The Merrill Presidential Scholars

25th Annual Convocation

Wednesday, May 22, 2013
11:30 a.m.
Memorial Room
Willard Straight Hall
Cornell University
Program

Introduction
Susan H. Murphy, Vice President for Student and Academic Services

Remarks
David J. Skorton, President

Presentation of Scholars
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Kathryn J. Boor, Ronald P. Lynch Dean

College of Architecture, Art, and Planning
Barry Perlus, Associate Dean

College of Arts and Sciences
G. Peter Lepage, Harold Tanner Dean

College of Engineering
Lance Collins, Joseph Silbert Dean

School of Hotel Administration
Michael D. Johnson, Dean
and E. M. Statler Professor of Hotel Administration

College of Human Ecology
Alan Mathios, Rebecca Q. and James C. Morgan Dean

School of Industrial and Labor Relations
Harry Katz, Kenneth F. Kahn Dean
and Jack Sheinkman Professor of Collective Bargaining

Closing Remarks
Susan H. Murphy, Vice President for Student and Academic Services
Douglas Merrill ’89, MBA ’91
Philip Merrill ’55 created the Merrill Presidential Scholars program in 1988, allowing Cornell to celebrate—on an annual, ongoing basis—excellence in teaching and scholarship. Since his passing in 2006, his wife of 46 years, Eleanor Merrill, and their three children, all Cornellians, have continued to support the program generously.

Philip Merrill ’55 was president and chief executive officer of Capital Gazette Communications for four decades. He also served the U.S. as assistant secretary-general of NATO, special assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State, chairman of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, and a member of the Department of Defense Policy Board. Phil was a trustee of Cornell from 1992–1996, and in 2003, was named a Presidential Councillor, the highest honor the university can bestow.

Douglas Merrill ’89, MBA ’91 is the co-founder and chief organizational officer at Sunward Systems, LLC. He is also an adjunct lecturer at the University of Vermont and a member of the board of directors of Orbit/FR. Doug is a member of the Cornell University Council and an active volunteer for Cornell Community Sailing, which is housed in the Merrill Family Sailing Center.

Catherine Merrill Williams ’91 is president and publisher of Washingtonian Magazine, Inc. She is chair of the board of visitors of the Philip Merrill School of Journalism at the University of Maryland, and serves on the boards of the Starlight Children’s Foundation and the Aspen Institute Socrates Society. Cathy is a member of the Cornell University Council and the President’s Council of Cornell Women. She holds an MSc from the London School of Economics.

Nancy Merrill ’96 is president of the Merrill Foundation and an environmental educator. Previously, she worked at the Conservation Fund and was executive director of the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education. Nancy holds an MS in public administration from George Mason University.
The Merrill Presidential Scholars Program

Class of 2013 Merrill Presidential Scholars

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Kristen Haynes
Julian Homburger
Linda Liu
Jennifer Sun
Yuchao “Olly” Wang
Zhimeng “Kristy” Yang
Derek Zerkowski
Dennis Zhou

College of Architecture, Art, and Planning
Mikhail Grinwald

College of Arts and Sciences
Andrew Baim
Kristen Fletcher
Marcella “Sally” Hayes
Jing Jin
Adam Kroloff
Suzana Markolovic
Patricio Martinez-Llompart
Andrew Santana
Sara Trongone
Jason Wang

College of Engineering
Guo Jie Chin
Emma Lejeune
Kimberly Lin
Zachary Sherman
Adam Trofa
Whitney Wenger

School of Hotel Administration
Lana Miller
Matthew Rubin

College of Human Ecology
Jonathan Bar
John Boyle
Anne Laurita

School of Industrial and Labor Relations
Alexander Bores
Lucas Kowalczyk
Since 1988, the Merrill Presidential Scholars Program has formally and publicly honored Cornell University’s most outstanding graduating seniors on the eve of their graduation while also recognizing individual teachers who have played a significant role in these students’ academic excellence.

Merrill Presidential Scholars rank among the top one percent of the Class of 2013 in their respective schools and colleges. They are chosen not only because of their outstanding scholastic accomplishments, but also because they have demonstrated a remarkable intellectual drive, energetic leadership abilities, and a propensity to contribute to the betterment of society.

