





# HOMECOMING





# Merit Awards

## Faculty Award of Merit

### André Dombrowski



André, you have written that the eye turns into “a restless, mobile entity... that actively participates in, and even structures, the act of painting from the bottom up.” Though you were remarking on the effects of impressionist style, you might have very well been describing the effects of curiosity, inquiry, and discovery that Penn alumni have experienced in your company for the past 12 years.

You have done this not just through books and on-campus lectures but around the globe. Just four years after you became part of the Penn faculty in 2008, you joined the Penn Alumni Travel program as the faculty host of a tour along the Danube River. It was the beginning of a lasting relationship, and nearly every year since, you have led Penn alumni to examine places of painting, from Bruges to Papeete to Strasbourg to Belle-Ile-en-Mer. It was here, in 2018, that you gathered with alumni and fellow travelers to locate the point where Monet stood and painted—a personally and professionally meaningful moment that you, with characteristic generosity, chose to share with those around you.

Alumni consistently praise your warmth, humanity, and ability to put them at ease to ask questions in unfamiliar environments. Because of these qualities, you have left a lasting impression on all and developed enduring friendships with many.

You have traipsed across terrains both terrestrial and virtual: In a landscape teeming with online offerings, you have led successful virtual lectures that stand out for their clarity and compelling natures. Memorably, you led a webinar for Penn Alumni Lifelong Learning covering Gustave Courbet’s *La Source du Lison*, a work recovered from the basement of the School of Dental Medicine and the centerpiece of an exhibition you co-curated at the Arthur Ross Gallery, where you also serve as Chairman of the Advisory Board. By the time the exhibition closed on May 28, 2023, more than 3,000 people had visited the gallery, among them Penn students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the wider community.

This year, you deepened your involvement with Penn Alumni Lifelong Learning, leading its inaugural seminar program with “How Monet Paints Time.” Students welcomed the quality of your research as well as your “easy

style and breadth of knowledge,” which made the series of lectures and synchronous sessions as enjoyable as they were enriching.

André, in these ways and more, you have actively participated in hundreds of moments of understanding painting “from the bottom up.” On behalf of all the alumni who have remarked that *your* eyes have helped them see the world anew, we are pleased to present you with the Faculty Award of Merit for 2024.

## Social Impact Award

### Desiree Martinez C’95



When you were in sixth grade, a visit to the Southwest Museum of the American Indian in Los Angeles set you on your life’s path. Although the now-closed museum was located within the traditional homelands of the Gabrielino-Tongva tribe, of which you are a member, one of the museum’s guides told you that the Gabrielino-Tongva were extinct. You were also struck by the stereotyped and inaccurate representations of Native communities in the museum’s displays.

But you learned something important that day: The information museum docents use to prepare their talks comes from archaeologists, anthropologists, and ethnographers. To present the perspective of your community—and rewrite its history—you would need to pursue a degree in one of those fields.

You decided to study anthropology and archaeology to make a difference on issues that matter not just to your tribe but to the Native community. Along the way, you became a champion of recognition and respect for groups often marginalized and misunderstood.

To pursue your dreams, you came to Penn, where you earned your degree in anthropology. Later, you continued your education at Harvard University, earning a master’s in anthropology with a concentration in archaeology.

Your essential work of supporting your community began during your undergraduate days. You helped found the University’s first organized cultural group for Native Americans, Six Directions, later known as Natives at Penn. Six Directions gave Native students on campus a place to celebrate their culture and served as the catalyst for much of the later work done at Penn on behalf of Native and Indigenous peoples.

After your graduation, you helped found Penn’s Association of Native Alumni, a group in which you continue to be involved today. More recently, you have served as a consultant for the Penn Native Community Council and helped plan celebrations of Native American Heritage Month on campus.

You have made the most significant impact in your work as an archaeologist. You have dedicated your life to preserving and protecting Native American sacred and cultural sites, especially those connected to the Tongva community. You have also worked to eliminate misinformation about the Gabrielino-Tongva, their history, and your community.

