

Homecoming 2019

2019



Merit Awards

Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw

Faculty Award of Merit



An Associate Professor in History of Art, you are a scholar, a teacher, and a curator. As you explore race, gender, sexuality, and class in art from the United

States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, you move seamlessly from the classroom to the museum. In this, you represent the full arc of knowledge: from discovery, to teaching, to communicating with the broadest possible audience.

No matter the medium—academic publications and books; classroom lectures; or popular exhibits such as “Represent: 200 Years of African American Art,” which you co-curated at the Philadelphia Museum of Art—you do it all with great virtuosity and passion.

At Penn, you teach a range of classes, from survey courses to graduate seminars. In addition, you lead curatorial seminars in which your students develop art exhibits at galleries and museums on campus and throughout the city. A magnetic teacher with a contagious love of learning, you recently won the Abrams Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching. Penn Arts & Sciences recognized you with their Innovation in Teaching Award for integrating digital techniques into your courses.

You bring the same dynamic teaching style to the alumni community. You have been a faculty host for Penn Alumni Travel for 10 years, leading trips to Peru, Spain, Portugal, France, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and the Caribbean. On each, you share your deep knowledge of art and culture with alumni travelers. At the same time, you join with them in uncovering new insights that have gone on to shape your research and teaching at Penn.

Your most recent curatorial seminar—in which your students researched and developed “Soy Cuba/I Am Cuba: The Contemporary Landscapes of Roger Toledo”—was a direct result of your meeting the artist on a 2015 Alumni Travel trip. The exhibit, on view at Penn’s Arthur Ross Gallery this past spring, opened to great acclaim.

Alumni travelers have raved about your expertise, your enthusiasm and accessibility, and your friendship. In fact, you have stayed in touch with many alumni long after your trips

are over, inviting them to your talks and back to campus for exhibits.

You have engaged alumni in numerous other ways. As part of Experience Penn, you have accompanied alumni on behind-the-scenes tours at the Prospect New Orleans and Art Basel Miami, providing context and spurring incisive discussion. Audiences at Trustees’ Council of Penn Women and Penn Spectrum events have also benefited from your expertise.

This past spring, you dazzled Penn alumni and friends as one of three panelists on stage with President Amy Gutmann as part of The Power of Penn Campaign tour. “One of the things that’s most important to me as an art historian,” you said at the Philadelphia event, “is sharing art with people.” In this, you have succeeded magnificently.

In recognition of your remarkable scholarship, your commitment to broadening and deepening access to art, and the joy with which you do it all, Penn Alumni is delighted to present you with the Faculty Award of Merit.

Jennifer Higdon G’92 Gr’94

Creative Spirit Award



One of America’s top composers today, you have created award-winning classical compositions that have cut across genres, soared through diverse audiences, and—like all great art—come to rest

deep in the hearts of your many listeners.

With two Grammy Awards and a Pulitzer Prize, you are one of this country’s most frequently performed living composers. You are also one of its most prolific, with works ranging from concertos, to operas, to school band pieces. Your impact has been so profound that some have referred to our current classical music moment as “the age of Higdon.”

Your work has been called many things: “propulsive,” “joyful,” and “American.” But most often, it is called accessible—or, as you have said, “communicative.” It’s a label that you have embraced. “I want my music to touch the audience. You don’t need a Ph.D. to understand my pieces,” you have noted.

Much of this comes from your background. Born in Brooklyn, your family moved to rural

Tennessee when you were 11. With artist parents, you grew up surrounded by art and by music—not classical music, but the Beatles, Bob Marley, and the Rolling Stones. Through rock, you have said, you discovered music’s power to communicate.

Your first experience as a musician was as a flutist in your high school band, having found a flute in your attic and taught yourself to play at age 15. At Bowling Green State University, you began formal music studies; three years later—at the age of 21—you took your first composition class. With abundant natural talent, a newfound goal to be a composer, and a commitment to working hard to make up for your late start, you entered the Curtis Institute of Music.

By the time you arrived at Penn’s graduate program in composition, you were still a relative novice by your own account, albeit one with dazzling potential. You soon gained a reputation as a strong student, impressing faculty with your mastery of a range of styles and your speed in composing. George Crumb was among your Penn mentors. You have said he challenged you to inject unexpected sounds into your work.

