



HOMECOMING 2016

FIFTH SLAM

AS little kids clambered on Claes Oldenburg's "Split Button" outside Van Pelt Library during Homecoming weekend, a boy on the cusp of tweenhood stepped onto a nearby stage and tip-toed up to a microphone. "This is an original hit," he said, before playing the guitar and singing two of his own songs alongside his father, his mother, (Marcia Geller Sawyer C'83) and her college roommate, Sandy Mayer C'83.

They called themselves Peter G & The 83s, a reference to the year half of the band graduated from Penn. And they kicked off the fifth-annual *Blutt Band Slam*, a friendly battle of the bands that brings together Penn students, faculty, alumni—and sometimes, as in 10-year-old Peter G's case, even potential future Quakers.

"I am so proud of this kid," his mother (and backup percussionist) said shortly after their performance ended to big cheers from the smattering of people looking on from College Green and passing by on Locust Walk. Three years before, Sawyer had been one of those curious onlookers,

Arts & Culture Anniversaries

stopping to watch the *Blutt Band Slam* during her 30th reunion. And young Peter has been a loyal spectator ever since, occasionally donning an oversized *Blutt Band Slam* T-shirt while plotting to one day take the stage himself—which he accomplished with a good audition tape for this year's eight-band competition.

For Mitchell *Blutt* C'78 M'82 WG'87, the driving force and sponsor of the event, Peter's passion was a sign that the band slam is growing in popularity. "I would say each year it's had a little higher level of turnout, a little higher level of submissions, a little higher level of participants ... I think it's building some campus-wide and alumni-wide identity."

Blutt, who runs the healthcare investment firm *Consonance Capital*, wanted "to create something like an *American Idol* at Penn" because, quite simply, he loves music and lamented his lack of exposure to it during his undergraduate days. So the avocational songwriter, who has managed to squeeze enough verses out of his limited free time to cut an album, set out to boost the music scene at his alma mater.

This year, the final two acts brought down the house as a rock band called *The Burgeoning* took home the overall prize of

\$1,000, and a clever freestyle rapper named *Jon Iwry* C'14 won the \$500 alumni prize.

Iwry, who performed in the first *Blutt Band Slam* as a student, nearly missed his performance because of an issue with his turntable, running to the stage just before the three judges—*Blutt*, *Rolling Stone* music critic *Anthony DeCurtis*, and Penn music department chair *Anna Weesner*—were set to make their picks.

"I felt like I was a freshman again, sprinting down *Locust Walk* to hand in my term paper in person so I wouldn't fail a class," *Iwry* mused afterward. "In a way, I think that's what Homecoming is all about."

His dramatic dash didn't seem to affect his lungs, however, as he expertly incorporated random words from the crowd into his freestyles after dropping self-deprecating lyrics like, "You'll never see a rapper whiter than me." It was enough to prompt one student who'd found himself a hap-penstance spectator to shout, "Have I been missing out? Band Slam is the shit!" Afterwards, *Iwry*, who's applying to law school but would still like to pursue hip-hop, shook hands and posed for photos.

"I think this event is awesome," he said. "Penn is the type of university that has so much creative potential, but students are so busy in their day-to-day lives that it feels like a lot of us don't get a chance to express



it as passionately as we wish we could. It's great to have events like this every once in a while that let Penn students showcase how talented they really are."

Among them was junior English major Mark Menkevich, the lead guitarist of The Burgeoning, an unsigned Philly band with high hopes. Menkevich said the \$1,000 prize will help pay for plane tickets for an upcoming showcase.

"When I found this event, it said in the description that Blutt was always thinking at school, 'Man, I wish had time to do my music,'" he said. "It was really cool to find a community of people like you that can do both. I always thought you had to pick one or the other."

