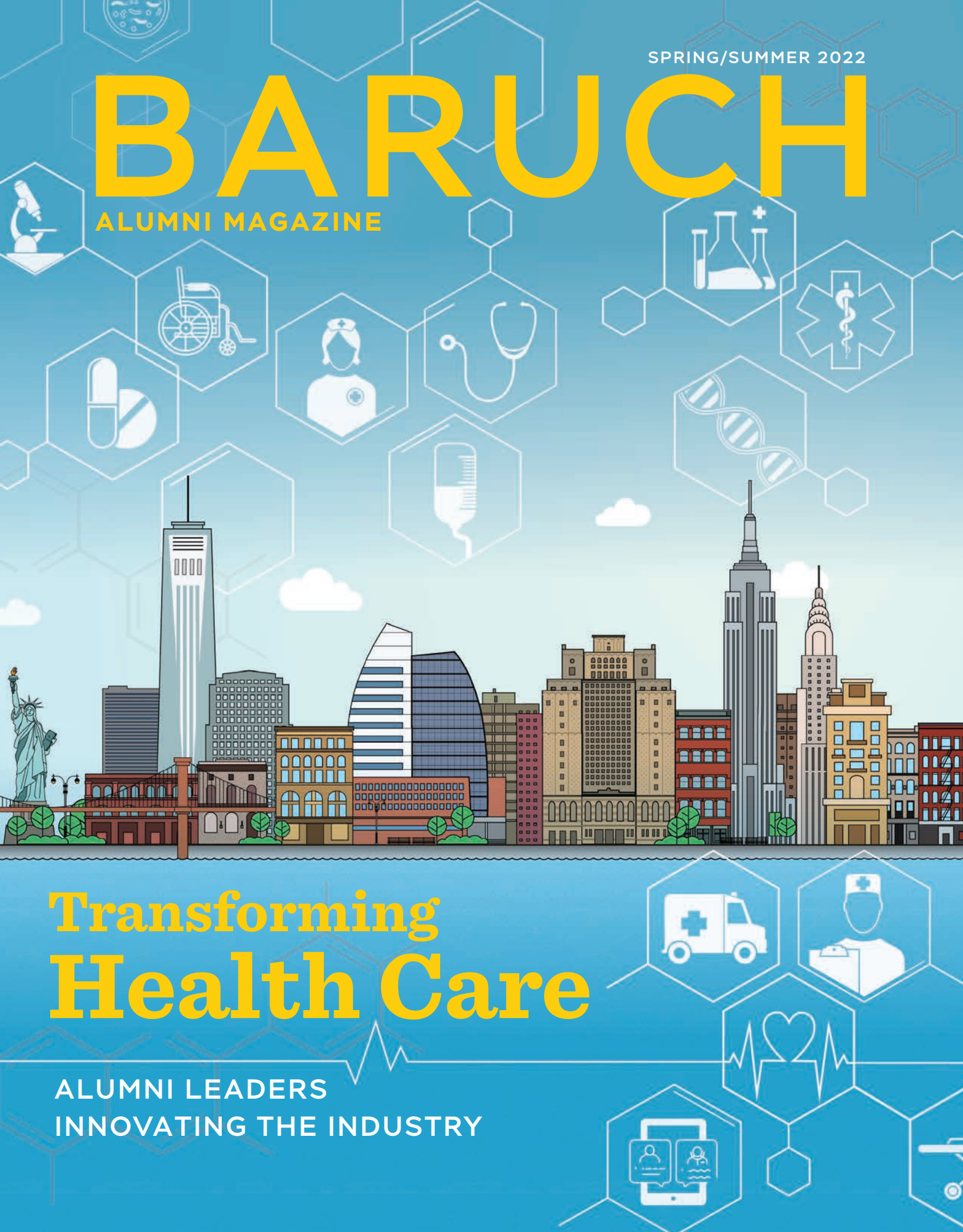


SPRING/SUMMER 2022

BARUCH

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



Transforming Health Care

ALUMNI LEADERS
INNOVATING THE INDUSTRY



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Baruch Alumni and Friends,

Spring is a time of celebration and new beginnings at the College. That sense of energy and optimism has been amplified by our gradual return to in-person instruction and campus gatherings.

Despite the challenging circumstances presented by the pandemic, the Baruch community came together to advance the academic momentum of our students. In May, more than 5,000 graduates and their families and friends filled the Barclays Center for the first in-person Commencement since 2019. This was preceded by the annual Student Achievement Awards that recognize hundreds of students who have excelled in academics and leadership activities. With your generous support that kept our students on track during a difficult time, these milestone events—in the most heartfelt and meaningful way—reflect Baruch’s legacy of excellence and the close-knit connection across generations.

In April, I had the pleasure of experiencing my first in-person Bernard Baruch Dinner, where *investing in our students* was the abiding theme. The dinner celebrates the College’s most dedicated and generous alumni and friends as well as business and community leaders. I am happy to report that we had a record-breaking dinner, raising more than \$1.7 million for Baruch’s students and the College’s ambitious future plans.

Each one of these gatherings is a celebration of Baruch’s enduring mission: a unique combination of *excellence and value* that allows us to deliver academic quality to a

tremendously diverse and talented student population. This lasting legacy allows Baruch and our vast alumni network to lead meaningful change toward a society that values opportunity for *all*.

This spring, the College launched a major strategic planning effort—to construct a comprehensive blueprint for our institutional future. This ambitious blueprint will help ensure that Baruch not only continues our legacy but capitalizes on the innovations of a rapidly evolving world—to scale what we do and expand our impact, while achieving an even higher level of quality and excellence.

The strategic planning process is an opportunity for the *entire* Baruch community to reimagine the future of the College. In particular, I want to fully engage and leverage our vast alumni community to help us shape and realize our goals. We will take extra steps to make sure alumni voices are heard.

Please ask yourself how you can impact Baruch’s future. Volunteer, mentor, hire, and sponsor our graduates as interns and donate at whatever level you are comfortable. Connect with me at my monthly blog, where I will continue to share Strategic Plan developments and other ideas.

Our students deserve every opportunity and every investment in their future.

Sincerely,
S. DAVID WU
President, Baruch College



On April 27, Baruch President S. David Wu presided over the first in-person Bernard Baruch Dinner since 2019. The annual benefit dinner honored Lara Abrash (MBA ’94), chair and CEO of Deloitte & Touche LLP, and Buzzy Geduld, CEO of Cougar Capital LLC and a member of the Baruch College Fund Board of Trustees.