After graduating, you took a yearlong position with the Penn Orchestra and wind ensemble as conductor, while continuing to compose.

From there, you rocketed ahead quickly. *Blue Cathedral*, which premiered in 2000, was your breakthrough piece, winning critical and popular acclaim. Today, it has the distinction of being one of the most frequently performed contemporary orchestral works by a living American composer. A string of successful and extraordinarily diverse compositions followed.

Like your music, you are known for your accessibility and warmth. The Milton L. Rock Chair in Composition at Curtis Institute and a frequent composer-in-residence at universities throughout the country, you are a dynamic and committed teacher. As one of the nation’s most distinguished queer composers, you have been an engaging role model for the LGBT community. And you rarely turn down an invitation to talk—at a preconcert session, an academic seminar, or an interview for a *Pennsylvania Gazette* piece. No matter the audience, you speak with insight and candor, making you one of the most sought-after voices in music today.

Fortunately for us, even as your star has risen into the stratosphere, you remain deeply rooted

in your adopted hometown of Philadelphia and committed to Penn. In addition to returning to campus for Music Department colloquia and University talks, you welcomed Penn students into a behind-the-scenes experience at Opera Philadelphia's production of your opera, *Cold Mountain*.

For moving modern classical music in new directions and touching a chord that has resonated powerfully in the hearts of so many, we are delighted to present you with the Creative Spirit Award for 2019.

Shannon Hedvat EAS'07 GEng'08 L'11

Young Alumni Award



You are what is known as a “triple threat.” Not only do you have the rare distinction of holding three Penn degrees, you have made significant contributions to the University as a student, alumna, and volunteer.

Your extraordinary service to Penn began when you were a student. Among your many leadership roles, you were President of both the Kite and Key Society and the Engineering Student Activities Council. You served as Co-Chair for the University Honor Council and the Class of 2007 Gift Drive, and you served fellow students as a Residential Advisor and Graduate Associate in the College Houses. For your service in these activities and more, you were awarded the prestigious Penn Alumni Student Award of Merit in 2007.

You are also a member of another important trinity: the Hedvat siblings. Fortunately for the University, rivalry in the Hedvat family seems to revolve around who can do more for Penn. When you won the William A. Levi Kite and Key Society Award for Service and Scholarship in 2007, you were following in the footsteps of your sister, Lauren Hedvat EAS'05 C'06 GEng'07, who won it in 2005. In 2010, it was time for your brother Brandon Hedvat EAS'10 W'10 GEng'11, to take the award home. Together, you and your siblings generously established the Mikail Hedvat Ijadi Family Scholarship to support the next generation of Penn students. The three of you often appear together at Penn events in New York City, as well as Homecoming and Alumni Weekend. You've even gotten your parents, Valentina and Nejat, to accompany you and get involved as members of their regional

alumni club, Parents Council, and more.

As both a law student and a lawyer who has won awards for your commitment to pro bono work, you have embodied the University's motto, “Laws without morals are useless.” Penn Law Admissions could always count on you to take prospective and admitted students on tours, to class, or even to lunch with you. You participated in the mediation clinic and helped coordinate Orientation to help fellow transfer students feel welcome. These days, you are still helping to bring talented students to Penn Law by volunteering as an Alumni representative at recruiting fairs and admitted student receptions.

As an alumna, your dedication to Penn continues to expand. You have volunteered your time through the Alumni Interview Program, Host Committees for various Penn events, and The Penn Fund Executive Board. You also continue to serve the Class of 2007, having held leadership roles such as Vice President of the class and Gift Chair. While balancing your full-time work as a rising-star intellectual property attorney, you are ever-willing to share your time with Penn, whether to give a guest lecture on the legal aspects of entrepreneurship or mentor current engineering students. You have even proposed the creation of a new shared interest group for alumni women entrepreneurs.

We are confident that as the years go by, you will continue to stay meaningfully connected to the University, and that Penn will be an important part of your family, just as you will always be a part of ours. And now, in appreciation for your many contributions to the University of Pennsylvania, we are delighted to present you with the Young Alumni Award of Merit for 2019.