Because the pursuit of scholarly excellence is largely a communal effort, it is particularly appropriate that the Merrill Presidential Scholars honored today pay tribute to the teachers most influential in their development. Cornell University also recognizes the vital effect these educators have had on the academic careers of the Merrill Presidential Scholars. The Cornell faculty members and the secondary school teachers selected by the scholars therefore participate in this celebration in a dual capacity—as witnesses to the achievements of their students and as honorees that have enriched their students’ educational experiences. All have earned the admiration and gratitude of the Cornell community.
Established in 1989, STAR (Special Teachers Are Recognized) Scholarships celebrate the influential role that high school teachers play in the success of Cornell’s Merrill Presidential Scholars. Scholarships will be named in honor of the outstanding teachers recognized today by the 2013 Merrill Presidential Scholars and will be awarded to Cornell students with financial need from the scholar’s high school or hometown. The late Donald Berens ’47 and his wife, Margaret Berens ’47, conceived of and sponsored the STAR program. Additional support comes from the William Knox Holt Foundation through the assistance of George Malti ’61, JD ’63, a director of the foundation, and the Cornell Alumni Association of Central New York.
Kristen Haynes

Honoring Deborah Hepburn of Clinton Senior High School and Barbara Bedford of the Department of Natural Resources

After receiving an IES Abroad High Academic Achievement Scholarship in the fall of 2011, Kristen spent the spring of 2012 studying environmental studies and sustainability in Freiburg, Germany. During her senior year, she has been involved in independent research in chemical ecology, studying the effects of floral color and odor on hawk moth foraging behavior. Kristen is a student assistant in Alice Cook House and a member of Ho-Nun-De-Kah, the CALS honor society. She plans to start graduate work in the fall in ecology at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse.

Attending Ms. Debby Hepburn’s 11th– and 12th–grade English classes was an extraordinary experience. She is singularly gifted in the art of teaching literature and writing, and does so in an incredibly exuberant and joyful manner. In her classes, we went beyond studying the traditional English curriculum: we learned how to be better human beings. As a class, we would discuss morality, integrity, responsibility, courage, and compassion. We would discuss the meaning of humanity, when humankind is capable of good and evil, and indifference. I believe these lessons in morality were the most important part of my high school education.

On the first day of [the] wetland ecology [course], Dr. Barbara Bedford told us a bit about her own background. After completing her bachelor’s in the humanities, she began working in wetlands. Concerned about the rapid loss of wetlands in the United States, Dr. Bedford returned to school, earned her PhD, and began a career involving both policy and wetland research. Her story made me reflect on my own research, rooted in more “pure science,” and inspired me to pursue conservation-guided research in graduate school. Dr. Bedford has been an important mentor and role model for me as an aspiring scientist.
Julian Homburger

Honoring Victoria Acquistapace of De La Salle High School and Nathan Sutter of the College of Veterinary Medicine

Julian is an active participant in research and plans to continue after graduation. He has worked with Dr. Nathan Sutter on domestic animal genetics for more than three years and has worked at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. In recognition of his research accomplishments, he was awarded a 2012 Goldwater Scholarship. In addition, Julian is a Rawlings Cornell Presidential Research Scholar and an important contributor to building community within the program. He plans to attend Stanford University next year to study toward a PhD in genetics.

Ms. Acquistapace stoked my interest in science, especially biology. Her enthusiasm for teaching and biology is unparalleled and inspired me to continue studying in the field. The most important project, and the capstone of the year in the class, is the science fair project. This project introduced me to the process of research, but most importantly, to the scientific mindset. This included distilling an interesting question into a feasible set of experiments designed to unequivocally generate data on the subject. I will always be thankful for the enthusiasm and support she gave.