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Two decades after its inception, the Financial Women’s Association (FWA) mentoring program at Baruch College has expanded in size and scope, with nearly 50 mentor and mentee pairs. As the program celebrates its 20th anniversary, mentors and mentees reflect on its enormous impact. Pictured: Former FWA mentees Julie Gurevich (’10) (left) and Kamelia Saroop (’12).




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Baruch Alumni Magazine

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Supporting Tomorrow's Citizens

Landmark CUNY Program Turns 25

What a quarter century it has been for CUNY Citizenship Now!, the nation's largest university-based program providing free immigration legal services. The initiative, founded in 1997 at Baruch College, has transformed from a small, campus-based program to a nationwide leader.

"Citizenship Now! grew out of CUNY's robust voter registration efforts," explained Allen Wernick, PhD, professor of law at Baruch and the program's founder and current director. "I was asked by the chancellor at the time to come up with a program to help our students become U.S. citizens, and it has since expanded to the public."

The program's services have grown to include green card renewals and helping individuals navigate Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) regulations. Dr. Wernick estimates that Citizenship Now! assists approximately 12,000 people per year, and he has raised awareness about the program thanks to a regular column he writes about immigration for the *New York Daily News*.

The program has faced its fair share of challenges. "There were a number of efforts in recent years to make getting a green card more difficult," Dr. Wernick said. "It created backlogs in the system. Then Covid-19 came and made it worse." Providing

Allen Wernick, PhD, professor of law at Baruch College, founded CUNY Citizenship Now! in 1997. In its 25-year history, the program has navigated various challenges, including recent political efforts to make getting a green card more difficult.



remote assistance throughout the pandemic brought different challenges. "It's not as effective or efficient," Dr. Wernick explained. "Not everyone has the internet, or a personal device, or is technologically savvy enough to do the paperwork themselves."

Dr. Wernick says Citizenship Now! has no intentions of slowing down. He gives special recognition to the dedicated 400-plus-member volunteer corps that regularly works with clients, particularly at naturalization events. He also commends CUNY's leadership and foresight for recognizing these needs and implementing a program to address them.

"I'm proud of CUNY for having this service and offering it to the community at large," he says. "It shows a commitment from CUNY as a welcoming place for immigrants." —SARA KARNISH

Newsworthy Partnership

The Google News Initiative is collaborating with Baruch College by funding a program that promotes journalism education, school newspapers, and news literacy in underserved New York City high schools. The program aims to help launch at least 25 school newspapers by the end of 2023 and will offer Google tools training for student journalists and their advisers.

"We're excited to be partnering with Baruch on this important initiative, which will give more students access to hands-on experience in news, as well as give educators an opportunity to instill media literacy skills," said Ashley Edwards, U.S. partnerships manager in the Google News Lab.

Baruch's High School Journalism Program launched 19 years ago and currently is managed by Professor Geanne Belton with support from other Baruch faculty, students, and Press Pass NYC, a citywide nonprofit. "CUNY in general and Baruch in particular have a very strong mission to help strengthen New York City, to be a resource for the city,

and in particular to create opportunities for young people here," Belton said. "This kind of outreach can really have a positive impact."

The program includes an annual conference where high school students across the city attend workshops run by professional journalists, a course for high school teachers called "Launching a High School Newspaper," and a "Newsies" contest with awards for outstanding high school journalism. Baruch students assist Belton with research and with running the workshops.

Some participating high school students have gone on to enroll at Baruch, taking leadership roles at Baruch's student-run newspaper, *The Ticker*.

"Without the high school journalism program, I likely would have never considered Baruch College, where I'm now studying journalism and am the editor-in-chief of *The Ticker*," said senior Amanda Salazar. "The program showed me that this is a college that takes

journalism seriously and can help me become a professional journalist."

The program also teaches news literacy. "Having a journalism program in a high school helps students learn how facts are gathered along with learning the difference between facts and opinion," Belton said. In addition, student journalism helps to "build community. To send students out to report on their own schools and write about their own schools is empowering and engaging."

—BETH HARPAZ



The Sea Is Key

Faculty Research Tackles Rising Tides and Deep-Sea Creatures

Recent and ongoing research by two Baruch College faculty members promises to shed new light on the connections between Earth's aquatic and terrestrial realms.

Deborah Balk, PhD, who studies climate-related vulnerability in the 21st century and the roles that urbanization, migration, poverty, and population distribution play, has been working toward a more accurate demographic understanding of the number and location of people living in areas classified as the low elevation coastal zone (LECZ)—critical information for policy makers and communities dealing with impacts from sea-level rise and other increasing coastal hazards caused by climate change.

A professor in the Marx School of Public and International Affairs and director of the CUNY Institute for Demographic Research, housed at Baruch and part of a CUNY-wide initiative, Dr. Balk recently coauthored a paper in *Earth System Science Data* that incorporates and refines currently available data to better estimate the at-risk population. The study finds that 1 out of every 10 people in the world lives in the LECZ, and city dwellers are more at risk—particularly those living in smaller cities in the global south and regions where adapting to climate change is politically unpopular.

Applying these datasets to the development of climate policy is increasingly important, says

Balk, given the "unambiguous evidence that urban population has grown more in the LECZ than outside of it."

David Gruber, PhD, Presidential Professor of Environmental Science and professor of biology in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, is the founder and lead of Project CETI (Cetacean Translation Initiative), which seeks to apply artificial intelligence to decipher the communication of sperm whales. The project is employing gentle robotics and advanced machine learning techniques to collect and analyze a comprehensive dataset of recordings of whale voices. "Sperm whales are incredibly intelligent and highly socially aware creatures," says Dr. Gruber. "We believe that by bringing humans closer to an animal species whose behavior is more similar to our culture and intellect than any other living being, we can help them care more for every form of life on earth."

In conjunction with his current research, Gruber collaborated with Alaina Claire Feldman, director and curator of Baruch's Sidney Mishkin Gallery, on an interdisciplinary seminar, "Who Speaks for the Oceans? Art, Science, and Inter-Species Discourse," offered this spring. The subject matter will also be the focus of an exhibition at the Mishkin Gallery, planned for fall 2022.

—SALLY FAY



Recent research by Baruch faculty members Deborah Balk, PhD (left), and David Gruber, PhD has focused on life below and above the sea. Dr. Balk has examined demographics of people living in areas at risk of rising sea levels and other coastal hazards, while Dr. Gruber's recent work has focused on communicating with sperm whales.