William W. M. Cheung D'81 GD'82 PAR'08 PAR'12

Alumni Award of Merit



You are one of Penn's most effective global bridge builders. Your success comes not only from your belief in the importance of engaging internationally, but also from who you are. In everything you do, you embody the highest integrity and absolute dedication.

As a young man, you left Hong Kong and came to the U.S. to pursue your dream of becoming a



dentist. After graduating from Wilkes University, you earned an M.S. from Cornell, then a D.M.D. and Certificate in General Dentistry from Penn Dental. As planned, you returned to Asia with incredible experience and credentials, and embarked on creating a thriving Hong Kong dental practice. You also carried home something you had not expected: a deep love of Penn.

That passion for Penn led you to become an active alumnus in Asia, where your ability to engage your fellow alumni was immediately apparent. Later, undaunted by the distance, you joined Penn Dental's Board of Overseers and initiated what is now 20 years of University leadership.

That remarkable run has included serving as Chairman of the Penn Dental Board of Overseers. You were also a member of Penn's Board of Trustees for two terms before becoming Emeritus. In that time, several committees have benefitted from your experience: Student Life; Diversity; and Local, National, and Global Engagement. Most recently, you signed on as Campaign Co-Chair for The Power of Penn Dental Medicine Campaign. For anyone, much less a busy professional who lives 8,000 miles away, this is an exceedingly full plate.

You have been an exceptional leader at Penn. Known for setting ambitious goals, you achieve them through discipline and focus. During your



tenure as Penn Dental Board Chair, the School has experienced tremendous growth, enhancing its facilities (which include the Cheung Advanced Dental Care Center and the Cheung Auditorium, thanks to your generosity), recruiting internationally recognized faculty, and fortifying its curriculum. In creating and funding the Cheung Family World Scholars, you have helped lighten the financial burden for many worthy students who aspire to impactful careers in dentistry.

To all of these roles you have brought your deep conviction that Penn must expand its global reach. You knew this as an international student. As a dentist involved in building oral health resources in less developed countries, providing free dental care to those in need throughout China, and bolstering continuing dental education across the globe, you have become even more certain of it.

At Penn Dental you have led the way in making the school into a model of global engagement. You have supported and catalyzed research and teaching collaborations around the world—particularly in Asia—and helped to build a faculty and student population that is more international than ever.

Across the University, you have worked ceaselessly to extend Penn's engagement in East Asia. From organizing alumni events, to welcoming visiting Penn faculty, to offering advice to Penn staff on logistics, you have been a vital partner. Today, Penn and its schools are collaborating with a growing number of Chinese universities, and you have helped build many of these relationships. You also oversaw Penn's establishment of its Hong Kong Foundation, which facilitates giving to Penn. And it is no overstatement to say that without your support, the bustling Penn Wharton China Center would not exist today. Your two increasingly involved alumnae daughters, Stefani and Liana, have ensured that your own transcontinental Penn connections continue to flourish.

With gratitude for your unending commitment to Penn and appreciation for the global vision you have fostered and continue to make a reality for our University, we are delighted to present you with the 2019 Alumni Award of Merit.

Dean A. Henry W'74 PAR'04
Alumni Award of Merit



A Wharton graduate who retired from a distinguished career in information technology to start a business specializing in African American genealogy, you

know that it's never too late to forge a new path.

Perhaps that realization accounts for your reconnection with Penn three decades after you graduated. That—and some perfectly timed Penn inspiration.

It was 2004, and your daughter Kristen had just graduated after four rewarding years as a student in the College. With Kristen's Penn experience still fresh in your mind, you heard Penn's new president, Amy Gutmann, outline her vision for the University. Her Penn Compact, with its emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and enriching the experience for all students, resonated strongly with you—and you knew that you wanted to be part of it.

So began a decade and a half of heartfelt and dedicated service. You joined the Black Alumni Society. Soon after, you became a member of the James Brister Society, the alumni group dedicated to improving the campus experience for students, faculty, and administrators of color. An active member of both, you quickly became known for your dedication, your willingness to help, and the ease and grace with which you connect with people.

All of these attributes made you a perfect leader for Penn's celebration of the 125th anniversary of the graduation of the University's first

student of color. As chair of the event's Finance Committee, you not only helped to produce a fantastic year of events commemorating James Brister and his legacy, you also played a significant role in catalyzing a new level of collaboration across Penn's multicultural alumni groups.

