lived the American Dream, and we’re very fortunate to be able to help the next generation wanting to do well in the world.”

At the opening of the Klara and Larry Silverstein Student Success Center, Klara Silverstein ’54, MA ’56, said: “I remember the libraries of my youth as silent spaces. If you so much as whispered, you were told to be quiet. Today, students come to the library for more than books; they come for guidance, for cutting-edge technology and for inspiration. We are so proud to be able to contribute to this exciting new endeavor.”

The Elizabeth Hemmerdinger Screening Center came about as a surprise gift from Dale Hemmerdinger (left), a member of the library renovation foundation, to honor his wife, Hunter College Foundation trustee Elizabeth Hemmerdinger (with their children Kate and Damon at the ribbon cutting).

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Leon and Toby Cooperman, who met in French class as students at Hunter, at the May 3 ribbon cutting: “If you can’t support Hunter, which gave you a world-class education for $25 a semester, and gave you a terrific wife,” he said, “who can you support?”

The opening of the Bobbie and Lew Frankfort Education Library drew the Frankforts (center), Bobbie Frankfort’s mother, Elaine Rosenberg ’42, and a large group of their children and grandchildren.

At the rededication of the Mary P. Dolciani Mathematics Learning Center, Mary Dolciani’s stepdaughter and Dolciani Halloran Foundation CEO Denise Halloran (center), trustee Michael Matthew Thomas (3rd left), and former trustee Gene Callahan (far right) were joined by Hunter math education students Jumi Uddin and Michael Arguelles, and President Raab.
NEW MARSHALL IN TOWN

T his year, for the first time in Hunter’s history, one of our alumni—Rafia Masood ’17—will travel to the United Kingdom as a Marshall Scholar. The scholarship, one of the most coveted and selective academic awards, was created in 1953 as a living memorial to U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, architect of the Marshall Plan.

The child of immigrants from Pakistan and a student in the Thomas Hunter Honors Program, Masood will study for her master’s in gender studies and family law at the University of London. Her goal was to create a memorial to U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, architect of the Marshall Plan. When Lasonde first met Masood, just returned from a summer of intensive Arabic instruction in Morocco, he says, she was unaware of the Marshall Scholarship. Lasonde, however, felt she would be a strong candidate… in another year: “I told her that everyone else applying for the Marshall had been working on their applications all summer and that the internal deadline was four days away. I advised her to wait.” Instead, she said she would get the application in on time for 2017—and she did,” says Lasonde. “When I tell other students about her, I always say, ‘Don’t try this at home.’”

FULL BRIGHT AWARDS

O nce again, Hunter maintained a record-breaking pace, producing seven Fulbright Award winners this year, of whom four, pictured below, chose to accept the award:

Jane Breuckell, MFA ’14, will spend a year in Nova Scotia researching a novel that she describes as a chronicle of “Northeastern North America’s unique spiritual and cultural heritage”

Dina Buitrago ’17 always loved science but didn’t know it could be a career. She discovered lab research via a special fellowship at Hunter. Now she will pursue a PhD in pharmacogenetics at the University of California, San Francisco.

Robert Roth, MA ’16, graduated from Wesleyan University, went into the New York City teaching Fellows Program, and earned an MA at Hunter’s School of Education. He’ll spend his Fulbright year at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá.

John Wetmore ’17 will spend a year teaching English in Spain after taking a six-week summer course at Harvard in epidemiology and statistics. A graduate of Hunter’s Macaulay Honors College, Wetmore plans a career in public health.

Norine Chan ’17 will spend a year in Taiwan teaching English in a public school. A student at Hunter’s Macaulay Honors College, she wants to pursue a career in both emergency medicine and public health.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

H unter alumni scooped up six National Science Foundation Fellowships in 2017. The winners, pictured below, will use their fellowships to fund graduate school and research.

Thomas Hart ’15, a bioinformatics graduate of Hunter’s Macaulay Honors College, is doing doctoral work at Rockefeller University.