You spent 15 years at Cogstone Resource Management, a cultural resources firm, beginning as an archaeologist and rising to become President. You worked with various organizations to strengthen relationships between Tribal Communities and arrange for the care and repatriation of cultural items.

You have also served as co-director of the Pimu Catalina Island Archaeology Project and consultant and project manager for numerous institutions, including the Autry Museum of the American West and the Fowler Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Your work as an archaeologist began soon after the 1990 passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which provides for the protection of Native American remains and objects and helped make your important work possible.

Most recently, you joined California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, as Director of Tribal Relations and NAGPRA/CalNAGPRA, which builds on your commitment to NAGPRA. You serve as the University’s primary liaison with Native American Tribal Nations, governments, and urban American Indian communities to develop and implement a robust Tribal relations program.

Early in life, you made it your goal to protect your tribe—and other Native and Indigenous communities—and their cultural resources. You have succeeded admirably, both in your work as an archaeologist and in your advocacy for Native peoples at Penn and nationwide. With gratitude and admiration for your pioneering efforts to be a champion—and a much-needed voice—of Native and Indigenous peoples, the Office of Social Equity and Community and Penn Alumni are proud to present you with the Social Impact Award for 2024.

### Creative Spirit Award

#### Robert W. Cort C'68 G'70 WG'74



When you were ten years old, your parents drove you across the Brooklyn Bridge to the Tivoli Theater in Times Square. In that 2,000-seat theater, on a massive screen, you saw *Around the World in 80 Days* and felt insignificant in the face of the spectacle, yet also like the most important person there. A year later, your brother took you to see *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, which would become your favorite movie. And a year after that, you saw *Gigi*—after which you stole a poster of Leslie Caron.

Almost a decade later, as a senior at Penn, the films you saw that year would mirror the turbulent time you were living in. Anger at the Vietnam War, the importance of the civil rights movement, and the emergence of feminism—you saw them reflected on the screen in *Bonnie and Clyde*, *In the Heat of the Night*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

At that time, you had no idea you would go on to become an acclaimed and prolific movie producer. You graduated from Penn with a degree in history, then earned a master's in history and an MBA from the Wharton School. But it was your career in consulting after graduation that brought you back to your love of movies. One of McKinsey & Company's clients was Columbia Pictures, and you went to Los Angeles for three months to work on a marketing study. You were hooked. After that, movies became your life.

In your four-decade career in Hollywood, you produced films like *Three Men and a Cradle*, *Cocktail*, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, *Jumanji*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Runaway Bride*, *Save the Last Dance*, *On the Basis of Sex*, and many more. Your 2004 HBO film, *Something the Lord Made*, about the pioneering Black heart surgeon Vivien Thomas, won three Emmy Awards.

Beyond the accomplishment of your many hit films, you have also retained the ideals of the films you saw during your senior year at Penn. You have harnessed your creative spirit—your expert ability to turn an idea into a dream of light projected on a screen—to reflect our world, in the hope that it can be improved. And you have put in the work to improve our world off-screen as well.

Since 2003, you have helped envision a better future as a dedicated member of the

National Advisory Board of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, where you have served as a devoted and thoughtful volunteer leader. Your creativity and focus have helped ensure that the Center has a lasting and sustainable impact on Penn, the local community, and the wider world. Your wise counsel was especially welcome during the development of the Center's recent planning document on the occasion of its 30th anniversary—a document that both looked back on the origins of the Center and charted a road map for the years to come.

You and your wife, Rosalie, have supported the Center with your philanthropy as well, establishing the Cort Internship Fund and the Cort-Swedlin Fellows Program, both of which provide opportunities for students to work with community-based arts programs sponsored by the Netter Center. In addition, you created the Robert & Rosalie Cort Endowed Scholarship to make a Penn education accessible for undergraduate students.