Freshman Julia Sandler was simply excited by the rare chance to perform on stage with her father, Tom Sandler C'87, who plays guitar. Tom stumbled across the band slam last year and decided to apply with his daughter. When they unex-

pectedly got a call-back, they had to get creative about rehearsing, finding space in a dorm room, a classroom, and an alumni relations conference room during Parents Weekend and Homecoming. They had low expectations going in, focusing more on enjoying the chance to play two original songs in front of Tom's father and Julia's grandfather Bob Sandler W'52, who was once part of Penn Players.

"It would be fun to win, but who knows," Tom said after their set, smiling at his daughter. "It's a win-win just playing with her and having my dad here." About an hour later, the pair looked equal parts stunned and elated when they joined Jon Iwry and The Burgeoning as winners, taking home the student prize of \$500. Their win was especially meaningful because it represented different generations of Penn people coming together—something the Blutt Band Slam has strived to achieve.

Diversity in age and musical idiom has been a defining feature of the event—from rock-and-roll, to a cappella, to a band this year featuring Penn vice president for public safety Maureen Rush G'11 on drums and psychiatry professor Tony Rostain on guitar.

"Homecoming is pretty special anyway, for all of us coming back, but I think we can build something at the University that has a lasting component and hopefully has a positive effect on much of the University community," said Blutt, whose now 15-year-old son Emerson has joined him at all five band slams. "It sounds a little clichéd, but watching people having fun and smiling at something we were able to contribute to is a gratifying experience." ♦

—Dave Zeitlin C'03

PLATT TURNS 10

As part of the Platt Performing Arts House's 10th anniversary celebration over Homecoming Weekend, Marc Platt C'79 ["Passion Plays," May/June 2006] was interviewed by Pearl Lo, a College senior who called the House "my home at Penn." Platt and his wife, University trustee and Penn Alumni President Julie Beren Platt C'79, provided the lead gift for the project. Located in the former Stouffer Commons, Platt House provides rehearsal space and a central gathering spot for Penn's student performing-arts community.

Besides touching on some career highlights of the prolific film-theater-television producer (whose credits include *Legally Blonde*, *Wicked*, the live TV production of *Grease*, and many more), their conversation addressed how he learned to be a producer (and met Julie Beren) at Penn, how their hopes for Platt House have been fulfilled, and whether students interested in careers in the performing arts should be majoring in them:

"It all starts with Penn," Platt said. "All the student performing arts [groups], when I was here, were really run by the students. So I had the opportunity to learn, and acquire many of the skills that I use today."

He recalled a Quadramics production of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* that made use of the arches of the Upper Quad to stand in for the three houses where the action of the musical farce takes place. "So that kind of creative thing you learn just by rolling up your



sleeves and doing it.” More broadly, “problem solving is problem solving,” whether you’re dealing with hundreds or millions of dollars. “It’s more sophisticated, the more sophisticated your productions become. But I learned at Penn.”

Platt also credited his mentor at Penn, legendary Glee Club leader Bruce Montgomery [“Monty in Full,” May/June 2000], for his “way of making you feel that every time you went out onstage, you were, like, opening on Broadway. When you’re 18 years old, and you have that adrenalin thrill, there’s something that was very inspirational about that.”

The Platts met through a production of *Godspell* (with music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, who would later do the same for *Wicked*, Platt noted). Doing a bit of stage business that involved presenting a glass of wine to an audience-member, he offered it “to the then Julie Beren in the audience, who later became Julie Platt.” They also forged a group of friends who have remained close through the decades, and to this day exchange a monthly newsletter on their doings, he added.

Platt House was created to remedy a perennial shortage of rehearsal space on campus, but beyond that to provide an environment of “real synergy—where kids who were like us, who are creative, could meet and create an energy,” Platt said. “To see what [students] made of this place, and the fact that it has been so well used for all these years, really warms our hearts very much, gives us a lot of great joy, truly.”