You made use of the same skills when, seven years later in 2013, you took on the role of co-chair of the James Brister Society. It was a challenging time for the 20-year-old group, but you saw an opportunity to create new momentum within the alumni community of color and set out to revitalize the organization.

Over two years, you honed the group's priorities, reconfigured programming and organization, and reached out to a broad range of alumni. Thanks to your hard work and the good will you engendered, the Brister Society reemerged as a robust organization with a renewed sense of purpose.

Your formal leadership positions only scratch the surface of your commitment to Penn. For 15 years, you have been a rock-solid supporter of students, alumni, and staff. From hosting dinners in your home for incoming students of color, to interviewing undergraduate applicants, to serving on any Penn Alumni committee that requests your counsel, to sharing your genealogy expertise with alumni through your well-attended presentations, you continue to find new ways to strengthen the Penn community. And even in the midst of a busy career and family life, you have always been wonderfully present—rarely missing a Black Alumni or Brister Society meeting, program, or conference.

Most recently, in addition to serving on your Class's Reunion Committee, you have been active in the Brister Society's efforts to support first-generation/low-income students. In this work, you truly excel. Whether you are hosting a small student gathering or chatting with students one-on-one, your warmth and deep dedication to helping them thrive at Penn is palpable—and enormously impactful. Fifteen years after you first heard Dr. Gutmann's call to action, you continue to respond with ardor.

For the many ways in which you support Penn's communities of color, and your abiding commitment to ensuring that this University and all of its students live up to their vast potential, Penn is delighted to present you with the 2019 Alumni Award of Merit.

Andrea Berry Laporte Nu'69

Alumni Award of Merit



You have a rare gift: the ability to go wherever you are needed and make a difference. You have shown that talent again and again in your commitment to Penn.

Your contributions are as wide as they are deep, from helping shape the Institute of Contemporary Art and advancing nursing education to helping steer two capital campaigns.

The daughter of Penn alumni Dorothy Thornburg Berry DH'41 and Harrison M. Berry Jr. D'43 GD'52, you graduated from Penn Nursing, where you were a member of Kappa Alpha Theta. From there you went on to earn a master's degree from NYU. In 1977, after meeting your husband John H. "Jack" Laporte Jr., you moved to Maryland where you raised two sons, Christopher and Timothy.

Always an enthusiastic alumna, you stepped up your Red & Blue activism in 1989 when you co-chaired the Undergraduate Advisory Board's Legacy Campaign at the School of Nursing to endow the Theresa I. Lynch Fund in support of undergraduate students. By 2001, you were an admired member of Penn Nursing's Board of Overseers and in 2007 you began co-chairing Penn Nursing's Where Science Leads Campaign, which raised \$109 million—at that time the largest comprehensive campaign ever run by a school of nursing. That groundbreaking campaign also included your establishing the Killebrew-Laporte Center for Admissions & Student Affairs.

In 2010, you joined the Board of Trustees as an Alumni Trustee. You also joined both the Penn Alumni Board of Directors and the Board of Overseers of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), where you quickly rose to the position of Board Chair. Once again, you made an indelible impact. Within six years of your leadership, the ICA's endowment had doubled.

In 2015, you were named a Term Trustee and you have served as an integral part of the committees on Facilities & Campus Planning, Academic Policy, and Development.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to your thoughtful and impactful leadership is the fact that the University keeps asking more of you. After Trustee Emerita status was bestowed upon you

in 2017, you were invited to remain on the Board's Campaign Development and Academic Policy committees. Similarly, in 2014, when your Alumni Board term was over, you continued serving on its Nominations Committee. In 2016, at Penn Nursing's request, you returned to its Board of Overseers, this time as chair. There you have helped students, faculty, and staff develop a culture of innovation that is taking on today's most difficult health-care problems.

A fervent supporter of the University, you served on the Steering Committee for the Making History Campaign and you bring your expertise, energy, and deep Penn pride to the same position on The Power of Penn Campaign.