Hila Haddad ’17, a Thomas Hunter Honors Program student, is in the PhD program in neuroscience at Brown University.

Munazza Alam ’16 is at Harvard pursuing a PhD in astrophysics. The McNair Scholar is exploring the atmospheres of planets that orbit distant stars.

Lashawn Peña ’15 is at Stanford pursuing a PhD in immunology. He is looking for the ways cancer cells can be reprogrammed into immune cells.

Omar Albert ’17 After his parents died, Chinese and economics major Omar Albert put himself through school by selling backyard play sets. The first in his family to graduate from college, he won both a Boren award and a Gilman Scholarship. He will study at Nanjing University in China.

Dina Buitrago ’17

Robert Roth, MA ’16

John Wetmore ’17

Hila Haddad ’17

Lashawn Peña ’15

Omar Albert ’17

Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship

Two Chinese Flagship students, Omar Albert and Kelly Liang, won the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship for the fall semester in China.

Boren Scholarship

Four Chinese Flagship program students won Boren Scholarships, grants to study less commonly taught languages in areas critical to U.S. interests:

Jacob Kessler ’17, a Hunter Macaulay Honors College student, will study Mandarin at Beijing Union University.

Yelena Suponya ’17 will study at China’s Nanjing University while completing an internship.

Callum Sproule ’15

A LAW SCHOOL TRIFECTA

No list of Hunter achievers would be complete without a mention of Callum Sproule ’17, whose remarkable journey continues. A former steamfitter from a family with no tradition of higher education, Sproule, 28, was accepted by the law schools of Yale, Harvard, and Stanford. He chose Yale.
It was New York City at its best and its proudest. To the cheers of family visiting from five continents, Hunter’s graduating students (minus one; see story opposite page), representing 150 countries, received their diplomas at Radio City Musical Hall. The new graduates, many of them immigrants or the children of immigrants, heard keynote speaker Alphonso David, chief counsel to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, tell his story of surviving terror in his native Liberia and discrimination in the United States. And they heard him exhort them: “Be unabashedly you... be proud of who you are.” It was a sentiment echoed by valedictorian Daniela Mikhailov (one of the all-female quintet of valedictorians; see below). “Have faith in yourself,” she said. “As Hunter Hawks, we are destined to fly high!”

Victoria Lau plans to devote her life to writing poems and novels. But she also wants to share her passion for writing with young people and will soon return to Hunter to pursue a teaching degree. She majored in music and biology and conducted cancer research while studying abroad. Accepted by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center, she plans to become a U.S. Navy field dentist.

Daniela Mikhailov learned Russian from her Uzbek immigrant parents, mastered English in grade school, and became fluent in Spanish to serve as a translator in medical offices. She majored in music and biology and conducted cancer research while studying abroad. Accepted by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center, she plans to become an oncologist.

Clarissa Torres, a child of Mexican immigrants and the first college graduate in her family, plans to use her psychology major in the world of business.

Rina Schiller’s first computer science class at Hunter—where she was one of three women in a class of 25—ignited an interest that led her to pursue a degree in computer science at Columbia University. She plans to earn an MBA and become a technology analyst and plans to earn an MBA. She majored in music and biology and conducted cancer research while studying abroad. Accepted by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center, she plans to become a U.S. Navy field dentist.

Chika Onyejuluwa applauds fellow Grove Scholar Darline Bertil, who followed an arduous, heroic path to her Hunter psychology degree. In 2010, Bertil’s father was buried for days under the rubble of Haiti’s earthquake and had to have both hands amputated. After coming to New York for prosthetics and the therapy to master day-to-day activities, she won a scholarship to Hunter. Bertil graduated with a 3.3 GPA and plans to return to Haiti to work with children with disabilities.

One of five children born to Nigerian immigrants, Onyejuluwa, a community health major and the first of her family to graduate from college, is destined to fly high!