Marc Platt found his calling in entertainment behind the scenes, and two of his and Julie’s children—Ben and Jonah



C’o8—have launched successful performing careers. “I think my advice always was to them, don’t study it in school,” he said. “Many kids are very single-minded. I actually believe in what I call ‘filling your pockets.’ If you’re an actor, if you’re a director, if you’re a writer, fill your pockets with history and art history and political science and stories, whether it’s literature or nonfiction, that you can actually still learn in liberal-arts education in universities like the University of Pennsylvania,” he said. “And then, when class is over, throw yourself into singing, if that’s your thing, or directing, or writing. And that’s when you learn,

somehow between the classroom and outside the classroom. That’s my advice to anyone pursuing it—that both inside the classroom and out are equally important in developing your craft and your minds, your intellect, and learning how to apply your creativity.

“Creativity is intuitive,” Platt said. While there’s a lot that can be learned about the mechanics of making art, “in terms of that fairy dust that a writer can put into dialogue, or the idea ‘reveal’ that you didn’t see coming, or, as an actor, the choices that one may make that are idiosyncratic and not expected—that’s not something you teach.” ♦ —J.P.



ALUMNI AWARDS OF MERIT

William L. Mack W'61 | ALUMNI AWARD OF MERIT 2016



You arrived at Penn, planning to become a structural engineer. But early on, you suspected that engineering was not for you. *Business*, on the other hand, held promise. So you made your way to Wharton, where you found your home at Penn. Over more than five decades of volunteer leadership, you have expressed your love for Penn time and time again. You have

provided wise counsel to a succession of presidents, helped realize the dramatic transformation of campus, and envisioned—and helped to ensure—a bright future for our University.

In every connection with Penn, you have shared your extraordinary energy, wisdom and leadership. A dedicated University Trustee since 1997 (now Emeritus), you served as Vice Chair of the Board, in addition to chairing the Facilities and Campus Planning Committees. You also sat on the Trustees Executive, Development, Nominating, Compensation, Neighborhood Initiatives, and *Making History* Campaign Steering Committees. You were a member of Penn's Health System Trustee Board, and of its Executive Committee.

Moreover, you personally advanced the dramatic transformation of Penn's campus. You consistently shared your invaluable real estate expertise, advising members of our financial and facilities staff on complex transactions. You championed construction of Wharton's Jon M. Huntsman Hall, as well as new academic, residential and retail spaces. You advocated for the expansion that resulted in the Weiss Pavilion, carved out of "found space" at Franklin Field; as well as the brilliant reclamation of 23 acres that resulted in Penn Park. You supported the application of the land lease concept, which will pay dividends to Penn for many years to come.

Your volunteer leadership has extended to Wharton, to which you have often credited your hugely successful business career. You have served as a member of the Wharton Board of Overseers since 1998, and as its chair since 2013; you are a past chair of the School's Undergraduate Executive Board; and you also served on the steering committee of the Campaign for Wharton.

The imprint of your philanthropy is evident across Wharton, where your generous support has launched innovative programs and enabled them to grow and evolve. Anticipating the University's growing leadership role in innovation and tech-transfer, you and your wife Phyllis established the Mack Center for Technological Innovation in 2001, and later funded the Center's transition to the William and Phyllis Mack Institute for Innovation Management in 2013. Your

newest leadership gift names the home of the Mack Institute: the Mack Pavilion. You have also supported the Zell/Lurie Real Estate Center, William L. Mack Plaza, undergraduate financial aid, and an endowed professorship at Wharton.

The business of real estate has been your professional focus. Early in your long and distinguished career you joined the Mack Company, the commercial real estate firm founded by your family, which famously acquired a parcel of swampy land in New Jersey and subsequently created the Meadowlands Sports Complex. The firm later became the Mack-Cali Realty Corp., where you are now chairman. As co-founder and chairman of AREA Property Partners, you developed marquee buildings around the world, including New York's Time Warner Center. In 2013, you co-founded the Mack Real Estate Group with your sons, Richard W'89 and Stephen C'94.

Throughout the years, however, art has always been your passion. Longtime supporters of the Institute for Contemporary Art, you and Phyllis opened your home for the ICA's 50th birthday at your Manhattan apartment, where your own stellar collection was displayed. As chair of the board of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, your vision as a leader extends to the cultural landscape of New York and beyond.

