

SPRING  
2016

A HUNTER

HUNTER  
The City University of New York

**From Hunter to Hollywood!**

*Orange Is the New Black* Star

**DASCHA POLANCO**

Inspires Our Freshmen  
With Her Success Story

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Photo: John Abbott



## THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Welcome to this, our newest edition of *At Hunter*, in which we chronicle—and celebrate—the achievements of our students, present and past, and our brilliant, groundbreaking faculty.

It goes without saying (but won't!) that I have a special place in my heart for our alumni. Every time one of them hits a high note in his or her chosen field, I think, "Well done, Hunter graduate! I am so proud!"

I had just such a special moment at our Convocation on September 7, as Dascha Polanco '08, who took her Hunter psychology degree to Hollywood and a regular role in *Orange Is the New Black* (she plays Dayanara Diaz), took the stage to inspire the incoming students with her story.

What really moved me was that Dascha, reading from her own handwritten notes, chose not to speak about her acting career and the glamorous life everyone in the audience assumed she's living. Instead, she spoke simply and movingly of her years at Hunter.

In many ways, Dascha (who also recently co-starred with Jennifer Lawrence in *Joy*) epitomizes the very best of this generation of Hunter students—and the graduates they become. Most students have to juggle work, family, and school—and they still scale the heights.

Born in the Dominican Republic, the daughter of a mechanic and a cosmetologist, Dascha grew up in the Bronx and was already a single working mother when she enrolled at Hunter. She persevered (see opposite page), got her degree, and then made the leap to her new, unimaginably wonderful career. Well done, Hunter graduate! I am so proud!

Another alumna with a flair for the dramatic gesture, Patty Baker '82, along with her husband, Jay, has made it possible—thanks to a very generous donation to her alma mater—for Hunter to buy and renovate 151 East 67th Street (it's just across the street, next to the 19th Precinct stationhouse). Renamed Baker Hall, and dedicated in January, it's the new, first-class home of our Theatre Department. Again, I find myself saying: Well done, Hunter graduate! I am so proud!

And Hunter is making another new space its own. It's been a little over a year since our floor in the Belfer Research Building opened on 69th and York. It's a rare Ivy/public partnership with Weill Cornell Medical Center. Hunter scientists have settled in, pursuing exciting research in state-of-the-art laboratories and collaborating with their peers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

And finally, on Page 15, there's a story that's very special to me. It's about Elham Fanoos, a Hunter freshman and classical pianist who grew up in Kabul, Afghanistan, under the shadow of the Taliban. Thanks to the efforts of American friends, he made it out of Kabul, Hunter gave him a scholarship, and at Convocation, he too inspired his new fellow students when he came onstage to play Rachmaninoff. Elham is one of the bright stars of our Music Department, and I look forward to the day I can say to him: "Well done, Hunter graduate! I am so proud!"

Dascha epitomizes the very best of today's Hunter student body—and the graduates they become.

*Jennifer J. Leab*



@HunterPresident



instagram.com/hunterpresident

## 'ONLY YOU UNDERSTAND YOU!'

### Dascha Polanco stars in *Convocation: The Next Generation*

There was no red carpet (we opted for purple), but Hunter gave Dascha Polanco '08 an ecstatic reception when she took the stage at Convocation. The audience of new Hunter students was star-struck.

But Dascha didn't talk about her role as Dyanara Diaz on Netflix's *Orange Is the New Black* or what it was like working with Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper on *Joy*. In fact, the word "Hollywood" never passed her lips. Instead, she shared the story of her four years at Hunter, which she

described as an exhausted blur of juggling school, work, and single motherhood. Her days, she said, consisted of "working from 11 at night to 7 in the morning, rushing to an 8 a.m. class, living on coffee and a croissant. Every day, I had to rush home, pick up my daughter, and go to work, over and over."

Those trying times (she got her acceptance letter from Hunter soon after her mother's death), "were moments in my life here that may seem negative," she said, "but they prepared me for being who I am today. When

I walked down the aisle with my diploma, I said to myself: 'Who is going to stop me from what I decide to do next?'"

Nobody, it turns out. While majoring in psychology, Dascha also took theatre courses—and that turned out to be the path she would follow, all the way to Hollywood. After four years at Hunter, she's part of another multicultural cast of characters. "I'm very proud," she tells *At Hunter*, "to be part of such a diverse cast on *Orange* that has changed the way people stay in tune with programming."

Re-entering Hunter's auditorium for Convocation, she says, brought back some raw memories. "I would go there and cry," she recalls. "I remember how during that time in my life I was so depressed due to my mom's recent passing."

And if Dascha's story now sets her apart from her peers, her advice to the new students is something they can connect to their lives—and their hopes for their own futures. "Possibilities are endless," she told them. "Let you be the one to make the right decision for you. Only you understand you."



## Hand in hand with Weill Cornell



‘Hunter is now moving into the science revolution of tomorrow.’

— Editorial, *New York Daily News*

There's still a whiff of that new building smell, but the Belfer Research Building, opened more than a year ago, is up and running—humming with the excitement of brilliant scientific minds working together to solve enduring medical mysteries—and confirming the foresight of Hunter's purchase of the fourth floor of the \$650 million facility built by the Weill Cornell Medical Center on East 69th Street.

The new building is drawing rave reviews from the Hunter scientists who occupy its labs and offices and mingle with their peers from Weill Cornell, who occupy the rest of the building. “It's so well designed, it makes science easy,” says Brian Zeglis, a Hunter professor of chemistry, “and it makes collaboration with the other people in the building easy.”

Indeed, Belfer is an unprecedented collaboration between a public university and an Ivy League giant. And in its labs and conference

rooms, scientists and students, from juniors to post docs, and from all genders and ethnic backgrounds, work together to create the medicine of the future.

In an editorial in April 2015 hailing the acquisition of the floor in Belfer, the *New York Daily News* hit the nail on the head. Hunter, the paper said, “is now moving into the science revolution of tomorrow.”

Spearheading Hunter's contribution to that revolution are 11 professors/principal investigators and their associated labs; a total of more than 115 faculty, postdoctoral candidates, graduate and undergraduate students, and technicians occupying the 21,000-square-foot space.

Many of the Belfer scientists are members of Hunter's Center for Translational and Basic Research, part of a larger research consortium—the Clinical and Translational Science Center. Hunter's partners in this consortium include both Weill Cornell Medical College and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer

Center, which is across the street from Belfer.

Translational science, a fast-emerging field, is best defined by the consortium's stated mission: “Advancing research from lab to bedside to community.” Essentially, Hunter scientists and their Cornell colleagues seek breakthroughs that can swiftly be “translated” into improved medical care. They are aided in this quest by the doctors, nurses (many of them graduates of Hunter's School of Nursing), social workers, and other clinicians who work directly with patients. This public-private partnership—a unique marriage of very different institutions—holds great promise for the future.

As they work together to find solutions to some of humanity's most intractable killers, the scientists at Belfer, their research propelled by a series of grants from the National Institutes of Health, also pass on their knowledge to a new generation—Hunter student scientists who reflect the great, diverse city that surrounds them.

## MANDÈ HOLFORD: A Killer in the Ocean Could Be a Lifesaver on Land



▲ The study of venomics leads Professor Holford (right), with Belfer students, into exotic areas of medical research.

In the group that Mandè Holford calls the killer snails, there's no nastier piece of work than the Cone Sea Snail. Every year, dozens of people, exploring a coral reef or wandering barefoot in shallow water, come to grief in accidental encounters with *Conus Geographus*. Its venomous harpoon-like tooth can penetrate human flesh, and there's no known antidote for its toxins. The fish that are its natural prey stand no chance; instantly immobilized, they are ingested whole.

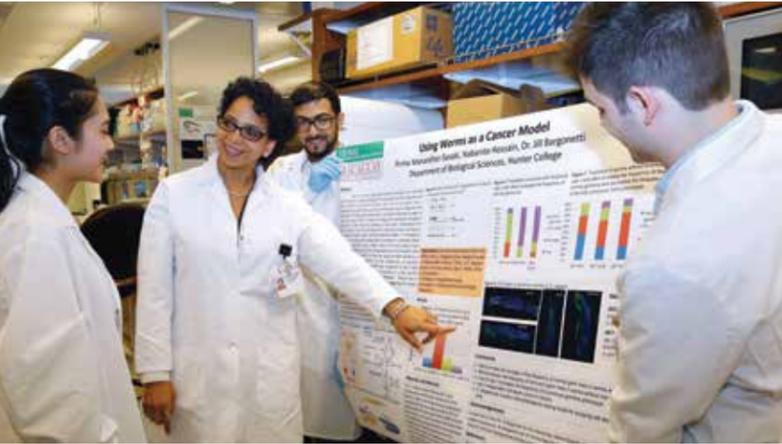
Holford, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry, lights up when she talks about the Cone Snail and its relative the Auger Snail (also known as the *Terebridae*). Her area of expertise, venomics (the study of animal venoms using an integrated strategy), leads Holford to the company of creatures others

might try to avoid, and to the places where they thrive; she recently returned from a sea snail safari to the Persian Gulf waters off Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

This is all in the service of developing powerful lifesaving drugs. “Drugs developed from sea snail venom,” says Professor Holford, “can be very specific and very potent, targeting pain, cancer, and epilepsy.” There's already one such drug on the market—Prialt, which is used to alleviate pain in HIV and cancer patients—and several more in the pipeline. The drawback is that, for now, the so-called venom peptides can only be taken via spinal tap. Holford's research is aimed at coming up with a way to deliver them in a noninvasive way. “We are working,” she says, “on a Trojan horse strategy.”