The first time I met Nate, I was trying to enter a dinner event and I could not find an unlocked door. He was walking by, and opened the door and let me in. This is a fitting metaphor for his mentorship during the past four years. Nate has kindled my passion for science and introduced me to genetic research. He has spent countless hours helping me work through roadblocks in research projects. His support and guidance has developed me as a young researcher and given me an outstanding foundation to continue a research career.
Linda Liu

Honoring Jamie Cucinotta of Fayetteville-Manlius High School and Edward McLaughlin of the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management

Linda, who majored in applied economics and management, will be a Class of 2013 University Degree Marshal, and was a recipient of the Academic Excellence Award, a Dyson scholar, and the winner of the 2012 Class of 1886 Speaking Contest. Linda also co-authored a research article on behavioral nutrition, which was published in a top peer-reviewed journal in December 2012. She has been on the dean’s list every semester and worked as a barista for Cornell Dining. After graduation, Linda will join S.C. Johnson’s brand management department.

My fondest memories from high school always begin with entering Mrs. Cucinotta’s room, getting ready for a Saturday morning practice with the Science Olympiad team. In her role as team coach, Mrs. C taught me to think critically, write clearly, and explore my interests freely. Beyond that, Mrs. C inspired me daily with her unending wisdom, strength, and compassion. Without her, I would not have learned the dedication needed to achieve my success or the courage needed to follow my dreams.

In class every day, Professor McLaughlin captivated me with his enthusiasm for teaching and passion for marketing. His insightful lectures and thought-provoking questions sparked within me a deeper interest in marketing. Later, when I became his teaching assistant and advisee, Professor McLaughlin encouraged me to become a more outspoken student and thoughtful teacher and guided me to pursue a career in brand management. His mentorship and kindness have positively, indelibly shaped my life, and for that I am forever grateful to him.
Jennifer Sun
Honoring Cathleen Zeleski of Northwood High School
and Clifford Craft of the Department of Natural Resources

Jennifer is a science of natural and environmental systems major in CALS. As a Rawlings Presidential Research Scholar, she has had the fortune of exploring research in biofuels and bioremediation, working on an interdisciplinary honors thesis on thiamine deficiency diseases, and submitting a publication on Great Lakes invasive species. Jennifer has also served as managing editor of The Research Paper, presented environmental policy articles written for The Triple Helix at the national conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and played clarinet in the Big Red Marching Band. She plans to work in water resource management before returning to graduate school in aquatic sciences.

As I sat in Ms. Zeleski’s integrated science class on my first day of high school, I couldn’t help but think that I might have landed in Ms. Frizzle’s classroom. Ms. Zeleski radiated an energy and passion for science that I still feel today, and her early encouragement of my interest in science ignited an active search for knowledge that has shaped my young research career. Between her never-fading smile and endless dedication to her students and the Science Olympiad team, she was the first to show me what it truly means to love one’s work, and continues to inspire me to find what makes me light up as she did every day.

On the first day of the stream ecology course, Professor Craft told the class that we would never see streams the same way again. Two classes and years of research later, his vast curiosity, broad experience, and engaging teaching style has also transformed my view of research as a dynamic but not isolated process, and the potential for scientists to influence environmental policy. He has also become an invaluable mentor, understanding my strengths, interests, and needs when I cannot express them myself, and I know his constant guidance and support will stay with me long after I leave the Hill.
Yuchao “Olly” Wang

Honoring Li Shao of the High School Attached to Dalian University of Technology and Rui Hai Liu of the Department of Food Science

Olly Wang is a candidate to graduate summa cum laude, has been on the dean’s list every semester, and is the Tennessee state winner of the Siemens Award for Advanced Placement. He is the president of Mainland China Student Association and the president of the Liaoning branch of the China Junior Writers Association. He published his book, Ice in Desert, in China in 2006. His review paper, “Recent Progress in Analysis of Total Phenols, Flavonoids, and Antioxidant Activity,” is expected to be published later this year. After graduation, he will be working as the general manager of Dalian Shandao Foods Co., Ltd.

In China, most teachers care mainly about students’ grades, but Miss Shao is among the few who actually care about students themselves. She would encourage me to write down my true feelings in my essays while most teachers were asking students to follow the writing templates; she would wave her hat cheering for me while I was singing during the spring festival celebration, although teachers were supposed to always keep serious in China. It is Miss Shao who has taught me to be the true me today rather than become just another typical Chinese good student like many others are.