For your vast and acclaimed work producing films that have made us laugh, cry, and leave the theater thinking about how the world can be made better—and for your volunteer leadership dedicated to improving the world—Penn Alumni is proud to present you with the Creative Spirit Award for 2024.

### Young Alumni Award of Merit

#### Deepak Prabhakar EAS'11 GEng'12



Collaboration and connection have powered your path at Penn. As an undergraduate, you worked with your classmates to engineer real-world solutions. You have carried that same spirit to the alumni community with your enduring effort to rally your peers around reunions, campaigns, and volunteer activities—and you are just getting started.

At the School of Engineering and Applied Science, a collaborative culture shaped your views beyond the classroom. You graduated in 2011 with a BS in engineering and biotechnology. You also earned an MS in biotechnology from Penn in 2012. Your time on campus sharpened your problem-solving abilities and taught you how to work with people from many different backgrounds. These skills have served you well, both professionally and in how you continue to show up for Penn in the years since your graduation.

Connection was a hallmark of your time at Penn. You were involved in myriad

groups to promote school spirit and find fellowship, from the Penn Traditions Undergraduate Board and the Senior Class Executive Board to the Theta Tau Professional Engineering Fraternity and the Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity. Your enthusiastic engagement with your peers was deservedly recognized when you received the Penn Alumni Student Award of Merit in 2011.

No matter how busy life got after graduation, you continued to make time for your alma mater while establishing yourself in the biotech industry. You raised your hand for the Penn Alumni Ambassador Program, motivated by a desire to connect with prospective students and help them learn about this special Red and Blue community. Your enthusiasm for connection with fellow graduates only grew as you became one of the University's most visible young alumni leaders.

You have served on three host committees—for the "Time to Shine" celebration, Homecoming, and The Power of Penn in Philadelphia—where you supported Campaign efforts by planning and welcoming alumni to inspiring University events. When it came time to select a new leader for the Class of 2011, you were elected President, a role in which you have served since 2016. Clearly committed to the Penn cause, you were invited to join the Alumni Class Leadership Council in 2017, where you rolled up your sleeves to strengthen ties between alumni classes and the University.

"Kind," "intelligent," and "thoughtful" are some of the ways your classmates and colleagues have described you, a testament to how you have connected with people over the years. More than a decade ago, while serving as Co-Chair of the Seniors for The Penn Fund, you encouraged your fellow Quakers to make a habit of giving back to Penn. Time has shown that you have not only talked the talk but also walked the walk—generously supporting Penn with annual gifts since your junior year. Thanks to your inspiring actions, the next generation of Penn undergraduates will be well-supported in accessing the same unparalleled classroom and campus experience that you remember so fondly.

For engaging the Penn community through collaboration and thoughtful connections with your peers, and for engineering an even brighter future for Penn students, we are thrilled to present you with the Young Alumni Award of Merit for 2024.

*Alumni Award of Merit*

**Belinda Bentzin Buscher C'92**



Good organizers bring us together; great ones draw us together. In your role as Chair of the Regional Clubs Advisory Board, Co-President of the

Penn Club of Seattle, and beyond—Belinda, you celebrate community as its own reward and bring out the best in all those around you. There can be no doubt that your warmth and dedication to Penn alumni clearly distinguish you as among the greats.

Perhaps one of the most striking examples is your work with the Penn Club of Seattle, where you have been at the helm for the past dozen years. During your tenure, you have creatively engaged longstanding members and made a point of welcoming new faces to the area. Alumni anticipate the annual pool party, where they experience the easy sociability of being among not just fellow Penn graduates but friends.

Your skill as a leader became even more evident during the pandemic. As the club's co-chair, when COVID-19 cases began to mount and the *Penn to You* series canceled its Seattle appearance, you pivoted quickly to spearhead discussions of virtual lectures from the Penn Alumni website. Remarkable afterward on the programming's success, you noted that "anytime we can engage with someone new makes us incredibly happy." It is no coincidence that so many alumni in the Evergreen State say the feeling is mutual, and that more people remark on this fact every year as the Penn Club of Seattle and its membership continue to flourish.