▲ At the Belfer ribbon-cutting: Andrew H. Tisch, a member of Weill Cornell's Board of Overseers, with Hunter College Foundation board member and Cornell University alumna Helen Appel, who celebrated the partnership of the two institutions.



▲ Professor Bargonetti: The goal is precise, targeted medicines.

In her more than two decades at Hunter College, Professor Jill Bargonetti has become one of the nation's preeminent breast

cancer researchers. A professor of biological sciences, she's part of Belfer's team of translational scientists, focusing on the molecu-

## JILL BARGONETTI: Unlocking Secrets of Proteins to Combat Breast Cancer

lar genetics of the deadly disease, specifically the roles played by two proteins—p53 and MDM2.

The laboratory work performed by Bargonetti and her team is painstaking, precise, and complicated. "Molecularly," Bargonetti says, "we study the genes and the gene products in a cancer. We genetically engineer the cancer to get rid of the genes and proteins we study, so we can see what happens when we get rid of them."

Understanding p53 and MDM2 is crucial to understanding breast cancer. In their normal state, the two proteins work together to

prevent the spread of damaged cells; when cancer strikes, however, the proteins actually promote tumor growth. Mutated p53 is associated with triple negative breast cancers; MDM2 is a driver of estrogen-receptive breast cancers.

For Bargonetti, the Holy Grail of cancer treatment is precision medicine, treatment that targets the cancer and doesn't damage any other aspects of a patient's DNA.

Ideally, she says, "After patients have treatment, they're the same person they were before they had the cancer."

## HIROSHI MATSUI: Bionanotechnology Enables Big Advances to Go Small

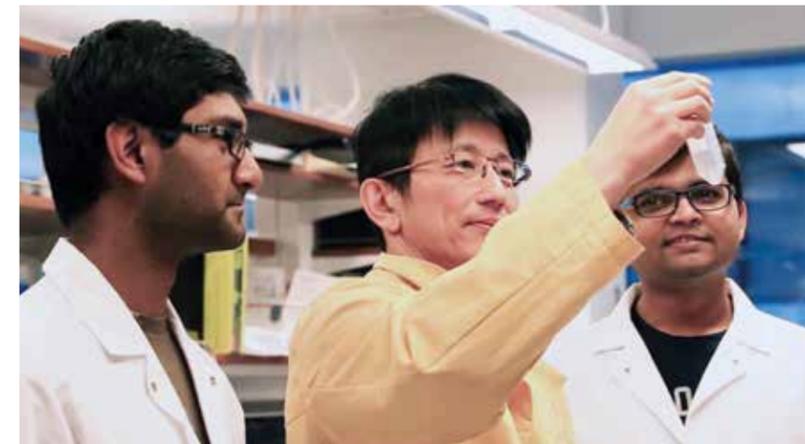
Professor Hiroshi Matsui takes the battle against cancer to a level so minuscule it's almost invisible. His specialty, at the intersection of biology and nanotechnology, is the relatively new—and very exciting—field of bionanotechnology, research conducted in units that are 10 to 100 times smaller than the human cell.

One goal of Professor Matsui's research at Belfer: to develop a carrier that will transport cancer-killing drugs directly to the area in need of treatment. "There are many effective drugs," he says, "but they do not work well because they

cannot target a specific area." The unintended result of current blunt-instrument treatment: Healthy tissue is attacked along with the targeted tumor.

To help pinpoint drug treatment, Matsui and his research group are working to develop a tiny case conjugated like an antibody, so it will seek out the cancerous tissue. The carrier will hold the appropriate drug. The case will also have to be MRI-sensitive, so that doctors can track its progress and watch the drug being released.

The move to the Belfer building, says Matsui, enables his group to



▲ Professor Matsui (center): thinking small, aiming high.

concentrate better on this and other research. "I like the new building very much," he says. "I like the close relationships between the medical

clinicians and researchers. We can exchange opinions and results with each other on a daily basis."

## DAVID FOSTER: Exploring Olive Oil's Potential to Fight Cancer

On one of the shelves in David Foster's lab in the new Belfer building, nestled amid the chemicals and compounds, there's a selection of extra-virgin olive oil from various countries. It's the key ingredient in his research. Foster hopes that an antioxidant in olive oil—it's called oleocanthal—will turn out to be a cancer-killer. "It has great potential," he says. "In the lab, we found it kills cancer cells and isn't toxic to noncancerous cells."

There's already some tantalizing evidence that olive oil may have a role in preventing breast cancer. A recent study in Spain, released in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, found a Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil to be associated with a relatively lower risk of breast cancer. And Foster's

research is aimed at other forms of the dreaded disease—gastric, colon, lung, pancreatic, and renal cancers.

Oleocanthal works because lysosomes, the parts of a cell where waste is stored—Foster calls them "the recycling centers"—are larger and more fragile in cancer cells than in healthy cells. They're vulnerable to anything that can penetrate, which oleocanthal does, crossing the barrier and causing necrosis—cell death. The adjacent healthy cells are unaffected—and that's a mystery that needs to be solved. "We need to understand why cancerous cells are more sensitive to oleocanthal than noncancerous cells," says Foster, who with Paul Breslin, professor of nutritional sciences in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at



▲ Professor Foster (with students): taking aim at numerous cancers

Rutgers, and Onica LeGendre, also of Hunter, published their research in the journal *Molecular and Cellular Oncology*.

"The published work involved studies with cultured cancer cells in the lab," says Foster. "However, we

have now begun to investigate the effect of oleocanthal on a genetically engineered mouse model for pancreatic cancers in collaboration with Dr. Nancy Du of Weill Cornell Medicine—and the initial study yielded promising results."

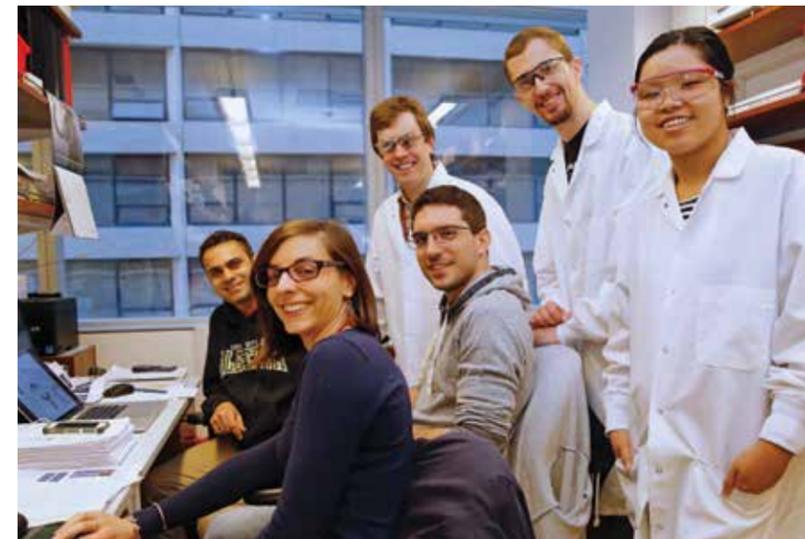
## BRIAN ZEGLIS: Creating a Puzzle To Make Radiation Safer

Toward the end of this year, clinicians at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center will begin testing a technique that Hunter's Brian Zeglis, assistant professor of chemistry, has been perfecting for five years.

They will first inject a cancer patient with an antibody whose task is to seek out the tumor; harnessed to the antibody will be one half of a molecular puzzle piece. A few days later—after the antibody and its tiny passenger attach to the tumor—they'll inject the second part of the puzzle piece. "It races around the body really quickly to find the other puzzle piece," says Zeglis, who has been at Belfer since January 2015. "They snap together like a jigsaw—and they make the tumor radioactive."

The goal of this microscopic molecular mating is to make Positron Emission Tomography (PET) safer for patients. Attaching radioisotopes to antibodies is one of the best ways to deliver radioactivity to cancer cells to act as a tracer for PET scans. But it can take several days for the injected isotope to degrade. During that time its radioactivity can harm healthy tissue. Zeglis's technique would cut that exposure significantly.

Zeglis came to Belfer from Sloan Kettering, where he holds a concurrent affiliate appointment in the Department of Radiology. He began his research there, as a postdoctoral fellow, then moved into the brand-new Belfer, funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health that, he says, "allows me to keep



▲ Professor Zeglis (standing, left): working on a PET project.

up the pace of the research."

At Belfer, he says, "We're very much into translational science. We admire scientists who study fundamental science or fundamental biology, but I learned very early

in my career that to galvanize my research I require the relation to human health and the potential for immediate impact, or at least impact on human health in a couple of years."

## STREET SMARTS Out of Their Classrooms—and Learning More

Sometimes you just have to get out of the house—and out of the classroom, too.

That's why, one morning in February, 35 Hunter students piled into a bus for a weekend at Black Rock Forest, a private preserve up the Hudson near West Point.

There, says geography major Yvonne Chow '18, "we tested water quality by collecting macro invertebrates from the river, hiked to the top of Frog Hill to study its weather station, and stargazed at night."