Gruber photo by Elias Carlsson; Whale photo by Amanda Cotton



Winning Ways

Baruch Athletics Is Back

Nothing can stop Baruch's talented student-athletes—not even a 15-month hiatus as a result of the pandemic that took hold in 2020. Unsurprisingly, the Bearcats got right back to their winning ways once sports resumed, taking home seven CUNY Athletic Conference (CUNYAC) championships this academic year. Men's soccer, women's tennis, men's basketball, men's swimming, men's volleyball, men's tennis, and baseball each won their respective CUNYAC championships.

To claim the men's basketball title, Baruch had to defeat Lehman College in the championship game, pulling out a thrilling 76–69 win in overtime. Head coach and former student-athlete John Alesi ('03) has been a part of all four of Baruch's championships, with the first as a player in 1999–2000 and the last three as head coach (2014–15, 2018–19, and 2021–22).

The Bearcats won their fourth straight men's swimming title and seventh in team history, dominating the competition behind the efforts of sophomore Dayan Ordabayev, who earned seven gold medals and was named the season's "Most Valuable Performer."



In addition to the championship winners, many other Baruch sports teams performed exceptionally well throughout the year. The women's swimming team finished in second place, capping another successful season—in fact, the team has finished either first or second each of the last 15 years. And the women's basketball team had its best performance since the 2014–15 season by reaching the semifinal round of the CUNYAC championship tournament. —JOHN NEVES

Nationally Recognized

Baruch Students Win Prestigious Awards and Scholarships

Seven Baruch College undergraduate students will soon be exploring new geographic and intellectual horizons, thanks to their success in elite national scholarship and award programs.

Bruno Santos Rodrigues ('23), an economics major in Baruch's Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, was awarded a grand prize of \$10,000 in the Social and Climate Impact category of the inaugural Blackstone LaunchPad Ideas Competition. The highly competitive, nationwide contest provides financial and entrepreneurial skill-building support to college students who have early-stage business ideas. Mr. Santos, one of just four competition winners—out of nearly 1,150 applicants from 34 higher education institutions—was selected for his proposal to create a socially responsible, environmentally friendly clothing brand that draws on his South American cultural background.

Mr. Santos was also the recipient of a prestigious Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship in 2021. The three-year fellowship program provides funded summer internships to promising undergraduate students from 12 New York City partner institutions.

Students representing the Weissman School and Zicklin School of Business earned highly competitive Benjamin

A. Gilman Scholarships to study abroad for the Spring 2022 semester. The U.S. Department of State-sponsored scholarship program supports the expansion and diversification of international study opportunities.

Economics major Joel De La Cruz ('22), international business major Allison Lai ('22), and digital marketing major Jacob Lam ('22) will use their Gilman Scholarships to support study abroad in South Korea. Pandemic-related restrictions have disrupted travel plans for actuarial science major Fanny Zheng ('23) (Japan) and for economics major Jin Qui ('22) and human resource management major Tracy Lu ('23) (Singapore), but the program is currently allowing scholarship recipients to defer their study abroad or to pursue virtual opportunities.

Tasked with helping Baruch students identify and compete for applicable scholarships and awards, the College's Office of National and Prestigious Fellowship Advising and the Study Abroad Office were on hand to provide institutional support and guidance during the prizes' exacting application process.

Congratulations to all of these intrepid awardees!

—SALLY FAY



Called to Serve: Baruch Alumni Tapped for City Hall Roles

In yet another example of Baruch College graduates helping shape New York City's government, economy, and culture, six alumni were recently appointed to high-ranking positions in the administration of NYC Mayor Eric Adams, who assumed office on January 1.

Two of the appointments are groundbreaking. Named commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Manuel "Manny" Castro (MPA '14) is the first formerly undocumented person to hold that position. Mr. Castro brings to his new role 15 years of immigrant rights advocacy, most recently as executive director of New Immigrant Community Empowerment, a Queens-based nonprofit and member organization of the New York Immigration Coalition. José Bayona ('09) heads up the newly created Mayor's Office of Community and Ethnic Media, functioning as the liaison to City Hall for media outlets that provide news and information in three dozen languages citywide. Mr. Bayona is CEO and founder of political and community consulting firm Grassroots Strategies and has held numerous communications positions in city government.

Lisa Fitzpatrick ('99, MPA '10) was named an administrator at the Human Resources



José Bayona ('09) is one of many Baruch alumni recently appointed to high-ranking positions in city government. He immigrated to New York 25 years ago, enrolled in Baruch at age 40, and now heads up the newly created Mayor's Office of Community and Ethnic Media. "The story of my new life in the United States started at Baruch College," he says.

Administration (HRA), providing oversight for programmatic and operational areas that help ensure that New Yorkers are able to access essential support and benefits. Ms. Fitzpatrick has served in the HRA for more than 35 years, most recently as chief program officer for the Medical Assistance Program and the Family Independence Administration.

Eric Ulrich (MPA '16) joins the Adams administration as senior advisor to the mayor. A former New York City Council member who served his southwest Queens district with distinction for a dozen years,

Mr. Ulrich helped pass legislation that established the New York City Department of Veterans Services.

Appointed deputy press secretary, Ivette Davila-Richards ('03) will help Mayor Adams communicate his agenda to the media and the public. Ms. Davila-Richards previously held positions as national assignment editor at Fox News Channel and associate producer at CBS News.

And Dawn M. Pinnock ('93) was named commissioner of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, where she supports the day-to-day operations of various city-wide agencies.

As these high-profile appointees—along with Vanessa L. Gibson (MPA '09), who won election as Bronx Borough president in November 2021—take their places in New York City government, they join numerous other Baruch alumni serving in New York State government, including seven who hold public office. Their achievements, says Baruch College President S. David Wu, "are great testimonies to the caliber of leadership and relentless pursuit of excellence in Baruch alumni, who continue to make outstanding contributions to iconic organizations in our city, our state, and beyond." —SALLY FAY

A Prescription for Innovation

BARUCH ALUMNI LEADERS SURVEY THE CURRENT HEALTHCARE LANDSCAPE AND PONDER POST-PANDEMIC PARADIGMS

BY SALLY FAY

Modern medicine is changing the course of human existence, increasing average lifespans, eradicating diseases, and offering relief and hope for those who suffer from chronic and debilitating health conditions. Yet the medical advancements from which millions benefit occur within a complex environment encompassing issues of economics, public policy, and equity, often resulting in dilemmas with no simple solutions.