You have already received Wharton's highest honor of the Dean's Medal, and the Wharton Club of New York honored you with the Lifetime Achievement Joseph Wharton Award. With gratitude that you have shared your vision, business acumen, and inestimable leadership ability with the University of Pennsylvania, we are honored to present you with the Alumni Award of Merit for 2016.

Alan K. Levin C'64 ASC'65 | ALUMNI AWARD OF MERIT 2016



You bridge the distance between Penn and your adopted Rocky Mountain state in so many generous ways. Just one example: A few years back, you invited the Penn Singers Company to perform in the Denver region. When a sudden snowstorm prevented the students from returning to their hotel, you simply invited all 20 of the singers to spend the night at your home. No problem.

While not every volunteer role involves serving breakfast, you have gone above and beyond on behalf of Penn ever since your very active undergraduate years. On campus in the early 1960s, you were a valued member of the men's varsity swim team, active on the Hey Day Committee, a brother at *Beta Sigma Rho* Fraternity, and served on the Inter-Fraternity Council. You worked on behalf of the wider community at the West Philadelphia Tutoring Project.

You kept up the pace after graduation as a serial entrepreneur. You settled in the Denver area, where you and your wife, Anna, raised two sons, Brian



W'94 and Ronald. Among other endeavors, you launched Glamorene Rent-O-Mat, the first rug-shampoo machine-rental company in the country. You ran Western Service Merchandisers, which supplies non-food items to supermarkets. Most recently, you have been president and owner of Fine Arts Industries, one of the largest manufacturers of framed pictures in the United States.

Living thousands of miles from campus has proven no impediment to your being an active member of Penn's alumni community over 50+ years. You served on the first executive committee of the Council of Regional Alumni Clubs (now known as the Regional Clubs Advisory Board) and as president of the Penn Club of Colorado for over 25 years. As a volunteer for the University's Alumni Interview Program for over a decade, you interviewed Penn applicants from across the region, answering their questions and sharing your perspective as an alumnus and Penn parent. You also founded the Colorado Ivy+Career Expo, an innovative career fair that now serves hundreds of graduates of Penn and other top schools each year.

The satisfactions of your own collegiate athletic career inspired you to become a great booster of Penn's athletic programs. You have brought men's and women's teams out to play at local universities, including a basketball game between the Quaker team and the University of Colorado that drew

cheering Penn alumni to the field house. You have introduced dozens of high school student athletes to the University's intercollegiate athletic programs, and you fuel enthusiasm for Penn teams by frequently inviting coaches out to talk with Western alumni.

You also have raised Penn's profile in Colorado by inviting professors for speaking engagements, and by booking the Mask and Wig troupe and other campus groups for engagements in the Rockies. You regularly return to campus to sponsor and take part in seminars at Wharton and other schools, where students listen with fascination to descriptions of your varied and successful entrepreneurial career. Always an enthusiastic member of the Class of '64, you have served on reunion committees and co-chaired your 50th Reunion.

In gratitude for all you have done on behalf of the University—by welcoming faculty, coaches, teams and cultural groups to Colorado, and for returning regularly to campus—and for your unwavering loyalty for and advocacy on behalf of all things Penn, we are delighted to award you the Alumni Award of Merit for 2016.

Paul S. Levy L'72 | ALUMNI AWARD OF MERIT 2016



As a young boy growing up in the Bronx, you lived and breathed Little League, posing for photographs in your uniform, cap, and mitt with great pride and happiness. While golf later became your overriding passion, your enduring joy in being part of a team has benefited every group you've joined since, especially your *alma mater*, Penn Law.

You have repeatedly stepped up to the plate on behalf of the University. After learning that the original law school building needed significant renovations, you and your wife, Karen M. Levy, teamed up to create the Levy Conference Center, a popular state-of-the-art meeting facility for the entire Penn law community.