The trip, led by Professor Thomas B. Walter, also allowed students to engage with professors and each other—the whole point of the out-of-Hunter experience, and the reason the trip was funded by the Hunter president's Initiatives for Student Engagement, which also paid for the Anthropology Department's tour of civil rights landmarks.

Among other experiences paid through the Initiatives: the Art Department's visit to the Met's Islamic Art Galleries; tickets for theatre students to see *The King and I*, and an outing to DIA Beacon museum for Muse scholars.

Not all Initiative activities required a road trip. For instance, in March, renowned pianist Steven Lubin came to Hunter to put on a master class for Professor Geoffrey Bursleson's Music Department students.

For the students on the Geography Department trip to Black Rock Forest, all that hiking through woodlands and wading through bone-chilling streams definitely paid off. "The greatest bonus of this trip," says Chow, "was the informal and relaxed company of professors, grad students, and undergrads."



▲ The group meets with Andrew Young, former U.S. Ambassador to the UN.

## IN GIANTS' FOOTSTEPS Hunter Students Go South to Meet Veterans of the Civil Rights Struggle

Chayanne Marcano didn't expect to cry. But every day, she says, "I just went back to my hotel room totally overcome with emotion; it was truly life-changing for me."

Chayanne joined eleven of her Hunter classmates on an eight-day spring-break van tour that took them to Atlanta, Birmingham, Little Rock, and Memphis, tracing the footsteps of the Civil Rights Movement, hearing firsthand accounts of the long-ago struggles, and sitting face-to-face with people whose names they had only encountered in history books.

The trip, long planned by Professor David Julian Hodges, was an exercise in "urgent anthropology," the study of endangered cultures. As they move into old age, the veterans of the Civil Rights movement—the men and women who risked their lives for racial equality—are fast becoming such an endangered group. Performing a kind of intimate fieldwork, the anthropologists from Hunter documented their stories, their words, and their faces—and formed bonds and memories to last a lifetime.

Made possible by the president's Initiatives for Student Engagement, a program that provides support for students to engage in experiential learning, the trip offered the students an opportunity to take the skills they had been studying in the classroom into the outside world.

In Atlanta, the group was escorted through the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthplace by the Rev. Dr. Albert Paul Brinson, a protégé of Dr. King. They attended church with Dr. Christine King Farris, Dr. King's 87-year-old sister. And they ate fried okra with Andrew Young, who stood on the balcony in Memphis with Dr. King the day he was assassinated—on that very day 47 years earlier. The timing had been acci-

dental, but, as Ambassador Young told the group, "a coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous."

They also met with Dr. Joan Burroughs, a veteran of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which championed African-American rights in the '60s. "She talked about sitting on the ground and the police surrounding them on horses, and looking up at the horses' bellies and hoofs overhead," says Chayanne. "When she was my age, she was putting her life on the line."

The group's experiences were documented in a short film by Crystal Waterton, a graduate student in Integrated Media Arts. It can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/137209744>.

Professor Hodges says he's thrilled with the success of the trip, a complement to his popular Anthropology of the Civil Rights Movement class. "In anthropology," he says, "our stock in trade is participatory exploration. I wanted them to have spectacular experiences."



▲ At the Pettus Bridge, scene of 1965's Bloody Sunday.

## ROCKING THE REAL WORLD With Hunter Graduate Degrees

### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

#### Ryan Olsen

Master's in Music Education, Spring 2012

Music Teacher, PS 124, Chinatown

"I love being able to work with a diverse group of students. For many of them, it's the first exposure to classical music as well as musical theatre. And I'm really proud of the accomplishments of our theatre club, one of the highest rated elementary schools at the Junior Theatre Festival in Atlanta every year."



#### Kezena Brown

MSEd (Adolescent Literacy), June 2014

Assistant Principal, New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities II, Bronx

"I am most proud of the trust that I help foster among parents, teachers, students, and the community. That's more empowering for kids than anything I do alone."

### SILBERMAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



#### Brian Romero

MSW, June 2015

Social Worker, High School of Excellence and Innovation, Inwood

"I really enjoy the position because it allows me to blend my passion for healing and social justice. At Silberman, I could discuss these issues with my professors and my peers; those conversations prepared me for this work."

### SCHOOL OF NURSING



#### Lara Wahlberg

DNP, May 2015

Nurse Practitioner, Palliative Care, Bellevue Hospital

"I feel privileged to work with these vulnerable patients and help them, and I'm honored to work with such a diverse group."



#### Samantha Roche

MS (Nursing), January 2016

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Weill Cornell Collaborative Care Center

"It's incredibly fulfilling to make a connection with someone and help them achieve their wellness goals. Thanks to the Hunter School of Nursing, I'm well-prepared for this position."



## AMERICA'S FINEST — Hunter's Three New Soros Fellows

Every year, the Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans award graduate school fellowships to 30 young scholars from immigrant families. The recipients, selected from a pool of 1,200 applicants, are picked because of their potential contributions to U.S. society or culture, or their academic field. In 2015, three from Hunter won the coveted fellowship.



#### Amal Elbakhar '11

Award to continue working toward her JD at Harvard Law School



#### Evgeniya Kim '10

Award to support her work toward an MBA at the Yale School of Management



#### Julie Zhu, MFA '17

Award to support her work toward an MFA in painting at Hunter



▲ Deena Chanowitz was one of three valedictorians; the others were Nicola Kriefall and Elizabeth Schneider.

A career in medicine was not in the cards for Deena Chanowitz—nor any career at all.

The oldest of 11 children, Deena, valedictorian at January Commencement, grew up in a Hasidic household in Jerusalem. Her only future,

her parents told her, would be to create a traditional home. After her family moved to New York City, they gave her a choice: Conform to the Orthodox lifestyle—or leave.

Chanowitz left.

Without a network, she knew no

## INTO A DIFFERENT WORLD

To forge a new life, valedictorian Deena Chanowitz had to leave her old one

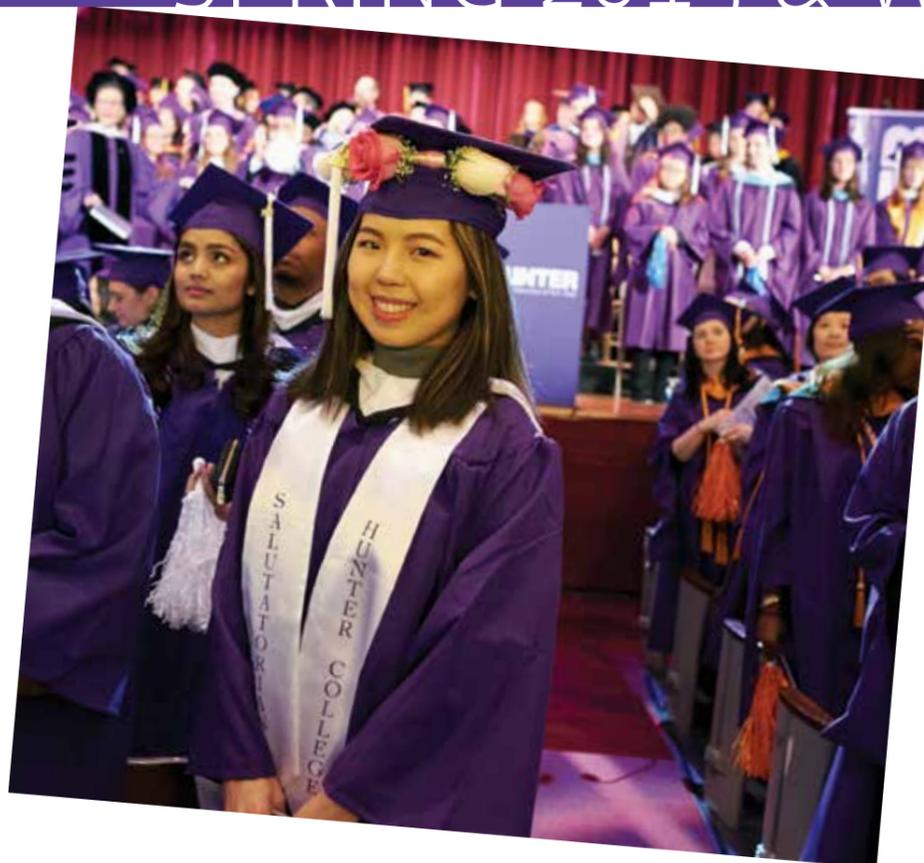
one; she became homeless. But she fought back, and by 17, was managing a restaurant. By 20, she co-owned one. By 25, she had become a private chef and enrolled at Hunter, with the support of the Footsteps program. Founded by Hunter alumna Malka Schwartz '04, Footsteps helps young men and women who grew up in strict Orthodox households pursue a secular education.

With her background—cooking for her 10 brothers and sisters since she was a young girl—Chanowitz began pursuing a nutrition degree. But then she became interested in how the human body works—and realized she had to become a doctor.

When Chanowitz was a pre-med student, her organic chemistry

professor was so impressed with her that she asked her to be her teaching assistant. She went on to do research on cancer, to shadow a gastroenterologist, and even to volunteer in Ghana. There she was surprised to learn that diabetes is soaring, just as it is in the U.S., and for the same reason: a lot of processed foods. Deena wants to prevent that disease and so many others by giving people better access to medical treatment and nutritious diets.

Chanowitz never gave up her religion; rather, she sees her mission as a doctor as part of her faith. Now the young woman once expected to keep house for the rest of her life is attending the Drexel University College of Medicine.