With characteristic enthusiasm and skill, you are also active with the Regional Clubs Advisory Board, working closely with Penn Alumni staff to support regional clubs around the world. In this role, your dedication to helping the regional club network thrive individually and as a unit is evident and invaluable. Above all, your orientation toward the positive power of the alumni community is unmistakable and infectious: those who spend time with you praise your ability to be present, to attend, and to engage. These values shine each time you return to Penn's campus from Seattle—no small act of travel, and one which happens with impressive regularity as you come to be with others in the Penn community in person at Homecoming, Alumni Award of Merit Galas, Alumni Leadership Retreats, and Alumni Weekends.

Your Penn journey has also inspired others. For the past two decades, you have met with countless prospective students as part of the Penn Alumni Ambassador Program to share your knowledge and love for Penn. Over the course of your tenure, you have no doubt helped many young people, some of whom boarded planes, trains, and automobiles toward Philadelphia, and who now count themselves among the alumni network.

You have been an invaluable member of the Penn community through your dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to service. With appreciation for drawing all of us closer together, we are pleased to present you with the Penn Alumni Award of Merit for 2024.

*Alumni Award of Merit*

**Ira Hillman C'92 W'92**



Ira, when you came to Penn in the late 1980s, you found an exciting community that opened a new world for you to explore. Outside of your

classes, you made a home away from home at Penn Hillel, Mask & Wig, the Greenfield Intercultural Center, and the LGBT Center.

As a student, you sharpened your natural leadership abilities as a member of the Sphinx Senior Society and Kite and Key. Your achievements, commitment, and character were further recognized by the Spade Award, which celebrates a graduating senior who demonstrates leadership both inside and outside of the classroom.

Your leadership skills have been on display throughout your evolution as a Penn volunteer. You started as a Penn Fund Phonathon participant in 1997 and now sit on the Board of Advisors at the School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2). In your role at SP2, you have earned a reputation as an engaged, thoughtful board member. Your commitment to social justice is furthering the School's mission of inclusion, excellence, and impact. SP2 is fortunate to count you as one of their most enthusiastic champions.

What is more, the decades you spent serving as President of your undergraduate class represent an inspiring example of your inclination to build community. You are known to be a planner with an eye for detail, from scripting remarks to taking the time to select the perfect swag buttons. Your energy, passion, and Penn pride have been truly instrumental in fostering a robust alumni

community for the Class of 1992.

To strengthen and empower Penn alumni who identify with the LGBTQ+ community and other historically marginalized groups, you became involved in several impactful initiatives. You have generously used your time and talents to serve on PennGALA, including leading the 10th, 15th, and 20th anniversary celebrations for the Penn LGBT Center. You have also been a trailblazer with Penn Leadership Q as a founding member, advocating for more LGBTQ+ leaders at Penn.

Penn Trustee Joan Lau EAS'92 WG'08, your friend and a fellow SP2 board member, said of you, "His focus on belonging and building community transcends interests, backgrounds, differences, and diversity."

You embody this sentiment each time you interact with the Penn community, bringing your lived experience and personal perspective to every engagement. As just one example, you offered candid insights about raising two children in New York with your husband Jeremy—an experience that you shared with fellow Quakers at a Penn Spectrum panel about "The Changing Family & How it Influences Identity." Ira, by being unapologetically you, you have undoubtedly inspired more than a few people along the way. Like the great playwright Tony Kushner wrote in his play *Angels in America*, "You'll find, my friend, that what you love will take you places you never dreamed you'd go." For your generous spirit, your collaborative leadership style, and your bravery in being your true self and inspiring others to do the same, we are delighted to present you with the 2024 Penn Alumni Award of Merit.