Jerich Alcantara ‘17 got his graduation after all—his own private graduation. Nine days after he missed Hunter Commencement in Radio City Music Hall because he was stuck on a stalled E train, Alcantara, a nursing student from Queens, walked across the stage at The Kaye Playhouse to receive his diploma from President Raab and Grade Dean of Nursing Saul Gillin. In the front row, a small group of friends and relatives cheered him on. Alcantara also received a $500 continuing education scholarship to help him prepare for his nursing exams.

His subway saga began when his E train stopped suddenly between stations in Queens. For more than an hour and a half, Alcantara, wearing his cap and gown and eager to get to Radio City for graduation, waited... and waited. His fellow straphangers threw him an impromptu party that another commuter videotaped. The video quickly went viral on social media and local TV news.

For his second graduation—the one where he actually took possession of his diploma—Alcantara, 22, didn’t have to rely on public transportation. He showed up in style, and on time, thanks to President Raab.

Today—not that we don’t have confidence in public transportation—we sent a car for Jerich to get to this graduation ceremony,” President Raab said. On August 16, Alcantara started his new job at New York Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center. The word is, he made it to work on time.

COMMENCEMENT MOMENTS
SPRING 2017

ONE OUTSTANDING GRAD
SALUTES ANOTHER

BACK ON TRACK
Graduation Derailed by a Stalled Train, Jerich Alcantara Got His Diploma Anyway
Actress/philanthropist/Hunter master’s candidate Isabella Rossellini at the Leubsdorf Gallery opening of Fowl Play, an exhibition of Patrice Casanova’s photographs of Rossellini’s flock of Heritage chickens.

Hunter held a reception at Roosevelt House to honor N.Y. Secretary of State Rossana Rosado (right). Among the attendees: one of her predecessors, CUNY trustee Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez ’75.

The subject was “How Did Clinton Lose? How Do Women Win?” at the March 13 Clinton Symposium at Roosevelt House. Speakers included (left to right): Hunter Distinguished Lecturer Karen Hunter; feminist icon Gloria Steinem; NOW New York president Sonia Ossorio; NY Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul; author/activist Tiffany Dufu; and Christine Quinn, president and CEO of Women in Need.

At a Distinguished Writers Series reading: Author Rachel Kushner (right) and Shelly Lazarus, former CEO of advertising giant Ogilvy & Mather.

At Hunter College Elementary School Commencement on June 22, political consultant/author Douglas Schoen, HCES ’64, accepts the 2017 Distinguished Graduate Award from sixth-grader Harris Cohen.

A new Hunter Hall of Famer Sylvia Weinstock ’51 (left) enjoys the Summer Party with author/businesswoman/philanthropist Tina Santi Flaherty.

Judith Zabar ’54 is flanked by Helen and Jim Neuberger at a tour of Professor Nari Ward’s exhibition in Socrates Park, Long Island City.
At age 30, forging a career in architecture and design, Greg Kilpatrick joined the New York City Teaching Fellows program, one of the country’s largest innovative routes to teacher certification. For Kilpatrick, MFA ‘14, it meant going into a classroom, “In Day 1,” while studying at Hunter’s School of Education. Bonfire Unger, MFA ‘17, took a different route. After graduating from Clark University in Massachusetts, she worked for seven years at the Museum of English Heritage in Battery Park City. Among her duties: coordinating the high school intern program. That stint triggered an ambition to teach, and she, too, enrolled in the School of Education. Those paths crossed last fall when Unger arrived at M.S. 256 in Battery Park City, where her students speak a different language. Greg made me realize very quickly that there’s an ally waiting, she says. “The high quality of our students is matched by the world-class faculty.”

As for the future, keeping up with the ever-shifting technological culture is crucial. As Kilpatrick puts it, “Curriculum and facilities need to be continually updated to reflect the ways in which technology permeates our culture, our thinking and the culture is crucial. As Middleton puts it, “Curriculum and facilities need to be continually updated to reflect the ways in which technology permeates our culture, our thinking and the world of work.”