## FINALLY, IT'S HIS TURN

At 71, Mariano Laboy gets his cap and gown

Growing up in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, the ninth of 12 children, Mariano Laboy was smart enough to skip more than one grade—but too poor to go to college. So, in 1962, he came to New York City and went to work in a factory that manufactured garment bags; he also enrolled in English classes. And every month, he sent money home to his family. His contributions helped three of his younger siblings attend college and get well-paying jobs.

Laboy, 71, continued to work, always moving up and taking on extra work to help his family. He

became a back-office manager for Merrill Lynch and then a foreign-exchange consultant for Bank of New York. When he retired, he decided it was time to achieve his long-deferred dream of a college education. On the advice of friends, he enrolled at Hunter. He majored in Africana/Puerto Rican/Latino studies, and received his degree at January Commencement. "It's never too late," he says. Indeed it isn't—and Laboy isn't finished with his education. This fall he'll be attending Hunter's Silberman School of Social Work to pursue a master's in community organizing.

◀ Mariano Laboy



## TRIAL AND TRIUMPH

For Maya Leggat, the road to graduation took a painful detour



▲ "I'm so happy...to be here today with people I love, and people who care about me," Maya Leggat, with (from left) Ted Uzzle and Officers Daniel Kearon and Victor Pastrana, told *The New York Post*.

The numbers tell a tale: 1,296 graduate degrees and 2,576 undergraduate degrees granted to Hunter students; thousands of friends and family members in attendance.

But behind every name called out, every diploma awarded, there's a human story—of an individual triumph, or a family's pride, or a struggle overcome.

There is, for instance, the story of Maya Leggat. Some of the loudest applause at Hunter's Spring 2015 Commencement erupted when President Jennifer J. Raab told Maya's story, and the three police officers who helped save

her life bounded onto the stage at Madison Square Garden to share her great moment.

Leggat, then 22, was reading her Kindle at Metro-North's White Plains station in September 2013 when a deranged man shoved her in front of a train. According to *The New York Post*, the force of the train "sent her flying underneath the platform, rather than crushing her. But she lost a finger, broke both legs, and severed an artery in her thigh."

Thanks to the timely actions of MTA Officer Ted Uzzle, Maya made it to the hospital, where her condition was stabilized; by the next

day the English major, still in her hospital bed, was asking for her homework. While she endured her a long recuperation, Leggat's teachers communicated with her via Skype—and Hunter waived her tuition.

At graduation, as she embraced Officer Uzzle, who's now retired, and his partners on that day, Officers Daniel Kearon and Victor Pastrana, Maya allowed all of her emotions to burst forth. "I'm so happy," she said, fighting back tears of joy. "It just reminds me how lucky I am to be here today with people I love, and people who care about me."

# HAPPENINGS at HUNTER



▲ At the midsummer production of *Madama Butterfly* at the Kaye Playhouse: Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor (left) and opera star (and Hunter College Foundation trustee emerita) Martina Arroyo '56, whose foundation sponsored the production.



▲ Co-authors Melanne Verwee (2nd right) and Kim Azzarelli (2nd left) discussed their book *Fast Forward: How Women Can Achieve Power and Purpose* with CBS's Norah O'Donnell (left) and fashion icon Diane Von Furstenberg at Roosevelt House.



▲ Historians Geoffrey Ward (left) and Ken Burns visited Roosevelt House to unveil their companion book to *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*, their PBS documentary series.



▲ Arlene Alda '54 took the spotlight at Roosevelt House to read her memoir *Just Kids From the Bronx*. Proud husband Alan attended.



▲ Celebrating the Writing Center's sixth anniversary at the Sherry-Netherland Hotel: Director Lewis Frumkes with guest of honor Elizabeth Strout (right) and Elizabeth Strong Cuevas.



▲ Author Phil Klay (MFA '11), right, joined The Aspen Institute's Damian Woetzel (left) and Wounded Warrior Band singer Tim Donley to discuss "Art in the Aftermath of War" at Lang Recital Hall.



▲ President Jennifer J. Raab presenting Frayda Lindemann '60 with an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters at Hunter's 2015 Commencement.



▲ The subject was "The Future of *The New York Times*," as Roosevelt House's Jack Rosenthal (center) interviewed *Times* executive editor Dean Baquet (left) and publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. in June.



▲ Narrator Paula Zahn with Joan Finkelstein of the Harkness Foundation for Dance, at a screening of *PS Dance!*, a film about public school dance education, whose executive producer is Hunter College Foundation Board member Jody Arnhold.



▲ Former Rep. Barney Frank, Hunter's 2015 Phyllis L. Kossoff Lecturer, discussed his book *Frank: A Life in Politics from the Great Society to Same-Sex Marriage* at Roosevelt House.



▲ After a staged reading of *Sell/Buy/Date*, her one-woman show about human trafficking, underwritten by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Sarah Jones joined Gloria Steinem in a discussion at the Kaye Playhouse.

# THE MELODY LINGERS ON Lin-Manuel Miranda and His Classmates Put on a Show for a Beloved Teacher



Barbara Ames doesn't remember exactly when she wrote the stirring words and music to "Martin Luther King," her gospel-style tribute to the late civil rights giant. She thinks it might have been when she taught public school in Bedford-Stuyvesant in the late 1970s. "Most of the children there were of color," she says, "and I wanted to introduce them to their heritage and culture."

Ames brought "Martin Luther King" with her when she started teaching music at Hunter College Elementary School in 1985. Singing it in assembly became a January tradition for a generation of students—among them Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose rap extravaganza *Hamilton* has made him one of the brightest stars on Broadway. "It wasn't until we got out in the real world," he says, "that we realized no one else knew this amazing song."

Miranda (HCHS '98) never forgot Ames—"our amazing elementary school teacher"—and her inspiring song. So, for Martin Luther King Day this

year, he quietly enlisted 50 of his former classmates to sing it in her honor. Miranda organized the performance—videotaped by Ames's daughter Alysso—as a stealth operation; he even blocked Ames from his Facebook page so she wouldn't get wind of it.

Then, the day before Martin Luther King Day, he and his former classmates filmed their toe-tapping performance.

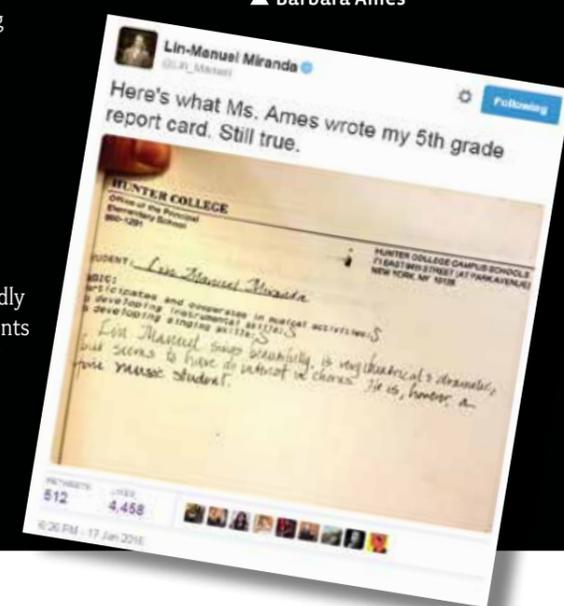
When Ames was told by her daughter that something special awaited her on the Internet, she was apprehensive. "Whatever it is," she said, "I'm not going to like it."

But then she viewed the video. Watching it, she now recalls, "I could hardly breathe. There were my dear, beloved students singing the song I taught them so long ago." It was, she says, "the greatest gift ever."

To see the performance:  
[bit.ly/lin\\_manuelMLK\\_song](http://bit.ly/lin_manuelMLK_song)



▲ Barbara Ames



# PERFECT HARMONY A Love of Music Took Elham Fanoos From War-Torn Kabul to Hunter

Three days after a Taliban suicide bombing that almost killed the principal of his school in Kabul, Elham Fanoos knew what he had to do. "I want to come to the U.S. to pursue my music studies in peace and freedom," he wrote in a Facebook message.

That was in December 2014. Nine months later, at Hunter's Convocation, Fanoos sat down at the

with their new friend via social media.

Back in Kabul, Fanoos, who comes from a musical family—his father is a classical Afghan musician—continued his studies. He attended the Afghan National Institute of Music, an academically rigorous conservatory founded in 2010 by Dr. Ahmad Sarmast and dedicated to the revival of music, which the Taliban had



▲ Free to make music

On August 3, 2015, Fanoos arrived at JFK Airport. Since then, although he misses his family in Kabul, he has adjusted well to life at his new school. "I have made friends at Hunter," he says. And New York? "It is a very exciting city."

He's not the only one who's excited: "When I first saw some of Elham's audition videos, my first impression was not only that I was watching and hearing a wonderful pianist, but also that his artistic sensibility was unusually mature for an 18-year-old," says Professor Geoffrey Burleson, director of piano studies in Hunter's Department of Music. "I've been even more impressed since I began working with Elham; his level of focus and devotion is quite formidable, and he soaks up new musical ideas like a sponge."

To hear Fanoos play: <http://www.wnyc.org/story/a-young-afghan-pianist-plays-for-his-countrys-future/>



▲ Elham Fanoos with mentor Dr. Ahmad Sarmast and NPR's Renee Montagne.

piano and played Rachmaninoff's *Opus 3, No. 2* for his enraptured new classmates.

