



Dear GSAS Alumni,

This spring has been extraordinarily busy at the Graduate School as we held two of our signature events—the annual [GSAS Awards Dinner](#) and the [Master's SynThesis](#) competition—before we celebrated our newest MA, PhD, and DMA graduates at GSAS Convocation. Read more about all three events below.

As the campus turns to a summer pace, I am mindful that our ever-curious GSAS alumni will have questions and concerns about the [unique challenges](#) faced by both GSAS and the University at this moment in history. I invite you to consider [Acting President Shipman's call to action](#), and to take pride in [Columbia's history of tradition, innovation, and growth](#).

Are you looking for opportunities to meet fellow Columbia alumni? Many of the Columbia Alumni Association clubs and shared interest groups host summer gatherings. Please review the [calendar of University events](#) to find get-togethers near you.

Happy summer!

Sincerely,

Erin Hussein
Director of Alumni Relations
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

GSAS NEWS



GSAS Awards Dinner

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences was pleased to host our annual Awards Dinner on April 28 at Casa Italiana. Among the honorees were alumni **Lauren P. Bernard** ('25PhD, Music), who received the [Campbell Award](#); **Gregory L. Verdine** ('86PhD, Chemistry) and **Colonel Matthew Bogdanos** ('84MA, Classical Studies; '84Law), recipients of the Dean's Award for Distinguished Achievement; and **Tyshawn Sorey** ('17DMA, Music Composition) and **Gaisu Yari** ('18MA, Human Rights Studies), recipients of the GSAS Outstanding Recent Alumni Award. **Umiemah Farrukh** ('25MA, South Asian Studies) received the [Dr. Devon T. Wade Mentorship, Service, and Advocacy Award](#), and **Tamara Hache** ('21MPhil, Latin American and Iberian Cultures) was honored with the [Presidential Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student](#). Dean Alonso presented the Dean's Award for Lifetime Achievement to **Christina Paxson** ('87PhD, Economics), the President of Brown University. You may relive the happy evening through our coverage of the event [here](#).



Master's SynThesis 2025

GSAS MA students showcased their thesis research on May 1 at the ninth annual Master's SynThesis Competition, hosted by the Compass Graduate Career Development Office. Inspired nine years ago by the [3MT event](#) for PhD students, SynThesis challenges GSAS MA students to distill their thesis research into a three-minute talk with one slide and no notes. This year, twelve

finalists from ten Arts and Sciences programs stood before a live audience to present their research and beat the clock. Your fellow alumnae [Julia Kang-Reeves](#) ('14MA, Classics) and [Romy Silver-Kohn](#) ('08MA, Modern Art, Critical, and Curatorial Studies) served as judges. Learn more about the exciting competition and watch the presentations [here](#).



Convocation and Commencement

Thousands of family members, friends, faculty, and staff gathered on the Morningside campus on May 18 to celebrate [140 DMA and PhD graduates](#) and [650 MA graduates](#). For only the second year in modern history, doctoral graduates were hooded as they crossed the stage. Rubén L. González, Jr., Columbia's Dean of Science and Professor of Chemistry, offered remarks to the doctoral graduates, and Matthew Hart, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia, spoke to the MA graduates. You may watch Dean González's remarks, beginning with Dean Alonso's introduction, at minute 11.19 of the [doctoral ceremony](#), and Professor Hart's remarks at minute 30.26 of the [MA ceremony](#).

ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

Manhattanville Community Day Summer 2025

Saturday, June 7, 12:00–4:00 pm

The Forum at Columbia University

[601 West 125th Street, New York, NY](#)

Visit the [Biobus](#), founded by GSAS alumnus [Ben Dubin-Thaler](#) ('00CC; '08PhD, Biological Sciences), and enjoy a free, fun-filled celebration of community with neighbors surrounding Columbia's campuses in Morningside Heights, West Harlem, Harlem, and Washington Heights. Immerse yourself in the arts through youth programming, indulge in uptown cuisine with local vendors, have fun with science activities, plus so much more. View the schedule of events [here](#).

CAGSN Summer Kickoff Happy Hour

Tuesday, June 17, 7:00 pm

Purple Waves

[285 West 110th Street, New York, NY](#)

Join the Columbia Alumni Global Sustainability Network (CAGSN) at Purple Waves, a café built on the principles of circularity started by Sharon Avnon Reuveni ('17SPS), to kick off summer and welcome recent graduates to the community. [Register here](#).

BIO 2025 Convention Columbia-Penn Mixer

Wednesday, June 18, 5:30 pm

Alumni Ventures

[7 Post Office Square, 6th Floor, Boston, MA](#)

Join fellow alumni in the life sciences for a mixer co-hosted by CAA Boston, the Penn Club of Boston, and Alumni Ventures, one of the most active VC firms in the U.S. Compare notes, talk about the latest breakthrough or deal, network, and connect with others in the hub of the life science universe. Hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic beverages provided. Tickets are \$35 per person. [Register here](#).