Given its current challenges, what's the prognosis for the healthcare sector and in what ways will it continue to foster innovation in the years to come? The global Covid-19 pandemic has definitely spotlighted both the capabilities and the shortcomings of our systems, and one thing seems certain: improvements will require the input of a wide spectrum of healthcare practitioners and industry experts. Among them are thousands of Baruch College alumni—a few of whom share their experiences and perspectives here.



DOCS BE NIMBLE

The dynamic nature of modern healthcare has fostered a host of entrepreneurial ventures seeking to address systemic inefficiencies and unmet needs. Alexander Pollak (MBA '09), a New York City EMT-paramedic with more than 20 years of 911 experience, recognized a service deficiency while working in the finance department of a national ambulance company. "Large event venues were typically covered by ambulance services, which are trained to transport, not to provide definitive care on site," he explains. In 2011 Mr. Pollak founded ParaDocs Worldwide, which offers a different care model, providing on-site medical resources and staffing at concerts, festivals, and sporting events throughout the United States and beyond. Its current workforce of about 2,800 EMTs, paramedics, and other trained medical professionals "can essentially create a pop-up emergency room, which not only provides immediate high-quality care for attendees but also avoids costly hospital trips and the accompanying stresses on the local hospital and 911 infrastructure," says the proud CEO.

For entrepreneurs, adversity often reveals new opportunities. As the pandemic unfolded, ParaDocs pivoted its focus to administration of site-specific Covid-19 testing and, later, vaccines. Most notably,

the company was the exclusive tester for the 2021 presidential inauguration and was part of the record-breaking vaccination initiative at New York City's Jacob Javits Center. Pollak predicts on-site medical services will remain a growing sector in the aftermath: "Covid highlighted the infrastructure, cost, and health benefits of concierge programs such as preventive care and screenings for both public and private enterprises."



PAYING FOR A MIRACLE

The exponential increase in understanding of biology and genetics in recent decades has led to the development of impactful new medical and pharmaceutical treatments, notes Brian Meltzer (MBA '00), vice president and global medicine leader at orphan drug developer Alexion Pharmaceuticals. A clinically trained gastroenterologist, Dr. Meltzer found himself drawn to the problem-solving aspects of biopharmaceutical R&D as he pursued his MBA in healthcare administration. Today he oversees a team working to develop better treatment options for Wilson disease, a rare genetic disorder that causes a buildup of toxic levels of copper in vital organs. "Pharmaceutical companies are made up of people who genuinely want to make sure patients get the therapy they need," he says.

Although delivering new and improved therapies is the goal, Meltzer acknowledges that economic aspects of the healthcare system weigh heavily on the process. "Along with being able to prove safety and efficacy to obtain regulatory approval, R&D programs today need to satisfy payors—whether that involves private-industry or government-funded health coverage—by showing a drug provides value: either better outcomes than existing therapies or similar outcomes at reduced cost, which means drug developers need to create a product profile and a research plan that satisfies both the medical and the value parts of the equation."



THE PATIENT AS CONSUMER

Delivering the best possible patient care within the constraints of a fiscally complex business model is a challenge Graham Gulian (MBA '94) faces daily as chief operating officer of NYC Health and Hospitals/Kings County, a Brooklyn-based level 1 trauma center within the largest public hospital system in the country. Mr. Gulian is optimistic about the overall trajectory of point-of-service healthcare delivery. "We've seen physician primacy challenged by the health insurers and the onset of managed care in the 1980s and 1990s, and now the growing empowerment of patients as consumers as health information became easily accessible via the internet," he notes. Yet he acknowledges there are challenges

ahead for the U.S. healthcare system: "Sadly, we still haven't figured out how to provide quality healthcare to every person." He labels health inequity as the biggest current problem in healthcare and notes the disproportionate effect the Covid crisis had on disadvantaged populations who lack adequate coverage options. "Our national health system continues to be highly segregated by economic status and race," he says.

Nevertheless, Gulian believes the trend toward facilitating and expanding care delivery will continue. "Health systems are adapting quickly to move from a hospital-centric model to a consumer-centric model with diverse care options," he says. "Those systems that figure out how to deliver care in the way that consumers are demanding will lead the pack."

continued on next page



During the Covid-19 pandemic, Alexander Pollak's company, ParaDocs Worldwide, began offering site-specific Covid-19 testing and vaccine distribution. In recognition of his work, *Crain's New York Business* included Pollak on its "40 Under 40" list for 2020.

In his role at Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Dr. Brian Meltzer leads a multidisciplinary, global team that conducts complex clinical trials to develop new drugs according to international regulatory standards.



Graham Gulian (left), chief operating officer of NYC Health and Hospitals/Kings County, says that facilitating and expanding healthcare delivery will continue. Annette Catino (right), former CEO of New Jersey-based provider QualCare, says that Covid has accelerated this and "reshaped patient expectations," pointing to telehealth as a prime example.





SURVIVAL INSTINCT

The growing recognition among hospital-centered healthcare leadership that new strategies are needed has driven a trend toward multilevel, vertically and horizontally integrated healthcare delivery networks, says healthcare consultant Annette Catino (MBA '80). "But in the wake of Covid, rapid innovation has become a matter of survival," she says. A health insurance industry veteran who spent 25 years as CEO of New Jersey-based provider QualCare, which she founded in 1991, Ms. Catino currently assists health system executives and their boards with post-pandemic healthcare delivery strategies. "Covid brought to light the financial vulnerabilities of some of the services that acute care facilities offer and reshaped patient expectations," she adds. "They've had to reimagine care delivery within this new landscape."

Catino points to telehealth as one of many examples of a service model rapidly embraced by consumers whose access to hospitals and doctors' offices was constrained by Covid. "Telehealth has exploded now that people have gotten a taste of it," she says. "And outpatient therapy was becoming more accepted before Covid, but now it's accelerating; patients continue to avoid hospitals because of fear of exposure to transmissible illness, and they want care in a nonhospital setting."

Rebalancing service delivery to meet changing demands poses new financial challenges for facilities still reeling from Covid's disruption of revenue-generating services such as elective surgeries and diagnostic testing. But this reorientation also presents a significant opportunity to build a better-integrated healthcare system, says Catino. "If I see providers for primary care, specialty/acute care, and long-term care, my electronic medical records may reside in three different portals that don't communicate," she says. "That's not helping me as a patient. To get to where caregivers know what's going on with the total patient, we've got to stop functioning within silos."