How he got from there to here is a tale of courage, persistence, and a love of music that transcends boundaries. And it's a story that resonates: Fanoos has been the subject of profiles on both NPR and ABC News.

At 18, he toured the United States with the Afghan National Youth Orchestra, performing solo at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center in Washington. That's when he met Lesley Rosenthal and her sons, Aron and David, members of the Scarsdale (N.Y.) Youth Orchestra. After the 2015 State Department-sponsored tour ended, Aron and David stayed in touch

suppressed during their years in power.

Dr. Sarmast's dream almost came to an end when he was seriously injured in the 2014 bombing, which targeted the high school auditorium where Elham was scheduled to perform.

Realizing it was time to leave Kabul, Fanoos contacted Lesley Rosenthal. Her mother, Hunter alumna Nancy Merblum Fadem '56, a retired teacher of English as a foreign language, tutored him via Skype to bring him up to speed for the CUNY assessment test. Then Hunter accepted him—and gave him a full scholarship package that includes a Mother's Day Scholarship funded by Dr. Frayda Lindemann '60, who shares his passion for music.



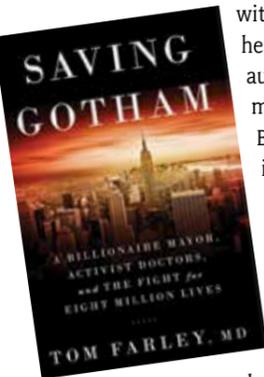
▲ Burleson: "A wonderful artist...unusually mature."

# TO OUR HEALTH

## Chronicling the Battle Against the City's Killers

An expatriate New Yorker returning after a long absence will find some changes in her favorite restaurant (if it still exists). Menu prices, of course are higher, but that's to be expected. On the other hand, the indoor air is much clearer; she can dine without inhaling other people's cigarette smoke. And the food, without losing any flavor, is healthier. That's because of two audacious decisions by the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg—banning smoking in nearly every bar, restaurant and workplace in the city, and getting restaurants to stop cooking with artery-clogging trans fats.

The story of how those changes—political acts grounded in public health concerns—came about is told with elegance and urgency in



*Saving Gotham: A Billionaire Mayor, Activist Doctors, and the Fight for Eight Million Lives*, by Dr. Tom Farley, the city's former health commissioner and the 2014 Joan H. Tisch Distinguished Fellow in Public Health at Roosevelt House.

The smoking and trans fat bans, estimated to have already saved thousands of lives, weren't the only initiatives launched by Bloomberg's first health commissioner, Farley's predecessor, Dr. Tom Frieden. He also sold the mayor on making chain restaurants post calorie counts on their menus.

Farley succeeded Frieden in 2009, running straight into a full-blown panic over swine flu (which turned out to be much less lethal than feared). And he sustained the focus on tackling the problems that shorten and degrade New Yorkers' lives. Among Farley's innovations: making the city's parks and beaches smoke-free, prohibiting the price discounting of cigarettes, and raising the legal sales age for buying tobacco.

Farley, now head of Philadelphia's Department



▲ Laurie Tisch, left, Dr. Tom Farley, and Ann-Marie Louison, 2015 Tisch Community Health Prize winner.

of Public Health, is generous in his gratitude for his time at Roosevelt House. "It takes a long time to write a book," he says. "With the Tisch Fellowship, I had that time—and a quiet space in an institution that thinks constantly about public policy. Laurie Tisch [whose Illumination Fund funded the fellowship], Hunter, and Roosevelt House can each stake a partial claim of authorship in *Saving Gotham*."

"Tom has had a tremendous impact on public health in New York City, and I'm proud that he accepted Hunter's offer to serve as the Joan H. Tisch Distinguished Faculty Member in Public Health so that he could write *Saving Gotham*," says Laurie Tisch. "Of course, Tom was a great commissioner, but it turns out that he's also a great writer! His book is engaging, and it's an important contribution to public health policy."

# THEATRE AT HUNTER GETS A SPECTACULAR NEW HOME

Since just after the Civil War, Hunter College and the building at 151 East 67th Street have co-existed as neighbors while the Upper East Side changed around them. Now, however, No. 151, the newly named Patty and Jay Baker Hall, will make history of a different kind as the home of Hunter's Department of Theatre.

The transformation came as a result of a generous gift from the Bakers—they originally pledged \$10 million, then added another \$5 million.

The building, just east of Lexington Avenue, next to the 19th Precinct stationhouse, started out in the 1870s as a residence for the nurses of Mount Sinai Hospital, then just across the street. The hospital moved to Fifth Avenue in 1904, and the residence went through a series of occupants and uses. It was most recently the Kennedy Child Study School, founded in 1958 by Joseph and Rose Kennedy in memory of their son Joseph Jr., who

was killed in World War II. Because the building was owned by the Archdiocese of New York, its sale required Vatican approval. Thanks to the Baker gift, Hunter acquired it in October 2015.

The new acquisition is already in the throes of a major interior renovation; the exterior is landmarked and can't be altered. Theatre students found 11 classrooms ready for them for the spring semester, and there are plans for eight rehearsal rooms, a faculty lounge, and a student area. Already, students are taking 17 classes in the building, including Introduction to Theatre, Play Analysis, and Playwriting, as well as graduate seminars.

The new home, says Claudia Orenstein, chair of the Theatre Department, "gives our department a physical presence in the city, with room to build new educational and creative possibilities for our students. We are excited to explore all the paths this new building opens up to us."



▲ Jay and Patty Baker lead the official banner-raising. Patty Baker '82 is a Hunter College Foundation board member and a Hunter Hall of Fame member.

# NOT HOMELESS, BUT ACTING THE PART

Every year, on the last Monday in January, New York City's Department of Homeless Services dispatches more than 3,000 volunteers—called enumerators—to conduct a census of the homeless. And on the same night, Hunter's Silberman School of Social Work, partnering with DHS, sends out 200 trained decoys, who pose as homeless people and see if the city's enumerators count them.

The Shadow Count, as it's called, is a way



of assuring that the city's count is accurate. "If the volunteers are missing many decoys, the assumption is they may also be missing many genuinely homeless persons," says Silberman Dean Mary Cavanaugh.

Due to a snowstorm, this year's census was postponed until February 9. Temperatures were in the 20s, and standing or sitting in the open air between midnight and 4 a.m.—the hours the city conducts its count—was not for the fainthearted.

The decoys are recruited in the months before the census and trained under the supervision of Training and Continuing Education Coordinator Christine Kim. Their training covers not only the importance of what they're doing, but how to stay safe on the streets and in the parks.

They go forth in teams of two, maintaining

◀ A team of city enumerators approaches a homeless person during the city's annual census.

contact with each other at all times—and with a team captain like grad student Dustin Chien. A team's night ends just as soon as an official enumerator approaches them. It could be 10 minutes; it could be all four freezing hours.

Silberman student Julius Flowers's assignment took him to a bus stop on East 106th Street, where he waited three hours before the enumerators spotted him. "My partner said, 'It's crazy that there are actually people out here in this weather,'" he says. "And I said, 'What does it say that they'd rather be out here freezing than in a city shelter?'"



▲ Keeping tabs on decoys: team captain Dustin Chien

# THARPSICORE!

## 50 Years Later, a Dance Legend Returns

It was a long time ago, and it took just 10 minutes, but Twyla Tharp's performance of *Tank Dive*, her very first piece, was the start of something big—a half-century cascade of creative energy that changed the face of contemporary dance. So on the 50th anniversary of *Tank Dive*, Tharp returned to Hunter, the place where it all began.

Addressing a room full of students, alumni, and audience members, Tharp recalled the moment her 22-year-old self stepped on stage in Room 1604 of the Art Department, twirled a yo-yo, extended her back, and, weighed down by a pair of wooden shoes, brought herself up to an extended *relevé*. At the time, all she had was her creative vision. "I had no money," she said, "but I

had an idea, and I was allowed to go for it. Thank you, Hunter. It's truly a phenomenal thing for a kid to get this opportunity."

Tharp's return—coupled with the unveiling of her newest piece, based on Beethoven's String Quartet No. 130—comes at a time when dance is flourishing at Hunter, with the establishment of a fully fledged Department of Dance, the first in a public college. And the Arnhold Graduate Dance Education Program—enhanced by a recent partnership with Lincoln Center—prepares students to become dance teachers in the city's public schools, where they can help a new generation of boys and girls embark on the same journey Twyla Tharp did when she stepped into Room 1604 50 years ago.



▲ Tharp (center), with Stephen Weinroth and wife Cathy Weinroth '74, a Hunter College Foundation board member, unveiled her newest dance piece (top picture).



▲ Showcasing the New York School in a New York school—Motherwell at Hunter's Leubsdorf Gallery.

© Arnold Newman, 1959

## TRIBUTE TO A TITAN Honoring a Giant of Art—and Hunter Trailblazer

It's almost impossible now, more than a half-century after their heyday, to imagine the explosive impact the Abstract Expressionists of the New York School had on the art world. Coming of age during World War II, they smashed conventions, disconcerted some (but not all) critics, and made New York City the center of the art world. Nowadays, their names—de Kooning, Pollock, Barnett Newman—have become part of the pantheon, and their works sell for stratospheric prices.