IMMERSED IN THE IMMIGRANT CITY
Teaching English as a New Language, Two School of Ed Graduates Walk the Walk—and Talk the Talk
DANCE ON!
After 50 Years, Parades and Changes Returns to Hunter

The Summer of Love was just weeks away when Anna Halprin’s Parades and Changes made its New York debut in the spring of ’67 at Hunter: That didn’t stop the city’s moral guardians from being offended by the nude dancers on stage, and Halprin was issued a police summons for indecent exposure.

Fast forward 50 years to The Kaye Playhouse on May 31, 2017. Under the title Radical Bodies, “The Paper Dance” part of Parades and Changes—which caused such upset half a century ago—was back at Hunter in a program that also included Yvonne Rainer’s Chair Pillow, Josef Limoho’s Dance for Isadora, and guest artist Simone Forti performing her own News Animations. The program was underwritten by Jody Arnhold and Hunter donated The Kaye for the evening. A concurrent exhibition on the history of Radical Bodies, on view at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, ran through September 26.

“Nothing is as rebellious as Parades and Changes,” says Jody Arnhold, founder of the Arnhold Graduate Dance Education Program. “It is social protest, and it is a masterpiece. I knew that this historic anniversary had to be marked at Hunter. I had to bring the radical body back to the scene of the crime.”

REALTY SHOW
Art Meets Business in a Showcase for Hunter Artists

Surrounding the 40th Street entrance to 5 Bryant Park, a Max Spivak mural from the 1950s celebrates Manhattan’s garment workers. Covered up for years, the mural was restored by Blackstone Group, the building’s current owner, motivated by an understanding of the importance of art in urban public places. So when Debi Wisch, a member of Hunter’s Art Advisory Board, looked for the perfect venue to showcase the talent of Hunter’s art students, she approached Jonathan Gray, Blackstone’s global head of real estate.

The result: in the marble lobby, a spectacular exhibition of eight large-scale works by Hunter MFA students Talia Levitt, Leonard Vaccaro, and others. Guest juror Andy Van Dinh, Equity Office senior VP Simon Wasserberger, and Blackstone Global Head of Real Estate Jonathan Gray.

As President Raab put it at the exhibition’s opening, “This is a partnership between two gold-standard institutions. And this is a gift that will keep giving.”

This is a wonderful development for our adult-education program at Hunter,” says Director of Continuing Education Lorraine Gallucci. “It’s a large-scale work by Hunter MFA students Talia Levitt, Leonard Vaccaro, and others. Guest juror Andy Van Dinh, Equity Office senior VP Simon Wasserberger, and Blackstone Global Head of Real Estate Jonathan Gray.

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As President Raab put it at the exhibition’s opening, “This is a collaboration between Blackstone and Hunter’s nationally ranked MFA program in Studio Art. As President Raab put it at the exhibition’s opening, “This is a partnership between two gold-standard institutions. And this is a gift that will keep giving every day, as people absorb, appreciate and are changed by this art.”
GLAM CHOPS

The Writing Center Throws An A-list Dinner Party

People basically go to our dinner for the great conversation,” says Lewis P. Frumkes, director of Hunter’s Writing Center, and co-host, with President Raab, of the annual event at Doubles private club in the Sherry-Netherland Hotel. “And what conversation!” Among the 150 attendees, most of them friends and supporters of the center, which is part of Hunter’s Continuing Education program: Gay Talese, Liz Smith, Evie Nemy, Daphne Merkin, Meg Wolitzer, Nobel-winning scientist James Watson (the center’s James Burton Memorial Lecturer this fall) and presidential portraitist Everett Raymond Kinstler.

The Writing Center presented its Logophile Award, given to distinguished voices in the literary community, to novelist and New Journalism pioneer Tom Wolfe. Wolfe, who was also the featured speaker, used his time at the microphone to bemoan the rise of social media and the marginalization of print journalism. “When I go out to buy a newspaper,” he lamented, “more or less tongue in cheek, ‘I always go out at night, so no one can see me doing it.’”