A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

As the healthcare system strives toward a sustainable paradigm, challenges both old and new will come into play. Gulian stresses the long-term financial toll of treatment—as opposed to proactive preventive care and public policy solutions—for chronic conditions related to health inequities among disadvantaged groups. Pollak cites caregiver burnout, exacerbated by the pandemic, and the resultant shortages in medical staffing. And Catino notes the as-yet-unknown healthcare impacts not only of pandemic-

caused postponements in routine care but of Covid-19-related conditions, such as "long Covid."

Nevertheless, one thing the healthcare system has in its favor is the talent and commitment of these change-making Baruch alumni, along with the countless other industry professionals who devote their efforts to transforming healthcare. "Whether it's actual medical practice, pharma, policy, IT, devices... healthcare is fertile ground for a very long, rewarding career for people who want to make their imprint," concludes Meltzer. "There's so much opportunity, and so much need."

Baruch in Healthcare

By the Numbers

Baruch alumni have left a major mark in the world of healthcare, and the College has been sending students to medical and dental schools throughout its history.

Here are just a few noteworthy numbers, per LinkedIn research and according to John Wahlert, PhD, chair of Baruch's Department of Natural Sciences:



More than **5,000** Baruch alumni work in the healthcare, medical, and pharmaceutical industries.

Since 2011, Baruch has sent **85** students to medical and dental schools, including top institutions such as Tufts University School of Medicine, the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine, NYU School of Medicine, and Columbia University College of Dental Medicine.



Baruch students have a first-time acceptance rate of **68%** to medical and dental schools. The national average is below **50%**.

Baruch's Zicklin School of Business has offered a graduate degree in Healthcare Administration since **1969**.



Top healthcare employers of Baruch alumni include Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, and NYU Langone Health.

Two Decades of Empowering Women

The Financial Women's Association Celebrates 20 Years at Baruch



It started small, with nine students and nine mentors. Two decades later, the Financial Women's Association (FWA) mentoring program at Baruch College has expanded in size and scope, with nearly 50 mentor and mentee pairs. As the program celebrates its 20th anniversary on campus this year, the Baruch community is reflecting on its enormous impact.

"It was a match made in heaven," said Betsy Werley, the FWA president who launched the Baruch chapter in 2002 and currently serves as its co-lead. "When I looked at Baruch, I saw high-energy, smart, first-generation students ready to launch their careers. FWA mentors share their life experiences with these students and serve as a bridge to the sometimes foreign and intimidating world of corporate America."

The FWA, an organization established in 1956, promotes the professional development and advancement of all women in the financial community through education, mentorship, networking, and advocacy.

The FWA program is highly selective—interested students must go through a rigorous application process and interview. Once accepted, students are paired with mentors based on their academic and professional goals. Current mentees appreciate connecting with and learning from these experienced women. "My mentor helped me narrow down my focus and align it with my career objectives," said Nayancie Matthews, a senior international business major and current FWA participant. "She really understood what I wanted to do, and we've had such a great connection. I know I have a mentor for life."

Matthews' mentor—Salome Makharadze ('05), managing director at Goldman Sachs

& Co. LLC—participated as a mentee back when she was a student at Baruch. She decided to become a mentor so that she could pay it forward and help the next generation of women.

"I wanted to help students see themselves in their best light," she said. "To encourage them, to listen to them, to be a sounding board for them."

Makharadze is one of *many* former students who have returned to the program as mentors. Stephanie C. Lew ('06), a director at PwC, for example, has served as a mentor for several years and says she is benefitting from the program just as much now as she did when she was a student.

"As a mentor, it helps me learn the younger generation's mindset and keeps me that much more relevant with potential employees and recruits," Lew said. "The FWA program was, and continues to be, such an enrichment in my life—I've met some of my lifelong friends through it."

In addition to one-to-one mentoring, the program hosts career-focused events and funds study abroad and attendance at leadership conferences. Mentees have gone on to land positions at companies like Goldman Sachs & Co., Deloitte LLP, and J.P. Morgan. Since 2005, the program has received generous financial support from BMO Capital Markets' Equity Through Education program.

As proud as Werley is of the program's remarkable 20-year history, she emphasized that it shows no signs of slowing down. "These impressive students are the diverse business leaders we need in New York City—and the United States," she said. "It's been a wonderful 20 years, but we're just getting started."

—SARA KARNISH



Betsy Werley (right), the FWA president who launched the Baruch chapter, shares a smile with her former mentee, Mirjana Llana ('18).



"I know I have a mentor for life," says senior Nayancie Matthews (left), who was paired this year with Salome Makharadze ('05).



Olga Barskaya ('10) (left), director of the FWA Mentoring Program at Baruch, catches up with longtime mentor Christine Li-Auyeung ('00, '02, MS '09).



FINANCIAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

A Message from the Director of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement

Earlier this year, a colleague nominated me to be recognized as a “Phenomenal Woman at Baruch” as part of Women’s History Month. I was extremely honored to receive this accolade and, as part of my acceptance, was asked to share a few thoughts on this year’s theme: *Providing Healing, Promoting Hope*.

I immediately thought back to March 11, 2020—the date when we decided to cancel in-person alumni events in the wake of the global pandemic. I am particularly proud of what we did next: We started planning virtual events and went on to host 170 of them through June 2021. Our entire Alumni Relations Office aspired to promote hope, encourage personal connections, and provide healing for those feeling discouraged and isolated.

Slowly but surely, we are returning to in-person events, and we look forward to seeing you again soon! I believe all of our Baruch graduates are phenomenal, and I remain honored to serve as your “Super Connector” to help promote hope and provide healing during these challenging times.

With warm regards,

Janet B. Rossbach

Janet B. Rossbach

P.S. Please find me on LinkedIn and connect!



60s Psychologist **Lawrence Balter** ('60) was quoted in *The Week* magazine describing how “Generation Alpha,” children born after 2012, perceive the events of September 11, 2001. Unlike many other historical events, he said, “There is actually a straight line that connects what happened 20 years ago to today.” **Robert Brooks** ('63), a clinical psychologist, recently published his 19th book, *Tenacity in Children: Nurturing the Seven Instincts for Lifetime Success* (Springer, 2022). The book, co-authored with his colleague Sam Goldstein,

elaborates upon their earlier writings related to resilience in children and adults. Brooks is former director of the Department of Psychology at McLean Hospital in Belmont, MA, and a part-time faculty member of Harvard Medical School. **Jerome A. Landau** ('64) is CEO of Arbitration and Mediation WORKS. The alumnus, who resides in Scottsdale, AZ, has worked as a professional attorney, mediator, and arbitrator for 50 years. **Michael Roth** ('67) retired as executive chairman of Interpublic Group’s board of directors.