One of those titans, Robert Motherwell, a prolific writer and editor who gave the New York School its name, taught art to the women of Hunter from 1951 to 1960. Hunter marked the centenary of his 1915 birth with the *Robert Motherwell and the New York School at Hunter* exhibition at the Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Gallery, which also included work by his contemporaries William Baziotis, Fritz Bultman, Richard Lippold, Ray Parker, and George Sugarman.

Organized by Howard Singerman, the Phyllis and Joseph Caroff Professor of Fine Arts, with Sarah Watson, acting director and curator, Hunter College Art Galleries, the exhibition was funded by the Dedalus Foundation, with ongoing support from the Leubsdorf Endowment and the Carol Goldberg Exhibition Fund.

In the words of the exhibition catalogue, Motherwell “set a precedent for a historically and professionally engaged art education that endures at Hunter College to this day.”



▲ August Morisot, *Sunrise*, 1886, watercolor on paper, 8.3 x 19.7 cm (3 1/4" x 7 3/4"), Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros

## A NEW WORLD, A NEW VISION

Free, or nearly so, after centuries of European colonization, the brand-new nations of Central and South America became irresistible magnets for North Americans and Europeans who arrived in droves to trade, to mine, to exploit—and, sometimes, to try to capture the beauty of the newly accessible, still mysterious, continent.

*Boundless Reality: Traveler Artists' Landscapes of Latin America*, an exhibition of the works of those painters, part of the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, ran at the Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Gallery all winter. Curated by Harper Montgomery, the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros professor of Latin American Art at Hunter College, and students from her master's course, it included works from the late 17th century, although most date from the mid-1900s. “This project not only allowed Hunter students to experience the process of devising and executing a scholarly exhibition,” says Montgomery, “it also taught them how exhibitions contribute to the production of new knowledge. For the exhibition, the 11 Hunter MA and MFA students conducted research on artists who were in many cases totally unknown. They wrote texts, which were published in the related book, proposed an exhibition plan, and even gave tours of the show once it was up.”

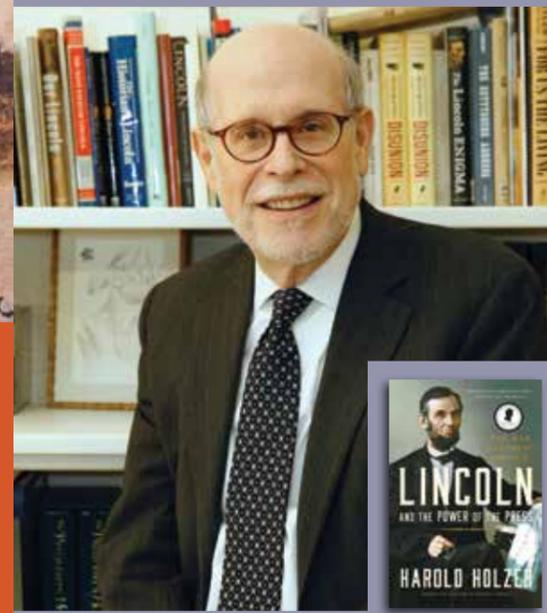
## HOUSE AND HOME

Contrary to our image, not every New Yorker lives in a gilded penthouse. More than a million and a half of us own or rent apartments developed under various affordable-housing programs.

An exhibition at Hunter's East Harlem Gallery (Third Avenue at 119th Street) traces the story of affordable housing in the city through photographs, architectural models (right), and comprehensive historical material. Titled *Affordable Housing in New York: The People, Places, and Policies that Transformed a City*, it complements the newly published book of the same name by Matthew Gordon Lasner and Nicholas Dagen Bloom.



## FOLLOWING LINCOLN'S FOOTSTEPS TO ROOSEVELT'S HOUSE



When Harold Holzer was in fifth grade in Queens, his teacher brought in a hatful of names and asked each child to pick one, go to the library, find a book, and write a composition. “I got Lincoln,” says Holzer, who then selected *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*, by Richard Current. “That,” he says, “was the epiphany.”

Holzer's discovery of the 16th president led to a lifelong fascination and literary specialty; over 42 years, he wrote, co-wrote, edited, or co-edited 52 books about the Great Emancipator. His latest, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press*, won the 2015 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize and the 2016 Goldsmith Book Prize, awarded by the Shorestein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School, among other awards.

Holzer did all this while holding down a day job as director of public affairs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. When he retired from the Met last year, he envisioned spending more time devoted to his great passion—writing and lecturing about Lincoln.

Then he heard that Hunter had begun the search process to find a new Jonathan F. Fanton Director of the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute. Holzer threw his hat in the ring.

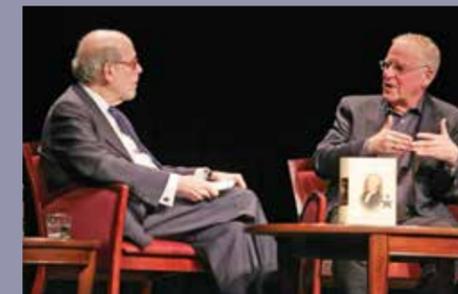
And he received powerful encouragement—from Hillary Clinton. At a Manhattan fundraiser he attended with his wife, Edith, the two had a

moment with the Democratic presidential candidate. She mentioned Holzer's recent retirement from the Met. “The retirement may not last,” he told her. “I've been asked to head Roosevelt House at Hunter. What do you think?”

“Roosevelt House!” Clinton exclaimed. “That's perfect—there's a progressive continuum from Lincoln to FDR. You should do it.” “She was right,” he says. “After all, both of those presidents saved the country. They helped save the world, too, and make it a better place. It was a natural pivot for me.”

Reflecting from his fourth-floor office, Holzer finds himself thrilled by Roosevelt House, its history, and its possibilities. “Eleanor and Franklin lived here before they moved to the White House,” he says. “It's the place where the New Deal was born. I can saunter into the library that FDR used and imagine the moment Frances Perkins walked in, and he asked her to be the first woman in a presidential cabinet, and she said, ‘Governor, only if you do old age pensions as we did in New York State.’ And he said, ‘Frances, we'll do it.’”

Of the present Roosevelt House, he says, “I



▲ More history unfolds: Holzer interviews Ron Chernow, whose *Alexander Hamilton* inspired the musical *Hamilton*.

love the real energy when young people are here. Then, in the evening, the community comes in for our vibrant public programs. I really want to see more interaction between those two groups. I plan to set up programs where the students, many of them immigrants hungry to learn about America, can meet and learn from the older, more established residents of Manhattan and the Upper East Side. I think they could gain so much from each other.”

## WOMEN'S WORDS With the Vote at Stake



▲ Matilda Cuomo, left, with President Raab and Maria Cuomo Cole

There's not a hashtag in sight, but the quotes—pithy, concise, and precisely targeted at an audience of men—were the early 20th-century feminist equivalent of Twitter. Now framed and covering the walls of Roosevelt House, the posters were the centerpiece of *Women Take the Lead: From Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Eleanor Roosevelt, Suffrage to Human Rights*, RH's first public exhibition since reopening as an Institute of Public Policy.

The exhibit unearthed rare artifacts—some unseen for more than a century—of the suffrage movement, presenting a perspective-shifting portrait of women's history in the United States. The initiative for the exhibit, which ran through May 27, came from Hunter Foundation trustee Elbrun Kimmelman '72, and it was shepherded to fruition by Director Harold Holzer.

For Holzer, Roosevelt House is the ideal place for an exhibition honoring women's history. It was home to Eleanor Roosevelt, an emblematic figure of female accomplishment. As we celebrate the 95th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, the documents on display—from Pearl S. Buck's edits of her Nobel Prize acceptance speech to a manuscript on family planning by Margaret Sanger—serve as a reminder that the progress made in the last century is built on foundations laid by brave, resourceful—and very witty—feminist forebears.

# Class Notes

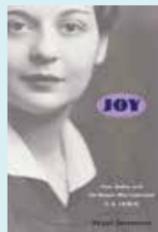
## Helen Posner Fried '31 2016 Alumna of the Year



At Hunter's Winter Commencement on January 21, President Jennifer J. Raab introduced a remarkable guest: Alumna of the Year Helen Posner Fried '31, who is 104. "Helen Posner Fried was born to immigrant parents," President Raab said. "She went on to become a New York City elemen-

tary school teacher, working in Harlem and Brooklyn. "When Helen took the licensing test," she continued, "the city failed 95 percent of the applicants. . . Helen passed it on her first try."

## 1930s

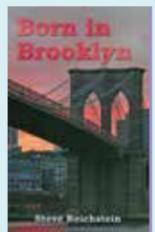


The brilliant, baffling life of **Joy Davidman** '34, who started at Hunter when she was 14, is the subject of *Joy: Poet, Seeker, and the Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis*, by Abigail Santamaria.

## 1940s

**Jane Oppenheim** '47, a Hunter College Foundation trustee, was named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania by Gov. Tom Wolf.

## 1950s



**Steve Reichstein** '59 has written a memoir, *Born in Brooklyn*, which includes a look back at his four years on Hunter's Bronx campus. It is available on amazon.com.

Hunter Hall of Fame inductee **Dr. Nanette Kass Wenger** (HCHS '47, HC '51), professor of medicine (cardiology) emeritus at Emory University School of Medicine, was honored in May as one of the Women Luminaries in Cardiology

by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Intervention.

## 1960s

**Rosemarie Birri D'Alessandro** '61, an activist for child protection and victims' rights, recently received the Woman of Distinction Award from her high school alma mater, St. Catharine Academy in the Bronx.