OPIOID WARS

At Belfer, Collaborating Against a National Threat

Earlier this year, at the Belfer Research Retreat, scientists from Hunter and Weill Cornell Medical College marked the second anniversary of the Belfer Research Building. The scientists gathered to discuss the pioneering work being done at Belfer by Hunter and Weill Cornell professors and students, and to celebrate the great success of this public-private partnership.

Hunter’s purchase of the fourth floor of Weill Cornell’s new $650 million building on East 69th Street rapidly brought about gainful collaboration between scientists from the two institutions. Today, 11 professors, 36 postdoctoral candidates and 97 students from Hunter work alongside their peers from Weill Cornell. Throughout the daylong retreat, the researchers shared their latest findings in translational science, a fast-emerging field aimed at advancing research from bench to bedside. One urgent health threat being addressed by scientists from both institutions: the epidemic of drug overdoses, driven by opioid addiction, that accounts for most of the accidental deaths in the United States.

At the Belfer laboratory of Hunter’s Mandë Holford, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry, the hunt is on to find a painkiller that’s as potent as an opioid but isn’t addictive. Holford’s research focuses on venomous, using otherwise lethal sea snail venom to fight pain.

“One such therapy is ziconotide, a peptide found in the venom of predatory marine snails,” says Holford, whose research is the subject of an episode of NPR’s Science Friday podcast. “It alleviates pain by blocking certain calcium channels and is not addictive.” However, there is a drawback. So far, ziconotide can be delivered only via spinal tap because it does not cross the blood-brain barrier. “We’re using a Trojan Horse strategy where we hide the peptide inside a nanocontainer and shuttle it across the blood-brain barrier,” Holford says.

Holford collaborates closely with Weill Cornell biochemistry professor Timothy Ryan, whose expertise is in neuron function, to identify new peptides that can be used in pain therapy.

That’s exactly the kind of scientific cooperation envisioned when Hunter scientists moved into Belfer.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Teaching the Classics Via Tomorrow’s Technology

In a shining new classroom/laboratory in the basement of Hunter’s North Building, Professor Jared Simard is preparing his class in classical mythology. While he’s there, his students will be scattered all over the city, learning and participating on their computers.

Some of the images Simard, of the Department of Classical and Oriental Studies, shows his students were created thousands of years ago, but the technology he uses is ultra-modern. Simard is among the early adopters of Hunter’s online teaching initiative. At Hunter, where many students juggle jobs, family responsibilities, and class schedules, online courses offer an option to study when the students can and where they can, to squeeze in an extra course, and to hasten their graduation. “Our online initiative allows our students to fulfill their academic requirements in a timely manner and will help increase our retention rates,” says Assistant Provost Vanya Quinones-Jenab.

The Hunter program is much more demanding than most online courses available on the Internet. “There are multiple deadlines within each unit,” says Simard, who’s now pursuing postdoctoral studies. “The students have to do a journal post first, which is seen only by me. Only after they do that do I release the next lesson.” One obvious question: How does an instructor know that the student is actually the person taking the test? “There are tools that can do that,” says Simard. “For instance, if the computer has a video camera, you can see who’s there. And you can’t pass the course without participating in the course. I’m finding that online students are more willing to engage; maybe it’s because they’re behind a screen.” And it seems to have paid off: Close to 100 percent of Simard’s students finished the course.