70s In February, **Daniel Nigro** ('71) retired as commissioner of FDNY. He had served in that role since 2014 and worked as part of the department for 53 years. Congratulations, Daniel! Fortress BioTech, Inc., a biopharmaceutical company, named **Neil L. Herskowitz** ('78) to its board of directors. Herskowitz has served as the managing member of the ReGen group of companies and has been president of Riverside Claims LLC since 2004.

80s **Michael B. Clement** ('80) was named a 2022 Influential Leader by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. He is an accounting professor at the University of Texas. **Steven Paladino** ('80) retired as chief financial officer and executive vice president of Henry Schein, Inc., the world’s largest provider of healthcare solutions to office-based dental and medical practitioners. He worked at the company for 35 years and will remain on the company’s board. Congratulations, Steven! Clearday, Inc., a residential care company, appointed **Richard M. Levychin** ('82) as director of its board and chair of the audit committee. **Michelle H. Brown-Nevers** ('83, MEd '90) joined Northern Virginia Community College as vice president of enrollment management and student success. She has 30 years of experience in student-focused leadership at colleges and universities. Women We Admire, a news and information agency about women in leadership, named **Helene R. Banks** ('85) one of its Top 100 Women Leaders of New York. She is a partner of Cahill Gordon & Reindel, a New York-based international law firm. **Luz D. Liebeskind** ('85, EMS '08), CFO of RiverSpring Living, was inducted into the 2022 McKnight’s Women of Distinction Hall of Honor in May. **Charles Moses** (EMBA '85) was appointed dean of the Eberhardt School of Business at University of the Pacific in California. In February, Moses also served as a panelist at the launch event of Baruch’s Higher Education Alumni Network. The National Association of Corporate Directors announced that **Larry Quinlan** (MBA '86) joined the board of its Florida chapter. Quinlan recently retired as global chief information officer for Deloitte. **Kaye Foster** ('89) was named a venture partner of ARCH Venture Partners, an early-stage technology

continued on next page

The Power of Persuasion With Real Estate Star John Gomes (MBA '02)

It takes more than a little charisma to rise to the top of the high-powered, fiercely competitive world of New York real estate. “It also takes passion,” says John Gomes (MBA '02), whose love for design and architecture, entrepreneurial spirit, and talent for trendspotting have landed him in the catbird seat of the luxury real estate market. His Eklund|Gomes Team—which he co-founded at Douglas Elliman with Bravo’s *Million Dollar Listing* star Fredrik Eklund—boasts almost 100 agents covering four states and 13 offices, with projects ranging from Miami skyscrapers to Malibu retreats. In 2021 they hit the \$4.5 billion mark for transactions.

Passion and drive also got the Boston-born Gomes to Baruch’s Zicklin School of Business. His application was initially rejected, but he immediately scheduled a meeting with the director of admissions and explained that his low standardized test scores could be attributed to learning disabilities. “I’m dyslexic, but I’m a creative person and a different kind of thinker,” he explains. He received an acceptance letter a week later.

Once at Baruch, Gomes found himself inspired by his real estate courses, became president of his class, and graduated cum laude. “I’m glad Baruch took a chance on me,” he says.

Through television appearances on HGTV’s *Selling New York* and Bravo’s *Million Dollar Listing*, and as a commentator for outlets like the *Wall Street Journal* and CNN, Gomes has become an expert voice on market trends. And during the height of the pandemic, when real estate was at a near-standstill and amid protests for social justice, Gomes—who is biracial and has had his own struggles with racism—used his voice to conduct forums about civil rights and diversity within the real estate industry. “At this point in my career, I have a platform,” he says, “and I realized I wasn’t doing enough.”

Gomes says part of doing more involves fostering inclusion in his field and on his team: “I feel I have a social responsibility to bring up talented agents who are diverse, to shine a light on them, and help them succeed.”

—NANETTE MAXIM



John Gomes (left) is real estate partners with Fredrik Eklund, who starred on Bravo’s *Million Dollar Listing*.

Tech Powerhouse

Jacky Wright ('85) Named 'Most Influential Black Person in Britain'

Here are some surprising facts about Jacky Wright ('85), chief digital officer of Microsoft and the top name on the 2022 Powerlist of most influential Black people in Britain, as published annually by U.K.-based Powerful Media. Number one: She's based in the United States, not the U.K. Number two: Her career in technology began with a job she held back when she was an undergraduate working her way through Baruch's Zicklin School of Business.

"I did not have an interest [in tech] until I got a job at a bank and started exploring technology," says Wright, who was born in London to Jamaican parents and immigrated to the States with her family as a teenager. "We had an IBM computer, and I started playing around with it and learned how to code so I could automate my work. From there, I was curious about what else I could do with it."

That curiosity led Wright, who had arrived at Baruch intending to study accounting, to declare a computer science major instead. She went on to work in IT for BP, Andersen Consulting, General Electric, and eventually Microsoft, taking a two-year secondment to serve as chief digital and information officer at Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs—the British equivalent to the IRS—before returning to the tech giant in 2019. She describes being named the most influential Black person in Britain as "humbling."

"I have always been focused on leading with purpose and paying it forward," Wright adds. "My ability to do that hinges on my ability to raise awareness of the challenges people face, to be their advocate and ally, and to have a role in creating economic opportunities for them."

And her advice for Baruch students who want to become tech leaders like herself? Focus on your passion first, and the tech part will follow: "Technology permeates everything we do. Whatever your passion, technology will play a role in it."

—SARA J. WELCH



venture firm. With more than 30 years of global human resources experience, Foster has played key roles in startups like Agios, GRAIL, and Resilience.

90s | **Anne Stapleton** ('90) authored her third book, *My ABC Coloring Book* (self-published, 2022), an educational tool for early readers. In addition to writing, she is a teacher based in the U.S. Virgin Islands. **Jerry Cheung** ('93) was promoted to managed services manager at Cornerstone.IT, a full-service IT business solutions provider. **Jeffers J. Joseph** ('93) self-published his fourth book, *Black Inventors*, a children's coloring book that shines a spotlight on Black inventors who have not previously received adequate recognition, including Marie Van Brittan Brown, who invented the first home-security system, and Garrett Morgan, who created the gas mask. **Ilene M. Rosenberg** (MBA '93) was promoted to partner at Kabat, Schertzer, De La Torre, Taraboulos & Co., a tax advisory company. **Bin Deng** (MBA '98) was appointed chief information officer of Ping An Insurance, an insurance company based in China. The publication *RuggedPC* interviewed **Chen-Teh Hwang** (MBA '98), the president of Rugged & Video Solutions Business Group at Getac, a Taiwanese computer company. Hwang spoke about the impact Covid-19 has had on the global chip shortage and how it has affected computer production and the automotive industry.