*Alumni Award of Merit*

**Sally Jutabha Michaels WG'90 PAR'19 PAR'21 PAR'23**



"Ben's Friends Forever"—that was the theme of a recent event hosted by the Penn Club of Thailand that brought together over 100 alumni for their largest

gathering ever. How does a community of alumni halfway around the world from Philadelphia maintain such vibrant engagement with Penn and foster such dedication from its members? If you asked them, these Friends of Ben would respond: because of you.

You received your MBA in finance from the Wharton School in 1990 and went on to excel in both the public and private sectors: first, in the real estate department of Gold-



## Class and Club Awards

man Sachs, and later, as Advisor to the Thai Trade Representative and Advisor to the Foreign Minister of Thailand. You and your husband, David Michaels W'84, also started GMS Power Public Company in Bangkok, where you are currently a Senior Advisor.

For many years you have been an officer of the Penn-Wharton Club of Thailand, where you were instrumental in hosting events such as the Wharton Global Forum in 2015 in Bangkok. You ably guided all the stakeholders for the event through complicated political circumstances and helped ensure the event's success.

In addition, as Vice President of the Penn Club of Thailand and the School Liaison, you strengthened the University's entire alumni community throughout the country, expanding its reach and bolstering its resources. Your selflessness, humility, and dedication to mentorship have led your fellow alumni in Thailand to call you "P' Sally" (or "Elder Sister Sally"). You lead, guide, and inspire—making sure that the organizations you spent so much time strengthening have new leaders ready to take the baton and carry them into the future.

At the same time, you have provided insight on key issues in Asia during nearly a decade of service on Wharton's Executive Board for Asia. Wharton leadership has looked to you for guidance on engaging with and strengthening the alumni community in Asia, and you have always provided expert counsel. You were kind enough to share all your talents with Penn, including designing and producing a unique pin worn proudly by many.

Beyond your knowledge and expertise, your philanthropy has reflected your commitment to providing support to those who follow in your footsteps. You saw the incredible impact for students who participated in the Wharton Global Youth Program, and you knew that it put them on track for success in the future. But you also knew that for students receiving financial aid at places like your high school alma mater, Phillips Exeter Academy, these programs were often out of reach. That's why you and your husband endowed a scholarship for Exeter students with financial need to participate in the Global Youth Program each year.

The Red and Blue is a vital force in your family, and in return, you have been a vital force in strengthening the Quaker community around the globe.

### Alumni Club Award of Merit | Penn Club of Boston

Thanks to your collaborative spirit and generationally inclusive events, Penn alumni in the greater Boston area are more plugged into Penn than ever. ... The driving force behind your club's success was your very active board, led by Club President Heena Lee C'95 and Vice President Krystle Karoscik MLA'15. This leadership group emphasized communication by reaching out to the more than 14,000 Penn alumni in Boston. ... You rallied your members for on- and off-campus events with The Penn Fund and Alumni Relations, including Homecoming, Alumni Weekend, and First Toast on the Road. Simultaneously, you continued to curate a mature experience through SAGES—a group for graduates from 1985 or earlier. Members of SAGES delighted in events like theatre, wellness gatherings, and wine tastings. You even mentored the Penn Club of Worcester, a fledgling alumni group that has been inspired by your vim and vigor. ... You have established the Penn Club of Boston as a wonderful example of an energetic and engaged group that is proudly and authentically *Penn*.