Among the attendees: Writing Center patron Daniel Rose (left) and featured speaker/honoree Tom Wolfe.
FIELD WORK, FAR AFIELD
A Hunter Professor Leads the Way to Healing Afghans’ Trauma

In 2016, Hunter won a $2.3 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development to help Afghan develop professional counseling programs at Kabul and Herat universities—the flagship schools of its public university system. Leadership of the project fell to Martha Bragin, an associate professor at Hunter’s Silberman School of Social Work, chair of the school’s Global Social Work and Practice with Immigrants and Refugees, Global Social Work and Practice, and a veteran in helping people in damaged parts of the world. Professor Bragin had already worked with governments in Vietnam, South Sudan, and Nepal to help traumatized populations by professionalizing social welfare services, from child protection to community-based counseling. She was thoroughly familiar with the challenges in Afghanistan. In 2010, she worked with the Afghan Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to develop social work as both an academic discipline and a profession. To lay the groundwork for that earlier assignment, Bragin and a Hunter-Afghan team toured the country to study how its many cultures understood social work and social welfare. The goal: to develop a uniquely Afghan version of social work. The project ended successfully when Kabul University opened its first social work department in 2014. But much more remains to be done. In Afghanistan, according to public health officials, 80% of the people who seek help at mental health clinics are neither mentally ill nor substance users. They’re suffering the effects of 40 years of uninterrupted warfare. To get Hunter’s new USAID-funded project underway, the Silberman School arranged for Professor Bragin and faculty from Kabul and Herat universities to travel to Mumbai, India, to study with professors of the School of Human Ecology at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Their efforts are starting to have an impact. “We’ve seen so many decades of war and destruction in our country,” said Herat University’s Basir Ahmed Karimi. “Now, awareness about psychosocial health is on the rise, and so is the demand for services like counseling.” For Silberman Acting Dean Mary Cavanaugh, the Afghan initiative is just the logical extension of the school’s mission. “When families and communities are in need of effective social services, we partner with them to provide support and assistance,” she states. “When people are in need 7000 miles away, we can do no less.”
when the Chicago Cubs finally won the World Series last year, Billy Blitzer said, “I yelled, ‘We won!’ and next thing you knew I was dancing in my living room.” For 35 years, Blitzer has traveled the country scouting talent for the Chicago Cubs—a tenure that includes almost a third of the 108 years, from 1908 to 2016, the team went without a World Series victory. So when they beat the Cleveland Indians in November, he said, “It was the greatest feeling in the world. It really was. All the years of working for the organization... it’s very emotional.” Blitzer is down-to-earth and generous with his reflections. He’s also proud to be one of Hunter’s oldest living alumni—and one of its few players signed, only five will get to the major leagues. At Hunter, Blitzer worked, drives the narrative. There’s also a chance encounter in the shop where young Martin encounter in the shop where young Martin Blitzer looked for coaching jobs as a al ballplayer, Blitzer looked for coaching jobs as a major-league scout set him on the path to his career and the ring he received from Cubs GM Theo Epstein. All those years have finally paid off. At the start of the last spring training, he recalled, “I’m walking past the ballpark, the PA announcer is going to name the starting lineups, and I heard him say, ‘And the lineup for the World Champion Chicago Cubs!’ I break into the biggest smile you’ve ever seen.” —Jonathan Rizzi

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF CERTITUDE
Centenarian Bea Klier ’36 Is a Late-Blooming First Novelist

names of all concerned, and she waited until now to publish to avoid hurting the feelings of the people portrayed. Bea Klier’s story is a perfect example of that. Many first novels tend toward the autobiographical, and so it is with Klier, although the story of Klier’s beginnings lends itself to the way of novelist. Still, she says, she changed the

PETER KLOWING (1943–2017)

Peter Klowing, Distinguished Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning at Hunter, and Professor of Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center, died on March 17. He was 73. Born Chi-Chi-Kwong in Taiwan and educated as an engineer (a profession he never practiced), Professor Klowing became a groundbreaking social scholar of America’s Chinatowns and Chinese immigration—as well as a journalist, documentary filmmaker, and author. He was Hunter’s first director of Asian American studies. And he invited the Dalai Lama to visit Hunter, which His Holiness did twice. “Peter was a unique and powerful presence at Hunter,” said Joseph P. Viteritti, chair of the Department of Urban Policy & Planning. “He had a distinguished career as a scholar, teacher, journalist and filmmaker, and was a passionate advocate for social justice—all of which made him an inspiring influence among students—both inside and outside the classroom. We will miss him dearly.”