00s | **Regina Gillis** (MBA '00) was named director of finance at The Mount, the Edith Wharton estate located in Lenox, MA. Prior to that, she served as interim director of finance at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. **Regina Martinez-Estela** (MPA '01) was named to *City & State's* "2022 Health Care Power 100" list. She serves as president and CEO of Independence Care System, a community of professionals dedicated to serving people with disabilities.

Alumni Spotlight, a publication highlighting alumni of various colleges across the country, named **John Hui** ('02) one of its top 100 entrepreneurs of 2022. Hui is the CEO of Twiage, an award-winning digital health company that provides communication and care coordination technology to healthcare providers nationwide. As the pandemic unfolded, Twiage rolled out a Covid-19 module that enabled EMT professionals to alert hospitals of incoming patients suspected to have the virus, so that staff could prepare accordingly. **Daniel Valenti** ('06) was promoted to director at law firm Goulston & Storrs, where he specializes in acquisitions and equity financings. **Jacqueline V. Gibbons** (MS '07) was named vice president of people and culture at Urban Resource Institute, the nation's

largest provider of domestic violence shelter services and a leading homeless shelter provider in New York City. In this role, she will lead the department's human resources operations and services. **Alexandros Hatzakis** ('08) was promoted to associate executive director at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, an anti-poverty policy and advocacy organization committed to economic opportunity and upward mobility. Bloomberg named **Fatima Shama** (EMPA '08) its new head of Diversity and Inclusion, Americas. She previously served as executive director of the Fresh Air Fund. In January, fashion designer **Nana N. Yoshida** ('09, MA '17) self-published a coffee-table book, *Designing in Brooklyn, New York: 20 Years of Fads, Fashion, and Social Change, 1997–2017*.

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A Sweet Gig

Hostess Brands' Amit Sharma (MBA '06)

Amit Sharma (MBA '06) originally planned to work in information technology, but his professional path led him to a more appetizing industry, so to speak.

He currently serves as vice president of Investor Relations at Hostess Brands, parent company of beloved snack brands like Twinkies and Ding Dongs, where he is responsible for increasing the awareness of the company within the investor community and bringing in new shareholders.

"The love that people have for these brands and the connection they have with them is incredible," he says. "I get so many emails every day from fans and customers."

Although Sharma studied computer science as an undergraduate, he found himself drawn to the financial sector once he embarked on his career. He knew changing industries would not be easy, but enrolling in the MBA program at Baruch's Zicklin School of Business seemed like a natural next step. "One of the great things about the school was the flexibility to pursue my degree while I was working," he says. "That was important to me."

After graduation, he landed a job at BMO Capital Markets, where he spent nearly 14 years as a director specializing in the food

and beverage sector, providing him with a wealth of experience that sets him up nicely in his new role at Hostess.

Now based in Kansas City, MO, after living and working in New York City for many years, Sharma views the Big Apple as an important early-career stepping stone and encourages current students to make the most of it. "Being in New York is enormously valuable, but only if you reach out and network," he explains. "If you think people will come to you, they won't. There is lots of competition. Seek out internships. Seek out conversations."

And what is Sharma's favorite Hostess snack? Currently, he prefers Baby Bundts, one of the company's newer products. "But it's never an easy choice," he laughs.

—SARA KARNISH



BEARCAT'S BEST FRIEND

It's a dog's life for Luna, the one-year-old Maltipoo (a cross between a Maltese and a miniature poodle) owned by Rohan Henry (MBA '17). Henry, who works as a manager at EY, shared this adorable photo with us on Instagram earlier this year. "Luna loves to play fetch and meet other people and dogs," he says. For more photos, follow Luna's very own Instagram account, @LunaHenryTheMaltipoo.

A New Stage

Theresa Von Klug (MS '02) and the human side of arts administration

Managing a performing arts company, at the best of times, is a juggling act: running productions smoothly, keeping budgets on target, and making sure artists and crews are happy. But when the pandemic struck in 2020, says Theresa Von Klug (MS '02), "It came down to survival and keeping our people safe." As then-general manager of Berkeley Repertory Theatre in California, Von Klug explored government programs, health insurance options, and more with her team: "We did everything we could to try to make people whole."

Nearly two years later, Von Klug is bringing her vast experience in arts administration—and deep respect for her employees' humanity—to the San Francisco Opera (SFO), where she was named chief operating officer in February. Founded only a few years before the Great Depression, the SFO has endured World War II, recessions, new forms of media, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 2022-23 seasons are particularly pivotal for the SFO as it celebrates its centennial, offering newly commissioned work such as composer John Adams's *Antony and Cleopatra*, as well as classics like Verdi's *La Traviata*. "We have to find ways to build for the next 100 years," Von Klug says. "That means taking risks."

Von Klug feels well equipped for her new position. She received her Master of Science in Industrial and Labor Relations from Baruch while simultaneously working as a production manager for New York's City Center theater. She went on to plan and execute dance, theater, music, television, and film events for organizations throughout New York and New Jersey. "Actors get a high from performing," she says. "I get a high from being backstage, making the magic work."

As a manager, Von Klug adds, the job is about examining and analyzing risks, exploring options, and being decisive. "One thing I love—which can also be tremendously difficult—is 'the show must go on' mentality," she says. "But if you want to do something new and different and hard, you can't give up. You have to keep trying."