You were moved to action again when Michael Fitts arrived as Penn Law's dean, bringing with him a cross-disciplinary approach that combines legal education with such fields as business and medicine. Inspired by the concept, you and Karen—parents of Charlotte A. Levy L'09 and Rebecca Levy Anikstein C'03 L'09, both lawyers—endowed the Levy Scholars Program, open to a select cohort of students who demonstrate both leadership skills and an ability to thrive in an academic environment that combines multiple disciplines.

Each Levy Scholar is assigned a mentor to offer guidance during the program. Nothing speaks to your own commitment more than the fact that you have mentored at least a half dozen of these talented Penn Law students. The Levy Scholars program has helped transform legal education at Penn, where over 70 percent of law students now graduate with a joint degree or

CLASS & CLUB AWARDS

Alumni Club Award of Merit – Penn Alumni Club of Washington, D.C.

It was a banner year for the Penn Club of DC. All told, you attracted over 1,000 attendees with a mix of events that seemed to have something for everyone. You transformed traditional gatherings—turning the First September event from a happy hour into a weekend brunch that attracted 175 people. And you enlivened the celebration of Ben Franklin's Birthday by teaming up with yPenn for the occasion. And you promoted your Club as never before: through a bright and beautiful revamped website, and a Facebook group page; as well as using snappy Penn Club of DC business cards, distributed at alumni gatherings as cheery reminders to keep in touch with the Club and with Penn.

Class Award of Merit – Class of 1986

The term, "crowdsourcing" may not have been coined until decades after you graduated, but the Class of 1986 has always known that getting lots of people excited and meaningfully involved is a winning strategy. Thanks to a large and dedicated team of volunteers who worked tirelessly to encourage classmates to "come back and give back," your 30th Penn Reunion was a triumph. Breaking records is nothing new for the Class of 1986. You did it at your 25th Reunion and again, just five years later. It's clearly time for yet another hurrah for your class and your remarkable cadre of volunteers and donors.

David N. Tyre Award for Excellence in Class Communications – Class of 1966

To set the tone for your 50th Reunion, your class appropriated a famous song penned by a fellow alum, Bobby Troup, a Mask and Wig troubadour from the Class of 1941. With only a few tweaks, "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," became "Get Your Kicks at Penn 66"—a winning theme for your milestone celebration. But your Reunion communications were much more than "kicks." You consistently and effectively made the case for one of your class's top fundraising priorities: endowed scholarships. The Class of 1966 Scholarship and scholarships established by individual classmates have helped make a Penn education possible for 162 students to date.



certificate from another school or department within the University. It has also served as a model for law schools nationwide.

In your own professional life, you have held executive management positions in the investment banking and fashion industry. You founded the private equity investment firm of JLL Partners, Inc. in 1988, where you currently serve as senior managing director.

Despite a demanding career, you have made an extraordinary and lasting impact as a volunteer leader. Named an Overseer of Penn Law in 1996, you chaired that board from 2001 to 2007. That year, you joined the University's Board of Trustees, where you were awarded emeritus status six years later. As a member of the Penn Medicine Board of Trustees, you served on its Executive Committee and chaired its Finance Committee. You have also served on the Penn Alumni Board of Directors, the Penn Alumni Council, and the Advisory Board of the Institute for Law and Economics.

You have made your mark as a strategist, philanthropist and motivator. You were a member of the Steering Committee for the University's *Making History* Campaign. You chaired Penn Law's hugely successful *Bold Ambitions* Campaign from 2006 to 2012, helping to achieve a 100 percent increase in student financial aid, a 40 percent increase in faculty positions, and the expansion of the School's unparalleled cross-disciplinary curriculum. Even after the close of the campaign in December 2012, giving continued unabated, with an additional \$21.5 million raised in the six months that followed—a testament to the philanthropic momentum you helped create.

In your time at bat for Penn, you've knocked some amazing home runs out of the park. We can't cheer loudly enough for all you've done. With gratitude for your dedication, keen problem-solving abilities, big-picture perspective, and impulse to action on behalf of Penn, we are pleased to bestow upon you the Alumni Award of Merit for 2016.