Your gifts and service to the University reflect your commitment to advancing nursing education and contemporary art at Penn and, through Penn, advancing quality health care and forward-thinking art to the world beyond. You have established the Andrea B. Laporte Endowed Professorship at the School of Nursing and given generously to benefit the Center for Global Women's Health. You also created the Andrea B. Laporte Curator Fund at the ICA to expand curatorial capabilities.

Bringing your connection to Penn full circle, you recently honored your father with the creation of an endowed scholarship at Penn Dental Medicine in his name. His distinguished career spanned more than thirty years at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, including service as the chair of oral radiology and as associate dean for admissions.

For taking on so many diverse, challenging, and critical leadership roles at Penn, and for your many years of unflinching support of the University, we are thrilled to present you with the Alumni Award of Merit for 2019.

Jeffrey L. Seltzer W'78

Alumni Award of Merit



The sixth floor of Van Pelt is home to a priceless treasure: the Rittenhouse Orrery. It is one of only two mechanical models of the solar system made by Philadelphia astronomer and clockmaker David Rittenhouse in the 1700s. For centuries, the University of Pennsylvania has upheld the or-

rery as a symbol of academia and achievement. It is thanks, in part, to your leadership and service that this remarkable instrument now holds a permanent place of honor as the centerpiece of the Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion.

Like the orrery, you are one of Penn's rare treasures. You exemplify lifelong learning and, as you demonstrated in the careful negotiation of this unique class gift, you understand how things work in relation to each other.

You began serving your class in the late 1990s, first as a member of the Reunion Committee and then as a Class Officer and, eventually, Gift Chair for the Class of 1978.

As an Overseer for the University Libraries since 2003, you have helped cultivate a strong bond between the Penn Libraries and your class. You were instrumental in the creation of the Orrery Pavilion and other library spaces for community building and knowledge discovery, such as the Class of 1978 Group Study Room, the Library Scholars Alcove, and the faculty offices on the sixth floor.

In addition, you have helped ensure that the Libraries are home to much more than ancient tools and equipment. Your generous gift to establish the Seltzer Family Digital Media Awards has expanded access to state-of-the-art technology, not just for the winners of the awards, but for all Penn students.

Similarly, when Penn's student radio station was in need of a technology upgrade, you remembered your days as a student host and stepped up to answer the call. Today, WQHS Radio broadcasts 24/7 from the Seltzer Family Studio. Your masterful knowledge of digital technologies also led to the establishment of the Seltzer Family eMedicine Fund, a resource that uses telemedicine to bring Penn Medicine's world-class health services to remote communities in Guatemala.

In addition to making other contributions to Penn Medicine, your family established the Dr. Ramon Sifre Prize for Excellence in Diagnostic Medicine. It was a meaningful way to honor your father-in-law and grandfather-in-law, both alumni of what is now the Perelman School of Medicine.

Since 1998, you have served on the Advisory Board for what has become the Huntsman Program in International Studies and Business. That same year, you established the Seltzer Family International Studies and Business Scholarship

Class Awards

CLASS AWARD OF MERIT

Class of 1994 | Twenty-fifth reunions are big events by any measure. And for the alumni celebrating them, they loom large in many ways. ... In a brilliant move, you decided to make what one class member has called the “mid-life juncture” the centerpiece of your 25th Reunion celebration. ... Saturday began with the “Class of ‘94 Mindfulness Workshop and Smoothie Bar,” ... It continued with a powerful memorial service celebrating the lives of classmates who had passed away. ... Inspired and galvanized, the Class of 1994 contributed an incredible \$48.9 million across the University, setting a new record for University-wide 25th Reunion giving.

DAVID N. TYRE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN CLASS COMMUNICATIONS

Class of 1989 | Last May, as part of the Parade of Classes, the Class of 1989 danced down Locust Walk to the contagious beat of the eighties hit “It Takes Two.” ... Thanks to your 43-person Reunion Committee, your 30th was, to quote the lyrics of the same song, “outta sight.” ... In all of your communications efforts, you have been keenly aware of the busy lives your classmates lead and committed to making their reunion planning a breeze. ... With 542 alumni and guests returning to campus, the Class of ‘89 set a new record for 30th Reunion attendance. And you exceeded your overall reunion giving goal by an impressive \$800,000 and 20 donors.