### Innovation Award | Penn Club of Hong Kong

### Community Service Award | Penn Club of Philadelphia

### Engagement Award | Penn Club of Switzerland

### Class Award of Merit | Class of 1974

Better than most, in planning its semicentennial anniversary, the Class of 1974 understood the value of calling. ... You spoke privately with concerned classmates, listened, and conveyed the hope that differences might be put aside. ... In every communication, your creative tagline and peace sign logo encouraged classmates to *Remember, Reminisce, and Reconnect* in advance of the big event. Perhaps one of the most illustrative examples is the digital class yearbook that you assembled on BrightCrowd, a newer platform that you adopted to great effect. ... Once on campus, spirits soared. Your 50th class reunion weekend was suffused with a joy matched only by an attention to detail. ... A total of 365 attendees joined one another on Penn's campus, and almost 450 classmates have reconnected through the (ongoing) virtual yearbook. Even during challenging times, your class raised \$4.2 million for the University, while the number of individuals making those gifts earns your class a place on the podium for participation. Thanks to your generosity, the Class of 1974 Peace Memorial Garden will grow and flourish for classes and generations to come.

### Class Award of Merit | Class of 1989

At every turn, you embodied your reunion motto, *The Love is Real*, by reinforcing the friendships, camaraderie, closeness, and Penn pride that have come to define your class. ... Thanks to a diverse cadre of class leaders, your 35th reunion committee dedicated itself to planning a weekend that was memorable, creative, and so much fun. ... Your *Groove is in the Heart*-themed reunion party was a nostalgic throwback that transported attendees back to 1989 for one extremely memorable night together. ... Early on, your class set a goal to break the attendance record for a 35th reunion. Despite a year defined by challenging circumstances, you broke the record with 392 classmates and guests attending. Even more impressive was the fact that you were the *only* class to break an attendance record this year—a testament to your efforts, and to the genuine care and high regard you have for each other. Together, you also raised more than \$8 million for initiatives across Penn with a continued and longstanding dedication to enhancing the undergraduate experience, especially for students with the greatest financial need.

### David N. Tyre Award for Excellence in Class Communications | Class of 2004

How do you convince your classmates to return to Penn for their 20th reunion? For the Class of 2004, it started with a memorable tagline: *Come Back '04 MORE!* It continued with a winning communications effort, complete with eye-catching graphics, which spanned all channels, from print to email to social media. ... In the ten days leading up to the reunion, you posted your Top 10 Reasons to Come Back campaign to social media, culminating in Reason #1: to see old friends and relive fond Red and Blue memories. ... In the end, your communications succeeded where it mattered most. They helped drive attendance, with 558 registrations and 372 attending the reunion party and raised \$3.1 million for your reunion, with Total University Achievement reaching \$4.4 million. In a creative twist, you complemented your class gift with a clothing drive in partnership with The Wardrobe, encouraging classmates to donate gently used professional clothing for students or community members who cannot afford suitable clothes for interviews or jobs.

For your dedication to growing Penn's alumni community in Thailand, for your thoughtful counsel to the University and support of impactful scholarships, and for being such a steadfast friend of "Ben" and of all alumni, we are honored to present you with the Penn Alumni Award of Merit for 2024.

*Alumni Award of Merit*

**Jennifer Krevitt, C'86 L'92 PAR'22**



"Great leaders grow talent. They strive to make everyone in the room smarter." These words from Penn's Adam Grant, organizational psychologist and best-selling author, echo your own views. You understand that leadership does not just happen. It must be cultivated with care.

In your professional career, you have worked hard to support and develop the next generation of leaders. Fortunately for your alma mater, you have brought those same skills to your volunteer work at Penn.

A Penn graduate twice over, you earned your undergraduate degree in economics at the College and then returned to earn your JD at Penn Carey Law. From there, you built a successful career in law and human resources, first at Goldman Sachs; later at Invesco, Ltd., where you served as Senior Managing Director and Chief Human Resources Officer; and now as the Principal at Krevitt Consulting.

Throughout your busy career, you have remained dedicated to Penn. In 2006, you were nominated to join the Trustees' Council of Penn Women (TCPW), a group of alumnae leaders who advocate for women leaders and women's issues on campus. It was the perfect fit. You quickly became a leader within the group, contributing to the Advancement of Women Faculty Committee and then the Regional Events Committee, which you co-chaired. Notably, as co-chair of the Membership Committee, you brought in new members who represented different backgrounds, careers, and regions of the country and made TCPW more reflective of the alumnae community.