Ehsan "Nanou" El-Tahry Zayan CW'73 | ALUMNI AWARD OF MERIT 2016



Living all over the world since graduating from Penn, you have nonetheless remained wonderfully close at hand—almost as if you had never stepped away from campus. You have worked with great dedication and efficiency on behalf of your *alma mater* from your current home in London, just as you did from earlier residences in such places as Cairo, New York, and

Bermuda. In all your roles as an alumna, your global reach and international perspective have helped bring the world to Penn, and vice versa.

Arriving at Penn in 1969, you studied economics and participated in the

Egyptian Student Association, the International Affairs Association, and the Philomathean Society, the oldest continuous collegiate literary society in the nation. In your final year at Penn, you were elected to the Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society.

Heading to New York, you began a 14-year career with the bank now known as JP Morgan Chase. While based in Manhattan, you travelled the world with assignments that included adapting Chase's training model for a Chase joint venture in Egypt. When you relocated to London in 1983 with your husband, Mohammed ("Mo") Zayan, you focused on yet another continent, Africa, working for a Chase affiliate on programs in Nigeria and neighboring countries. These were busy years, during which you and Mo raised your children, Adley Zayan C'o8 W'o8 and S. Nadia Zayan, and you founded the firm of Liberty Capital Ltd. Despite a full schedule, you kept your focus on the Red and Blue, networking with other alumni and hosting numerous events.

Indeed, one of the first things you did after moving to Bermuda as President of EBT Securities in 1992 was to hold a Penn Alumni event in your new home. You quickly became the "face of Penn" on your island home, founding both the Penn and Wharton Bermuda Alumni Association and the Bermuda Secondary School Committee, also sponsoring popular events such as lectures by Wharton Professor Mario Moussa and other Penn faculty.

After returning to England a few years later, you expanded your leadership role as a founding member of the UK Leadership Committee and chair of the UK Interview Committee (2005-08). You have interviewed hundreds of applicants, becoming an integral, if long-distance, part of Penn Admissions' volunteer corps.

Retired from Collingham Capital Management LLP, a London-based alternative investment manager, you remain in close touch with Penn. You were elected a University Alumni Trustee in 2011, and served on the Student Life; Local, National and Global Engagement; and Development Committees, as well as the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity. You are a former member of the Penn Museum's Board of Overseers and the Penn Alumni Board of Directors, and currently participate in the International Advisory Board of the Huntsman Program and the Trustees' Council of Penn Women.

In the decades since graduating from Penn as a scholarship recipient, you have honored Penn's impact on your life by establishing two endowed scholarships. The Mac El Tahry Scholarship Fund and the M.M.A. Zayan/M. El-Tahry Memorial Endowed Scholarship are named for members of your family.

It is with gratitude for sharing your winning combination of gracious dedication, generosity, and a wonderfully global perspective that we feel privileged to award you the Alumni Award of Merit for 2016.



Jayne Davis Perilstein W'80 | ALUMNI AWARD OF MERIT 2016



Navigating complex situations with apparent ease sums up your *modus operandi*. You played a key role in bringing the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation to Penn, where the precious filmed testimonies of 52,000 Holocaust survivors are now available to students, scholars and the public. As both a Wharton alumna and Shoah's managing director of advancement, you served as a liaison between the Foundation created by film director Steven Spielberg and several Penn departments. "It took some doing," you later recalled. And yet you pulled it off with great Red-and-Blue élan.

Your inclination toward energetic engagement began early. As a Marketing and Organizational Management major, you were active in Wharton Women, worked for *Wharton Magazine*, and founded Students Helping Students, a peer-mentoring program.

Your life since graduation has remained wonderfully Penn-centric. You married a classmate, Ronald P. Perilstein W'80, settled in the Philadelphia region, and raised your children, Julie Perilstein Mozes C'08 and Alex D. Perilstein. You and your husband were partners in the Arjay Group, Inc., the insurance brokerage he founded, and you ran an event planning firm and worked as a marketing professional until you joined the Shoah Foundation full-time in 2012.