ALUMNI CLUB AWARD OF MERIT

Penn Club of Southwest Florida | You have long been one of the brightest stars in Penn’s constellation of small but mighty regional clubs. ... Intent on extending your reach, you launched a new club website and Facebook page. ... The 1,068-person database you produced in conjunction with Penn Alumni was a triumph of persistence and hard work. ... You bolstered programming with an expanded event lineup. ... All the while, you have managed to consistently grow two of your club’s signature initiatives: your alumni interview program and the Southwest Florida Penn Club Endowed Scholarship. Both speak to your long-standing commitment to lighting the way for a new generation of Penn alumni.

to support students pursuing this prestigious dual degree. Additionally, your expertise in sports management has guided the Alumni Advisory Committee for the Wharton Sports Business Initiative since its founding in 2005.

With exuberant spirit, you regularly attend Penn events and have contributed to assembling the next generation of Penn students through your near-20-year participation in the Penn Alumni Interview Program.

Your philanthropic support and service have made an impact on many diverse aspects of the student experience and every corner of campus—from Wharton, The Penn Fund, and the Libraries, to Athletics and Scholarships.

According to your son, Ian Seltzer C’09, one of the astonishing number of people who wrote in support of your nomination for this award, you have fostered a “continual connection to the University through giving and active engagement” and a “passion for Penn” that you have passed down to the next generation of your family like a treasured heirloom.

We hope you know that, as with our precious orrery, there will always be a place of pride for you at Penn. With appreciation for your extraordinary service and continued dedication to the Red and Blue, we are proud to present you with the Alumni Award of Merit for 2019.

Stacey Deutsch Shoer C’89 PAR’18 PAR’19

Alumni Award of Merit



Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” In lending your enthusiasm to the University of Pennsylvania,

you have certainly achieved great things. Among them: solidifying a strong Penn presence in South Florida, expanding the membership of the Penn Club of Miami, and helping your Class of 1989 achieve the Class Award of Merit for its fundraising efforts in 2014.

For students, alumni, and volunteers alike, you are dedicated to helping people find their place in the world of Penn. You began as an undergraduate, sharing your passion for Penn with prospective students and parents as a volunteer tour guide for the Kite and Key Society. Today, you help Penn recruit talented students

through your 15 years of service to the Alumni Interview Program and your role as Alumni Interview Committee Chair for the Miami area. You were one of the first committee chairs to consistently offer interviews to 100 percent of the applicants in your region, an impressive feat that moves Penn toward the goal of giving all applicants this important opportunity to advocate for themselves.

For nearly 10 years, you have been an active member of the Trustees’ Council of Penn Women. As Co-Chair of the Miami Regional Event Committee and the Leadership Committee, you keep members excited and engaged, and guide them toward the volunteer leadership positions that are right for them.

But you are best known for the enthusiasm with which you bring Penn people together. You are the unofficial Penn Ambassador of the Sunshine State, always ready to welcome Penn guests to Miami or help alumni transplants make connections among your friends, many of whom are Penn-connected.

As President of the Penn Club of Miami, you quadrupled the number of members in your first year. After five years under your leadership, the Club is now among the University’s most active. You manage every organizational task with aplomb, from marking Benjamin Frank-

lin’s birthday on the Club’s Facebook page to arranging awards for the local high school students who embody his character.

True to the spirit of Miami, your party- and event-planning skills are legendary. Whether it’s a sendoff for newly admitted students, a faculty lecture for Club members, or a private tour of a museum for your fellow members of TCPW, you perfect every detail down to the cookies frosted in red and blue.

You are ever-present at Penn events in South Florida, and ever-willing to come back to campus for Homecoming Weekend, volunteer leadership retreats, and twice-yearly TCPW conferences. Most recently, you were here to see your sons Carter Shoer W’19 and Maxwell Shoer EAS’18 GEng’19 receive their own Penn degrees. They join you and other members of your family, including your sister, Alison Schonwald M’95, and husband, Howard Shoer W’87, as proud Penn Alumni.

In recognition of your generous gifts of time and energy, your proactive, can-do spirit, and undying loyalty to the University of Pennsylvania, it is with great enthusiasm that we present you with another treasured keepsake to go along with the acceptance letter you have kept for all these years: the 2019 Alumni Award of Merit.