CAA Boston hosts Dr. Jonathan Rosand

Wednesday, June 25, 5:00 pm

Charles River Plaza

[185 Charles River Plaza, Room 3110, Boston, MA](#)

Join Columbia alumni and friends for a special lecture by Columbia Trustee and Harvard Professor Jonathan Rosand ('88CC; '94VP&S) entitled "The Global Brain Care Coalition: How each of us can reduce our risk of dementia, Alzheimer's, stroke and depression." [Register here](#).

Columbia Global June Events

The [Columbia Global Centers](#) in Athens and Paris will hold events during the month of June. See the list of events and find registration links [here](#).

Members of the 1754 Society: Take a Columbia+ Class

Members of Columbia's [1754 Society](#), which recognizes donors who make planned gifts and bequests to GSAS or Columbia, are eligible to receive one complimentary course from the extensive catalog of online courses offered by Columbia+, the University's online educational platform offering non-degree non-credit courses. Find more information [here](#).

ALUMNI NEWS

- **Christine Chang** ('10MA, East Asian Languages and Culture) made the [2024 TIME100 Next](#) along with her Glow Recipe co-founder Sarah Lee. Their skincare company started as an e-commerce site and exploded over the past year.
- **Adji Bouso Dieng** ('20PhD, Statistics), a 2023 winner of the GSAS Outstanding Recent Alumni Award, was [named](#) one of ten African scholars to watch in 2025.
- Global technology leader Fiserv appointed **Takis Georgakopoulos** ('99MA, Mathematics of Finance) as Chief Operating Officer. Prior to joining Fiserv, Georgakopoulos served as head of J.P. Morgan Payments.
- **Irvin Hunt** ('14PhD, English and Comparative Literature) and University Professor Saidiya V. Hartman are two of the co-screenwriters of the sci-fi film *BLKNWS: Terms & Conditions*, which [premiered](#) at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival.
- **Amal Moussa** ('11PhD, Statistics), a Managing Director at Goldman Sachs who leads the Single Stocks Exotic Derivatives Trading desk was appointed to the [Columbia Alumni Association Board](#). Moussa joins **Nicole Bullock** ('10MA, Statistics) as GSAS representatives on the Board. **Jillisa Brittan** ('86MA, English and Comparative Literature), former President of the GSAS Alumni Board, ended her last term on the CAA Board this month: GSAS thanks her profoundly for her decades of service to GSAS and Columbia.
- **Romy Silver-Kohn** ('08MA, Modern Art, Critical and Curatorial Studies), co-curated the MoMA exhibition "[Lillie P. Bliss and the Birth of the Modern](#)."
- **Justin Smith-Ruiu** ('00PhD, Philosophy) is the Founding Editor of the Substack newsletter [The Hinternet](#).
- Europa Editions published *The Mortal and Immortal Life of the Girl from Milan* by National Book Award Finalist Domenico Starnone, translated by [Oonagh Stransky](#) ('02MA, Italian Literature). [Read an excerpt here](#).
- **Jenny Xiao** ('28PhD, Political Science), a Partner at Leonis Capital, was featured on the [Forbes "30 Under 30" list](#) for 2025 under the Venture Capital category.
- GSAS alumni have recently been featured in Columbia Magazine.
 - [The Impact and Artistry of the Federal Duck Stamp](#) explores the latest exhibition by **Daniel Ksepka** ('07PhD, Earth and Environmental Sciences), curator of science at

the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Connecticut, which is dedicated to the artwork of the Federal Duck Stamp, a little-known but wildly successful conservation program.

- [Can We Solve the Parkinson's Puzzle?](#) details ways in which Columbia Professor of Neurobiology **David Sulzer** ('88PhD, Biological Sciences) and other Columbia researchers are working to treat, prevent, and ultimately cure the world's fastest-growing neurological disorder.
- [Joan Tower: An Uncommon Composer](#) celebrates the career of three-time Grammy winner **Joan Tower** ('88DMA, Music).

Do you have news to share? Write to us at gsas-alumni@columbia.edu.

GSAS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

The GSAS Alumni Board acknowledges with deepest gratitude the service of Directors whose terms on the Board end this month: **Allison Turza** ('07CC; '14PhD, Psychology), **James Chonko** ('06PhD, Physics), **Larry Friedman** ('79PhD, Psychology), **Johanna Goetzl** ('13MA, Climate and Society), and **Hua Eleanor Yu** ('65GS; '76PhD, Biological Sciences).

You can assist the [GSAS Alumni Association Board of Directors](#) in advancing the vision of GSAS Dean Carlos J. Alonso by joining one of four alumni board committees: Alumni Engagement, Awards, Recent Alumni and Students, and Stewardship and Engagement. Write to gsas-alumni@columbia.edu for more information.

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