—NANETTE MAXIM



10s **Matan Cohen** (MBA '10) was named vice president of marketing at Agrify, a data-driven, agriculture solutions company that focuses on cannabis, hemp, and other high-value crops. **Diana Richardson** (MPA '10) was named Brooklyn's deputy borough president. She previously served as a New York Assembly member in central Brooklyn. In her new role, Richardson will focus on addressing food insecurity, reducing gun violence, and supporting community boards. **Roger Trimble** (MS '10) was promoted to managing director of Morgan Stanley, where he serves as head of Wealth Management Portfolio Risk. Prior to his career on Wall Street, Trimble served as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and was deployed to Iraq in 2004. **John A. Meche** (MSEd '11) is the project director of the Black Male Initiative at the College of Staten Island. He defended his dissertation in March to earn his EdD. **Craig Wesley** (MPA '11) was named manager of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Simons Foundation, a private foundation whose mission is to advance research in mathematics and basic sciences. **Alex Schukin** ('13) was promoted from associate to partner at American Industrial Partners, a middle market private equity firm. **Tracey Rho** (MPA '15) was named Miss Black New York USA 2022 and in August will compete in the Miss Black USA competition, the largest scholarship pageant for women of color. She will also focus a year of service dedicated to civic engagement and volunteerism. **Jazzmine N. Clarke-Glover** (EMS '17) was named to Women We Admire's "Top 100 Women Leaders of New York" list. She is the vice president of workplace culture and inclusion at Wagner College in Staten Island. **Kenya Nyota Lee** (MSEd '17), who serves as chief of staff at Baruch College, was named to *City & State*'s "Responsible 100" list for its annual Corporate Social Responsibility awards. The awards represent "New York's most outstanding citizens who are thought leaders and influencers who are setting

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Connect with the BCAA

The Baruch College Alumni Association (BCAA) has been at the forefront of supporting **Past, Present, & Future Generations** of Baruch alumni for more than 50 years! With generous assistance from our members and committed volunteers, the BCAA hosts enriching events, wellness programs, and professional activities each year and has endowed hundreds of scholarships and awards.

Our Board of Directors is 48% women and represents our growing commitment to diversity, with Michelle Corley as executive director and Raphael Rivas ('05) as president.

Don't be a stranger:

Connect with us at bcaaalumni.org,
BCAAalumni@baruch.cuny.edu,
or 646-660-6080.

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The Family Jewels

Turning a Side Hustle into a Celebrity-Fueled Enterprise

In 2015, Mayer Kamkhatchi ('19) was a freshman at Baruch College and, like many of his peers, a striving child of immigrants juggling coursework and two part-time jobs. In Kamkhatchi's case, the second job was an unpaid position helping his older sister Adina sell her handmade jewelry online.

Just three years later, that side hustle had vaulted Kamkhatchi from unpaid webmaster to CEO of Adina's Jewels, a multimillion-dollar company worn by celebrities like Billie Eilish, Kylie Jenner, Cardi B, and Ariana Grande. In late 2021, its success landed the siblings on the 2022 *Forbes* "30 Under 30" list in the retail and e-commerce category.

"Adina and I put every ounce of our energy into this business, which we were running out of our parents' house in Brooklyn at the time," says Kamkhatchi, who attributes his success to hard work, a bit of luck, and his Baruch education. "Whatever I learned at school during the day I would go home and apply immediately."

The two were also savvy enough to ride the social-media influencer wave: "We were reaching out to influencers on Instagram before it was being used for marketing."

Although Kamkhatchi's classes in marketing and management were, unsurprisingly, the most applicable to Adina's Jewels, an English course taught by Adjunct Assistant Professor Rasheed Hinds was the most memorable: "He was a superb teacher, very big on freewriting—expressing your mind on paper." Kamkhatchi still uses the technique today. "I write down what I'm thinking and all decisions come naturally when I do freewriting," he says. "It opens my mind up."

Kamkhatchi has found the approach so effective, in fact, that he recommends it to anyone looking to turn a part-time gig into a successful primary venture. "Don't deviate from side hustle to side hustle," he advises. "Write down your vision for your core business, stick to it, and don't get distracted. It's very important to home in on one thing and begin to pivot from there."

—SARA J. WELCH



CLASSNOTES

standards of excellence... and making transformative change.”

20s | **Jessica Vodoor** (MPA '20) was named president and CEO of Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden in Staten Island. She previously served as vice president of

operations at The New 42nd Street, Inc. **Bailey Davis** (MS '21) joined Dermody, Burke 7 Brown, CPAs, LLC as an associate in its tax department. **Izabela Rak** ('21) joined Fortuna Advisors, a management consulting firm, as a change management associate, where she helps clients change how they set goals and allocate resources.

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IN MEMORIAM

Mildred Weissman (1920–2022)



The Baruch community mourns the passing of a gracious and devoted friend, Mildred Weissman. She and her late husband George ('39) were among Baruch College's most prominent benefactors. Since 1998, the College's School of Arts and Sciences has been named for Mildred and George, a testament to the central role they believed the arts and humanities play in holistic college education. Thanks to their support, the Weissman Center for International Business has enriched student preparation for careers in the global workplace for nearly three decades.

Even after her beloved husband's passing, Mildred remained a very generous supporter of the school and the center. “We will miss Mildred's warmth, humor, and leadership,” said Helen Mills, president of the Baruch College Fund. “She and George had an enormous impact on Baruch—and their legacy will not be forgotten.”

ABOUT THE BENCHMARK SOCIETY

The society honors individuals who have included Baruch College in their will or trust, used retirement fund assets or life insurance to make a gift, or established life income gifts that benefit the College. In so doing, members have chosen to support Baruch beyond their lifetimes as Bernard Baruch did himself. Please contact Laura Kotkin at 646-660-6074 or laura.kotkin@baruch.cuny.edu to learn more.

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Betty (Rothwax) Geller '43
*Selma Brenner '45
Leonard Feller '47
Alvin Gindel '47
Rita S. (Briloff) Perman '47
Selma (Seeger) Robbins '47
*Edward Strum '47
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Julian Light '52

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**Benchmark Society member*

DID YOU KNOW...

- More than 137,000 Baruch alumni can be found on LinkedIn?
- JPMorgan Chase, Citi, and Morgan Stanley are the top three employers of Baruch alumni?
- Amazon is now the #10 employer of Baruch graduates?

...Your Baruch Network is your professional network.

Over the past two years, the Office of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement has established networks at some of our top alumni employers, including **Citi, Deloitte, EisnerAmper, EY, Goldman Sachs, Google, Grant Thornton, KPMG, the MTA, and UBS.** These networks have four primary goals:

- Build connections among alumni within a company, encouraging internal job sharing, mentoring, and sponsorship
- Recruit volunteers to mentor and speak to current students about career prep
- Develop new talent pipelines between the employer and Baruch College for undergraduate, graduate, and alumni/experienced hire recruiting
- Encourage individual and institutional philanthropic support of Baruch College

To explore launching a Baruch Network at your employer, contact Janet B. Rossbach, Director of Alumni Relations and Volunteer Engagement, at janet.rossbach@baruch.cuny.edu.

To post/search open positions for alumni/experienced hire candidates, join the **Baruch College Alumni Network Official Group** on LinkedIn.



To recruit current students, go to baruch.cuny.edu/hire-baruch or scan the QR code!



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