In 2018, you were nominated to be TCPW's Vice Chair, and three years later rose to become Chair. As the group's leader during the pandemic years, you faced a unique challenge since TCPW's signature conferences were no longer possible. You pivoted, planning and organizing virtual conferences to keep the members engaged and the group strong. In

both leadership roles, you graciously agreed to extend your term, to ensure continuity and keep TCPW vibrant. After six years in leadership, during which you consistently went above and beyond for the group, you passed the torch this summer, working collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition.

When you chose to expand your Penn engagement beyond TCPW, you turned to Penn Carey Law, first joining the Dean's Women's Council and later the Law Alumni Society Alumni Engagement Committee. In 2023, you were invited to join Penn Carey Law's Board of Advisors at a critical time, as the Law School prepared to welcome a new Dean. Once again you were the perfect fit, using your human resources expertise to provide support to navigate this transition. After the new Dean, Sophia Lee, was named, you were among those who provided counsel that fostered her successful first year. You even established the Krevitt-Cohen Endowed Fund to provide support for the new Dean's priorities during the early days of her tenure.

Your volunteer work at Penn spans the campus. You have served Penn Arts & Sciences through your work on the SAS Professional Women's Alliance. Your beloved Class of 1986 has benefited from your work as a reunion and gift committee volunteer. You have also served the larger alumni community through your membership on the Penn Alumni Board of Directors, where you represented TCPW.

Jennifer, you have always understood that leadership matters. Today we honor you for your leadership and your sincere desire to use your talents to make a difference for your alma mater. With gratitude for your commitment to advancing women and women's issues at Penn, for keeping TCPW strong during a challenging time, and for cultivating the next generation of leaders on campus, we are pleased to present you with the Penn Alumni Award of Merit for 2024.

*Alumni Award of Merit*

**Marc H. Morial C'80 PAR'24**



In 1915, W.E.B. Du Bois emphasized the urgency of taking action to improve the social, political, and economic conditions of African Americans.

He advocated for seizing the moment and working toward progress without delay, writing, "Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some

future day or future year." Marc, one could not think of a better description to sum up the trajectory of your life.

You graduated from Penn in 1980 with a degree in economics and African American studies, then went on to earn a law degree at Georgetown University. In the spirit of now, you returned to your hometown of New Orleans, working as a lawyer before being elected to the Louisiana State Senate. In 1994, you were elected mayor of New Orleans, an office you held until 2002. During your time as mayor, you were also elected president of the United States Conference of Mayors, a non-partisan organization that represents cities with populations of 30,000 or more. After your time as an elected official, you continued your service by joining the National Urban League, the nation's largest historic civil rights and urban advocacy organization, where you currently serve as President and CEO.

Like Du Bois, you didn't wait for a more convenient season. You believed that our best work can be done today, and you were dedicated to passing on that sense of civic commitment to the next generation of leaders by engaging with Penn.

Despite your many professional responsibilities, you have always made time for Penn. You have returned to campus again and again to share your experiences and talk with students about what vibrant civic engagement can look like and to participate in dialogues on important issues. You are particularly known for your stirring speeches at Penn Spectrum events, where you have been a fixture for many years. You have always made yourself available, including at the most recent Penn Spectrum conference, where you spoke about the importance of having diverse voices in municipal, state, and federal government, and how Penn alumni can support fellow Quakers who are serving in or pursuing public office.

You are also a longstanding member of the Black Alumni Society and the James Brister Society and a non-resident senior fellow with the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program at Penn Arts & Sciences.

For your embodiment of W.E.B. Du Bois's promise of progress, your dedication to strengthening the fabric of civic life, and your commitment to sharing your vast knowledge and expertise with Penn students and alumni, we are honored to present you with the Penn Alumni Award of Merit for 2024.