Over many years, you have worked with great energy and creativity on behalf of your *alma mater*. When you first encountered the Trustees' Council of Penn Women (TCPW) while working on the 125 Years of Women at Penn celebration in 2001, you saw firsthand the role it plays in the lives of female students, faculty members, and alumnae. You co-chaired TCPW's Philadelphia Regional Events and Programming Committees before becoming TCPW chair in 2012. On your watch, exciting events proliferated, including a speed-networking program designed to help members learn more about one another. Gifts to Penn by TCPW members increased as well. Most of all, you strengthened connections among TCPW members and committees across many areas of the University.

"Penn alumna" is a role you consistently honor through your personal leadership. You served on the Penn Alumni Board of Directors for over a decade, beginning in 2005, actively participating in the Alumni Programming Committee. You were a member of the Alumni Class Leadership Council, and currently serve as class president and chair of both the Gift and Reunion Committees for the Class of 1980.

You have also looked beyond Penn in your service to the University. As a member of the Wharton Committee of the Alumni Affairs Mentor Program since 2002, you have encouraged fellow classmates to work with students at West Philadelphia's Sayre High School, as part of a Netter Center for

Community Partnerships service learning program. You and the other alumni volunteers have developed supportive relationships with the teenagers, helping them to map out plans for the future and envision career options.

You served on the *Healthy Cities: Healthy Women* Committee at Penn Nursing, a conference series aimed at bringing visibility and developing solutions to global urban women's health issues. You helped to select specific topics of interest, identified speakers, and marketed the event to a broad audience at Penn and beyond.

You not only care deeply about being of service; you enjoin others to do the same. In your time with TPCW, you and other members have mentored younger Penn alumni to become meaningfully involved with the University.

For your organizational gifts, your deep dedication, and your commitment to the future of Penn and the community at large, we are privileged to award you the Alumni Award of Merit for 2016.

Lauren G. Hedvat EAS'05 C'06 GEng'07 | YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD 2016



Before you arrived at Penn, you were a big sister, and before you became a dedicated Penn alumna, you were an active and enthusiastic undergraduate. In each of these roles, you have been a leader—someone to look up to, depend on, and emulate.

You came to campus as member of the Class of 2005. Having attended a small high school in New Jersey, you were eager to be part of a large and dynamic student body in an energized urban environment. Which is exactly why you chose to come to Penn and pursue dual degrees in Engineering and Economics. So you packed your bags for Philadelphia in the fall of 2001, and became the first member of your family to attend the University of Pennsylvania.

It wasn't long before your two younger siblings followed your lead, which is no surprise. You immediately radiated affection for Penn, and this made a meaningful impression. Your sister Shannon joined you on campus as a member of the Class of 2007, and then your brother Brandon with the Class of 2010. Your mother, Valentina, quickly became an active engaged parent when you started at Penn and her loyalty has never waned. Penn became a family affair, with you leading the way.

As an undergraduate, you served as president of the Kite and Key Society for two years, and on the executive boards of the Engineering Student Activities Council, Engineering Peer Advising Council, and Society of Women Engineers. You were a resident advisor at Fisher Hassenfeld College House and participated in the College House Alumni Ambassador program. Your contributions as a student leader, paired with your academic achievements,



earned you the Penn Alumni Student Award of Merit and the William A. Levy Service and Scholarship Award your senior year.

With such great success as an undergraduate at Penn, why rush out the door? After earning your dual Bachelor's degrees, you went on to earn a Master's at Penn Engineering. Like you, your sister and brother continued on to graduate school at Penn, following in your footsteps once again.

You moved to New York in 2007, and not surprisingly, have excelled in your professional pursuits. After working for Deutsche Bank and Barclays Capital, you joined Goldman Sachs as an associate and then vice president. You are currently Capital Markets Director at Angel Oak Capital Advisors. Outside of work, you have devoted yourself to a number of volunteer activities, including forming the New York chapter of 30 Years After, an organization dedicated to the Persian Jewish American community.