**Beverly Bonaparte** (MSN '62) has been appointed president of Chamberlain College of Nursing's Jacksonville, FL, campus.

**Herbert Landau** '63 retired as executive director of the Lancaster (PA) Public Library in July 2015.

**Leon Cooperman** '64, chairman and CEO of Omega Advisors, received the 2015 Graham & Dodd, Murray, Greenwald Prize for Value Investing. The prize is given by the Columbia University Graduate School of Business in conjunction with Gabelli Funds.

**Vera Junkers** '66 has been elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Senate, representing the Middle Atlantic District.

**Leslie Fishbein** '67 presented a lecture, "From Shtetl to Ghetto: The Culture of the Lower East Side," at the YM-YWHA of Union County (NJ). Fishbein is an associate professor of American studies and Jewish studies at Rutgers University.

**Lew Frankfort** '67, former chairman and CEO of Coach, Inc., has joined Sycamore Partners, a New York-based private equity firm, as executive in residence.

Criminal and matrimonial attorney **David M. Chidekel** '69 was featured in an interview published in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

**Howard Hoffman** '69 has been inducted into the Craft & Hobby Association Hall of Fame.

## 1970s

During Women's History Month at the Italian American Museum in New York City, **Louis Barrella** '70 participated in a presentation celebrating neglected Italian Renaissance painter Sofonisba Anguissola.

Two large-scale works by sculptor **Alice Aycock** (MFA '71) are on display in the Jane and Harry Willson Sculpture Garden at the Georgia Museum of Art. *Waltzing Matilda* and *Twin Vortexes* were originally part of *Park Avenue Paper Chase*, Aycock's outdoor exhibition on Park Avenue in Manhattan. New York City's Marlborough Gallery will present a major exhibition of Aycock's work in October 2017.

**John Rowan** (MS '72), president of Vietnam Veterans of America, was the keynote speaker for the opening ceremony in Dover, DE, for *The Wall That Heals*, a traveling memorial.

**Lowell H. Lustig** '75 has been named an executive director of the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science. Based in Ohio, he will lead Weizmann's philanthropic efforts in several states.

**Jeanne McCooley** '77, senior director of communications at the Metropolitan Golf Association, received the Association's Distinguished Service Award at its annual meeting.

## 1980s

**Amy Chalfy** (MSW '81) has been appointed chief program officer at JASA, an agency serving older adults in the New York metropolitan area.

**Kim Fink** '81 was recently named director of development at the Bay Street Theater in Sag Harbor, NY. She was formerly the director of individual giving at the Public Theater in Manhattan.

**Helen Mandlin** (MSW '84) performed her solo act, *My Life So Far: A Musical Memoir*, at the Cambria, CA, Center for the Arts.

**Hugo Xavier Bastidas** (MFA '87) presented a workshop on the gallery and exhibition business at the Art Students League of New York.

**Olga Sanchez** '87, artistic director of Portland's Milagro Theatre from 2003 to 2015, is pursuing a doctorate in the arts at the University of Oregon.

Vocalist **Peggy Eason** (MSW '88) performed at the Provincetown Cabaret Festival last summer. Eason was nominated for a 2015 MAC Award in New York City for her work on two shows: *As I See It* at Stage 72 and *I'll Show Them All* at Don't Tell Mama.

**Andres Torrens** (MSW '88) has been promoted to vice president of clinical services at the Center for Family Services of Palm Beach County, FL.

*Beyond Ground Zero: 9/11 and the American Landscape*, photographs by **Jonathan C. Hyman** (MFA '89), is on view at the September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center, documenting improvised memorials that emerged after the attacks.

**Diane E. Lang** '89, received the 2015 Leadership and Support Award from the School Administrators Association of New York State. Lang is director of instructional support services at Orange-Ulster BOCES.

**Daniel Seaman** '89 has been appointed managing director of the

Israel office of Steinreich Communications, an international public relations firm based in New Jersey. Seaman was previously director of the Israeli Government Press Office.

**Julianne Tamasy** '89 has been appointed senior vice president, Venture Capital Services, at Square 1 Bank, Boston.

## 1990s

*Inevitability of Truth*, a critically acclaimed show by **Ruth Pastine** (MFA '93), was presented last fall at Edward Cella Art & Architecture in Los Angeles.

Artist **Elia Alba** '94 has been appointed to the New York Foundation for the Arts Board of Directors.

**Jennifer Broomfield** (MSW '94) is the Title IX director at Florida State University. She previously ran the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program.

**Yelena Bondar** '96 is director of the New York City College of Technology's Accredited Study in Associate Programs, providing financial, social and academic support to associate's degree candidates in STEM disciplines.

**Michelle Dunbar** (MSEd '96) is the principal of South Warren Elementary School in Warrenton, NC.

**Anne M. Thomas** (MSW '96) is vice president of residential services for Jewish Geriatric Services in Longmeadow, MA, and administrator of the Leavitt Family Jewish Home.

## Honoring Dr. Antonia Pantoja '52



A mural dedicated to the late Antonia Pantoja, a member of the Hunter Hall of Fame and the first Puerto Rican to receive the President's Medal of Freedom, was unveiled in November at the Corsi Senior Center in East Harlem. The mosaic mural by artist Manny Vega was three years in the making.

Pantoja is best known as a founder of ASPIRA, founded in 1961 and dedicated to developing the educational and leadership capacity of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic youth. Pantoja was also a founder of the National Puerto Rican Forum, which promotes economic self-sufficiency, and Boricua College, as well as many other organizations dedicated to community empowerment and education in New York City and beyond.

**Adrienne Flores** '97 recently joined WDRB 41 Louisville, KY, as news anchor and reporter.

**Katherine Azbell** (MSW '98) is director of community relations at the Ambassador of Scarsdale (NY), an assisted-living community.

**Rich Swingle** (MA '98) plays a leading role in *Providence*, a modern silent film of a love story spanning four decades. The film opened in AMC theaters last winter.

Video and installation artist **Kristine Marx** (MFA '99) exhibited *Discontinuous Space Continuous* at Station Independent Projects in Manhattan. It was the second solo exhibition there for Marx, associate professor and program co-director of Core Studies at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

## 2000s

Real estate broker **Sandu Calinescu** '00 joined Coldwell Banker's Flatiron office in 2015.

*continued on next page* →

*Present Continuous*, an exhibition by artist **Omer Fast** (MFA '00), was presented at the Jeu de Paume in Paris from October 29, 2015, to January 24, 2016. Drawing for the most part on moving images, Fast's work explores narrative complexity through a practice that blurs the boundaries between reality and representation.

The work of sculptor **Margarita Cabrera** (MFA '01) was featured in the 2015 group exhibition *The Other*



*Side: Chinese and Mexican Immigration to America.* The exhibition at the Asia Society Texas Center explored issues of immigration, border relations and labor practices.

**Cathryn Ferrigno Marchman** (MSW '01) has been named executive director of Partners for H.O.M.E. (Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone), which seeks to prevent homelessness in Atlanta.

**Amy Siniscalchi** (MSW '01) is assistant executive director of Children, Youth and Family Services at Westchester Jewish Community Services. Siniscalchi oversees a network of programs serving 7,000 Westchester children from pre-school through late adolescence.

A solo exhibition by artist **Sarah Crowner** (MFA '02) opened in April at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Crowner's work has been exhibited at MoMA, the Whitney, and other major museums in the U.S. and Europe.

Artist **William Powhida** (MFA '02), who has exhibited internationally, will have his first solo museum show in the fall at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, CT.

**Bonnie Durham** '04 was selected as a featured artist by ArtPrize 2015, an international art competition in Grand Rapids, MI.

**Mark Howell** (MSW '04) is the executive director of United Crescent Hill Ministries in Clifton, KY.

**Melva Miller** (MSW '04) is deputy borough president of Queens. She formerly served as director of economic development for the Queens Borough President's Office.

**Dr. Anastasiya Kleva** '05 has joined the Bronx and Tuckahoe, NY, practices of ENT and Allergy Associates.

**Meghan McCarthy** (MPH '05) is director of Community Health & Wellness at Baptist Health Care in Pensacola, FL.

**Ryan Murray** (MPH '06) is deputy mayor of Long Beach, CA, and the mayor's advisor to the city's privately funded Innovation Team.

**Carolina Worrell** '07 is managing editor of the trade publication *Railway Age*.

A solo exhibition by **Emily Noelle Lambert** (MFA '08), titled *Idée Fixe*, was held at New York's Denny Gallery.

**Stephanie McClure** (MA '08) is the museum registrar at the Hispanic Society of America.

**Jessica Mein** (MFA '08) was an artist in residence at the 2015 A.i.R. Dubai program.

**Kevin Tolan** (MUP '08) is the first executive director of Westwood Works, a community organization in Cincinnati.

Two Hunter alumni were named to *City & State NY's* "40 under 40," rising stars in city government, politics, and advocacy: **Sasha Neha Ahuja** '09, deputy director, Policy & Innovation

Division at the New York City Council, and **Ryan Baxter** '12, assistant vice president of the Real Estate Board of New York.

**Shana Smith Haines** (MA '09), who teaches writing at Tidewater Community College in Virginia, has won the school's 2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Award.

A solo exhibition of sculptures and drawings by **Ryan Roa** (MFA '09) was presented last fall at the Hudson Ann Street Gallery in Newburgh.