MILDRED DRESSELHAUS ’51 (1930–2017)

Mildred Dresselhaus—professor emerita of physics and electrical engineering at MIT and alumna of Hunter College High School (’47) and Hunter College (’51)—died on February 20, 2017. She was 86.

“I’m walking past the ballpark, the PA announcer is going to name the starting lineups, and I heard him say, ‘And the lineup for the World Champion Chicago Cubs!’ I break into the biggest smile you’ve ever seen.” —Jonathan Rizzi

"T"his all took place in Brooklyn.” Bea Klier is talking about the start of her long, event-filled life, taking a listener back to the vanished world in which she grew up and the people who populated it. It’s also one of Hunter’s oldest living alumni—and one of the most engaged in new pursuits. Hidden, her latest novel, just came out this month. Many first novels tend toward the autobiographical, and so it is with Klier, although the story of Klier’s beginnings lends itself to the way of novelist. Still, she says, she changed the

\[ \text{For Class Notes, visit: http://hunter.cuny.edu/classnotes} \]
CAROL GOLDBERG

Carol Goldberg ’56, chair of Hunter’s Art Advisory Board, was a social science major, but she discovered a new passion shortly after graduation, embarking on a lifelong involvement in art. “It was a fabulous time in the New York art world,” she says, “and I realized that’s where my true bent was. My husband, Arthur, and I began collecting art and continued for 50 years. I was an art adviser for about 30 years, and from 2001 to 2008, we operated an art space for curated exhibitions from our collection.”

She renewed her connection to Hunter when Arthur began auditing classes at the College. She, too, began taking classes and attending Hunter events, and in 2009 she joined the board of the Hunter College Foundation. She is a champion of Hunter’s art programs, and soon after joining the Foundation, she began helping to build a strong Art Advisory Board.

Among Goldberg’s many recent Art Advisory Board projects was helping to arrange the MFA exhibition in the lobby of 5 Bryant Park (see page 17). She also regularly accompanies groups on visits to museums and galleries where there is a Hunter presence, sharing her enthusiasm and her expertise.

One of Goldberg’s special enthusiasms is Hunter’s Artist’s Institute. “The Institute,” she says, “is a unique program where students work around the concept and vision of one well-known artist for a semester, providing a forum for dialogue and aesthetic inspiration. Gallerists and artists are aware of this program; the Institute provides a link between Hunter and the professional art world.”

Goldberg is also generous as a donor. Among the Hunter programs funded by the Goldbergs’ Foundation To-Life are the Arthur and Carol Kaufman Goldberg Curatorial Workshops, which bring curators of international stature—including such luminaries as Fabrice Stroun, Valerie Cassel Oliver, and Pablo Helguera—to Hunter to work with students in the MA Program in Art History and the MFA Program in Studio Art. Goldberg is especially proud of Hunter’s Department of Art and Art History, observing, “The department has an insistence on excellence for connoisseurship, and a wonderful reputation.”

The influential artsy.net just ranked Hunter among the 15 top art schools in the country, and U.S. News & World Report ranks it No. 20 for Fine Arts.

A highly respected player in the New York art scene—Goldberg serves on the Producers Council of the New Museum; is a trustee emerita of Independent Curators International, which trains curators and promotes art through traveling exhibitions; and is a member and former board member of ArtTable, an organization of professional women in the arts.

A longtime supporter of Hillel at Hunter, she’s spearheading a drive to raise funds for the College’s recently announced Jewish Studies Center.

“I had a wonderful education at Hunter,” says Goldberg. “It is even greater today than when I was a student, because of expanded curriculum and the diversity of the student body which has added to the dynamism of the College. It has been very rewarding for me to serve on the Foundation Board.”