You remain meaningfully connected to your alma mater. In 2007, you were appointed to the Alumni Class Leadership Council (ACLCLC), where you have served as co-chair for the ACLCLC Awards committee for several years. You serve on the Young Alumni Committee of the Penn Club of New York and have chaired Penn Alumni Interview Program committees. You also chaired your 5th and 10th Reunions, helping to achieve record-breaking attendance and winning the David N. Tyre Class Communications Award. Like a big sister to the Class of 2005, you have inspired your classmates to stay involved and to give back to Penn.

You are passionate about the power of financial aid and have donated generously to scholarships. Along with your siblings, you created the Hedvat Ijadi Family Scholarship at Penn in 2012. Yet again, the three of you came together to support a shared value and love for your University.

You are a remarkably engaged and generous alumna, who has already done so much for our Penn family. After witnessing all you have accomplished to date, we can't wait to see what comes next. It is with great respect and gratitude for your loyalty and leadership that we honor you with the 2016 Young Alumni Award.

Jonathan Avnet C'71 | CREATIVE SPIRIT AWARD 2016



As a seasoned Hollywood powerhouse, you are no stranger to risky business. In an industry infamous for disappointment and uncertainty, you nevertheless opt to take chances, rather than play it safe. You choose possibilities over guarantees. And while it takes a certain kind of spirit to go out on a limb, it takes true talent like yours to turn risks into reward.

As the writer, director, or producer of more than 70 films, TV shows, and theater productions, your movie *Risky Business* was, of course, only one of

them. When this blockbuster hit was released in theaters in 1983, it propelled Tom Cruise to stardom and catapulted your career to new heights.

To rewind a bit, your creative journey began as a student at Penn, where you thrived in writing courses and crystallized a sense of yourself as someone with something unique to say. Throughout your undergraduate years, you studied theater and film, and began getting behind-the-camera experience on independent short films and other small-scale productions.

As a young producer, you paid your dues, relying on one key personal attribute: your relentless will to succeed. You have shared the need for persistence, as well as other wisdom, with Penn students as a regular guest at the Kelly Writers House and dedicated mentor and industry resource. You have sponsored internships at your film company, Brooklyn Films, through the RealArts@Penn program. You have engaged with a myriad of budding Penn artists and hopeful creatives getting their start on Locust Walk. And over the years, you have modeled, time and time again, that taking a risk for your dreams is a leap worth taking.

Among the many motion pictures, television movies, and Broadway plays you have directed, written, or produced are *Black Swan*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *The Burning Bed*, *Uprising*, *The Starter Wife*, *Spamalot*, *History Boys*, *Pillowman*, and many more. Your projects have won Oscars, Emmys, Tonys, Peabody Awards, Golden Globes, and a catalog of other awards and recognitions. Most recently, you directed the FX network series *Justified*, and launched the web channel WIGS. You co-founded your first production company in 1986 and now head Indigenous Media as co-CEO, where your focus is on innovative online entertainment.

Throughout your legendary career, you have stayed closely connected with Penn. You and your wife, Barbara Brody Avnet, entrusted Penn with your three children (Alexandra C'02, Jake C'05, and Lily C'11), before they launched their own notable careers in the entertainment industry. You have served as a School of Arts & Sciences Overseer since 2002, offering your unique and deeply valuable perspectives to three Deans and countless fellow Overseers. You established the Avnet Screenwriting Fund to bring visiting screenwriters to teach on campus, and have visited Penn classrooms yourself as a frequent guest lecturer. You have invested across the University in Penn Arts & Sciences, Kelly Writers House, the David Pottruck Health and Fitness Center, and the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing. Beyond Penn, your many distinctions include serving as vice chair and trustee of the American Film Institute.

To borrow a line from poet Emily Dickinson, you "dwell in possibility," and prove that pursuing one's creative vision is well worth the inherent risks. For serving as an excellent role model and mentor, and for your unwavering support of Penn and the bright promise of our students, it is our privilege to present you with the Creative Spirit Award of 2016.