**Christopher Robinson** (MFA '09) is the co-author of *War of the Encyclopaedists*, a Gen Y coming-of-age novel about love and war.

## 2010s

**Firelei Báez** (MFA '10) received the 2015 Catherine Doctorow Prize for Contemporary Painting from the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art.

**Carmiel Banasky's** (MFA '10) debut novel, *The Suicide of Claire Bishop*, was published last fall by Dzanc Books.

**Bill Cheng** (MFA '10), author of *Southern Cross the Dog*, has received a 2015 fiction fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

**Kaitlyn Greenidge's** (MFA '10) debut novel, *We Love You, Charlie Freeman*, was recently published by Algonquin Press.

**Kimberly Livingston Prokoshyn** '10, head sommelier at Rebelle NYC, was interviewed by *Wine & Spirits Magazine* last fall.

**David Shrobe** (BFA '10) is 2015-2016 artist in residence at the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling in Harlem.

*Infinite Space*, a vinyl installation by **James Weingrod** (MFA '10), is on display at the Granoff Center at Brown University.

**Marcello Gasdia** (MS '11) is director of consumer research for Phocuswright, a company that provides information and analysis to the travel industry.

**Lauren Holmes** (MFA '11) is the author of *Barbara the Slut and Other People* (Riverhead, August 2015), a critically acclaimed debut collection of stories about the human flaws that challenge relationships.

**Robert Hoffman** (MA '12) is the acting and vocal instructor for the Broadway Bound Children's Theatre and Broadway Bound Junior Children's Theatre at the Gold Coast Arts Center in Great Neck, NY.

**Christopher Rivera** (MFA '12) has opened an art gallery, Embajada, in his native city of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

**Sasha Wortzel** (MFA '12) co-wrote, co-directed and co-produced *Happy Birthday, Marsha!*, a film about transgender artist/activist Marsha "Pay it No Mind" Johnson.

**Dalila Ordonez** '13 was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship at Harvard.

**Kevin Quill** '13 performed the one-man play *An Iliad*, a modern retelling of Homer's classic, at Buzzards Play Productions in Wareham, MA.

**Jonathan Harper Schlieman** '13, a director, was invited to participate in the 2015-16 Actors Theatre of Louisville Intern/Apprentice Program.

Artist **Sara Shaoul's** (MFA '14) *Strange Labor*, a work exploring the

connection between the female body and socioeconomic forces, was exhibited by the Brooklyn Artists Alliance.



Painter **Alteronce Gumby** (BFA '14) had a solo show at Dutchess Community College's Mildred I. Washington Art Gallery last fall.

**Amy E. Witting** (MFA '14) received the Atlantic Theater Company's inaugural 2015 LAUNCH Commission for her play *The House on Top of the Hill*.

**David Hilder** (MFA '15) was awarded the Serenbe Playhouse's First Annual New Territories Playwriting Residency (in Georgia) for new creative work in outdoor, site-specific theater.

**Stephanie Park** '15 has been named a Community Fellow of the Immigrant Justice Corps, which helps low-income immigrant New Yorkers obtain legal aid to apply for asylum, Green Cards, and other types of legal residency status. She is spending the first year of her two-year fellowship at the MinKwon Center for Community Action in Flushing, Queens.

## Yvette Francis-McBarnette (HCHS '42, HC '45)



## Pearl Handshuh Hack '46

Inducted into Hunter's Hall of Fame in 1996, Pearl Hack, who died Nov. 14, graduated Phi Beta Kappa and became a teacher, a civic leader, and an active, engaged alumna. A lecturer in urbanism and public administration at Hunter, Wellesley, and Brooklyn College, she was a board member of the Regional Plan Association from 1978 to 1992; a member of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Congress, and a member of the Council of Overseers of UJA-Federation of New York.

Perhaps her greatest contribution to her alma mater was her work in support of the Hunter College library.

And she had a fulfilling sideline—as an extremely successful matchmaker.

Yvette Fay Francis-McBarnette '45, who died on March 28 at 89, was an academic prodigy who went on to become a pioneer in the treatment of children with sickle cell anemia.

Dr. Francis was still a teenager when her family immigrated from Jamaica. Raised in Harlem, she enrolled at Hunter at 14, graduating in three-and-a-half years with a degree in physics. Too young for medical school, she earned a master's in chemistry from Columbia before enrolling in the Yale School of Medicine, the second African-

American woman in its history.

Fifteen years before the *New England Journal of Medicine* confirmed the effectiveness of antibiotics in treating sickle cell anemia, Dr. Francis, then at Jamaica Hospital, was using them to treat children with the disease. She served on a White House panel whose recommendations led to the 1972 National Sickle Cell Anemia Control Act.



## Helen Stambler Latner '39

When she died on January 25 at 97, Helen Stambler Latner left behind a generation of better informed readers. Writing the "Ask Helen Latner" column in *Jewish Week*, she offered sage advice on Jewish customs.

Born in Bensonhurst, the former Helen Hudesman worked as an English teacher and school principal before turning to writing full-time about Jewish traditions.

"It dawned on me that there were large areas of department . . . that would not be handed down," she

said in a 1981 *New York Times* interview.

The result was her books—*The Book of Modern Jewish Etiquette: A Guide for All Occasions*; *Your Jewish Wedding*, and *The Everything Jewish Wedding Book*—and her column.

She called her books "a roadmap" for Jews of all backgrounds. "Even those who don't observe anything," she said, "will attend weddings and funerals."



## Hunter Remembers From December 2014 on

Alice J. Rust '31  
Pauli Murray '33  
Lillie Bellin Pope '37  
Josephine Propp Laitman, '38  
Jean Reidy '39  
Gertrude Schimmel '39  
Katherine Masset Sims '39  
Ernestine Friedl '41  
Elizabeth Kelly-Fry '41  
Eugenie Clark '42  
Dorothy Lazarus '42  
Joyce Phillips Austin '43

Jennie Rosenburg '44  
Ruth Rosenthal '44  
Irene Tonkonogy Adler '45  
Ida Preti Cook '45  
Anna Margaret Murphy '45  
Shirley Irene Robbins '46  
Charlotte Neuman Spiegel '47  
Wanda Wolski Berkley '48  
Susan Heller '48  
Edith Horowitz '48  
Evelyn Papalexis Bales '49  
Lillian Hill '49 (BA) and '52 (MA)

Elaine Cooke '50  
Dorothy Smith Nevins '50  
Patricia Charache '52  
Marcia A. Weiner Weinstein '52  
Adelaide Spitsbergen '53  
Dorothy Packwood '54  
Stanley Egner '55  
Harriett Tishkoff '56  
Bella Kerner Tresser '56  
Karen Brooke Dubno '62  
April Ahlers Brooks '66  
Bobbye Goldstein '66

Frances Yeransian '67  
Rabbi Allan Schranz '68  
Theresa Smart '68  
Mary Cumming '71  
Suzy Bales '77  
Edward Maneski '80  
Lucia Negri '81  
Sarah Globus '88  
Maureen Kandrach (MSN, MPH '88)  
Diana Lee Friedline '96  
Kate Helen Light (MFA '05)



## FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER KELLE JACOB '08

amazing things for my gallery, visiting colleges and speaking,” she says. “I was invited to speak at Hunter about how I had set up my business.”

Then came her epiphany: “I was going there to inspire the students—and I wound up being inspired.” She enrolled at Hunter, where she majored in media studies and minored in English. Her goal was to become a journalist. “My biggest thrill,” she says, “was when I collaborated on a *Village Voice* story about gentrification in Brooklyn.”

Jacob also became involved in the life of Hunter, serving on the Senate—and galvanizing the campaign to renovate the library. “Her leadership in that campaign was extraordinary,” says President Raab. “She would show up at my door and say, ‘Here’s what I think we should do.’—and then she would do it. She deserves so much credit for the modernization of our library.”

In the midst of this came the invitation that changed her career plans. Recommended by Hunter, Jacob embarked on an internship at Estée Lauder. “I thought they wanted me to work at a counter,” she laughs. “Instead I was involved in strategy, product development. I was using the same skills I would have used as a reporter—using insights, really understanding and investigating what

people need, and developing a product based on that.”

Today, she’s at Estée Lauder, as manager for North American strategy, working on global product development. And she’s bringing the analytical skills she learned there to her work at the Hunter Foundation Board, where, as the youngest woman member, she’s in the advance guard of a trend to involve more recent grads. “It’s all about understanding the millennial dynamic,” she says.

Support the recent  
alums now, in the  
hopes of establishing  
lifelong bonds.

Her idea, presented to the Foundation Board on December 15: Support the recent alums now, as they start their careers, in the hopes of establishing lifelong bonds.

“The board,” says Jacob, “is very supportive to our new ideas and understands that we have to continually evolve.”

Millennials, like the Gen-Xers, and the Baby Boomers, and the World War II “Greatest Generation,” have their own cultural touchstones, their own way of existing in society, and, says Kelle Jacob, their own style of philanthropy. When they give, she says, “they care about being part of something.”

That’s why Jacob, appointed to the Hunter Foundation Board just last year, has her sights set on forging Hunter’s bonds with those alums who, like her, came of age after 2000.

Her own pathway to Hunter was a circuitous one. At first, she decided not to go to college. Instead, to market an online art gallery she founded, she competed on *America’s Next Top Model*, in the season that began in September 2004. “I did