Professor Liu is my advisor, but he is more like my parent at Cornell. He would invite me over to his home for dinner during Chinese Spring Festival; he would come to watch my performance during Chinese culture shows; he always cared about my study, my life, my career intention, etc., and whenever I told him that I had made some achievement, I could see joy in his eyes. I feel really lucky that I had Professor Liu as my advisor during my four years at Cornell, who keeps me warm as if I were at home.
Zhimeng “Kristy” Yang

Honoring Kenneth Greathouse of Parkway Central High School and Vicki Bogan of the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management

Kristy, an applied economics and management major in the Dyson School, will graduate summa cum laude, and was designated as a Dyson Scholar all four years. Kristy was a research assistant in the Dyson School and a teaching assistant for courses in finance and applied finance. She received the Leadership Certificate with High Distinction from the BOLD program, and served as co-president of the society for Women in Business, and president of the Dyson Undergraduate Council. Kristy has interned at Goldman Sachs, Citi, and Merrill Lynch and will return full-time to Goldman Sachs as an analyst in investment banking in the firm’s healthcare group this summer.

I had the opportunity to be Mr. Greathouse’s student for two years at Parkway Central High School, in honors chemistry and AP chemistry. Mr. Greathouse’s class resembled a college-level course, with problem sets, large projects, as well as major assessments that forced us to learn the value of time management, sometimes the hard way. Mr. Greathouse put us ahead of the curve by not only prepping us to pass the AP chemistry exam with flying colors, but also inspiring us to develop self-motivation and responsibility that are necessary in college and beyond, and for that I am thankful.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Professor Bogan as her research assistant, student, and teaching assistant for applied finance during the last four years. I always looked forward to our weekly research meetings, during which Professor Bogan would often offer up words of wisdom and seasoned advice on a variety of facets of life. Her incredible ability to relate to students and her passion for the improvement of the Dyson School are evident in her teaching and hard work. I am grateful for the laughs and heartfelt advice that I will carry with me for years to come.
Derek Zerkowski

Honoring Joseph Farrand of Ten Broeck Academy and Franklinville Central School and Antonio DiTommaso of the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

Derek is proud to attend Cornell with support from the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, a veteran’s education program. He performed undergrad research in the Nutrient Management Spear Program (NMSP) for the last year. He is a co-author of an agronomy fact sheet through the NMSP lab. He has been on the dean’s list every semester since transferring to Cornell. Additionally, he is a member of the Golden Key, Phi Theta Kappa, and Sigma Tau Epsilon honor societies. He is returning home to marry his fiancé, Erika, after graduation and take a position with a soil and water conservation district.

Throughout junior and senior high [school], Mr. Farrand taught an exceptional series of agriculture classes which sparked my interest in the topic. His classes inspired me to receive further training in agriculture and set the stage for my eventual return to college to pursue this degree. He built my confidence through encouragement to run for, and attain, a Future Farmers of America officer position. The FFA trips we took with him were as much fun as you could have at school! Ever patient and willing to go above and beyond to help me understand things, he taught me immeasurable practical, hands-on skills.

I met Professor Antonio DiTommaso, who teaches the weed biology course, my first semester at Cornell. I was intrigued and entertained by the subject matter he covered and his high-energy teaching style. I don’t believe I’ll ever meet someone as passionate or knowledgeable about weeds. His courses are intense, but very rewarding and he always had positive encouragement for me and was always there to help. I remember spending hours in the weed garden/greenhouse trying to learn the various species for the all-important weed [identification] practicum. He, like a previous mentor, introduced me to something I genuinely loved to learn about.
Dennis Zhou

Honoring Teresa Groman of Jamesville-Dewitt High School and Roger Spanswick of the Department of Biological and Environmental Engineering

Dennis, a biological engineering major, has conducted cardiovascular disease research in the biomedical engineering department for the past two years. He was published in the ISME Journal, and has also worked as a biomedical research intern at Rice University and MIT during the summer. While not in the laboratory, he manages a textbook business, facilitates recitation sections for engineering courses, and enjoys playing tennis and piano. He has also been a member of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society, Golden Key International, and the Institute of Biological Engineering. After graduation, he plans on pursuing a PhD in biomedical engineering.

Ms. Groman is one of the most remarkable teachers I have ever had. Whether it was shattering flowers with liquid nitrogen, making tie-dye shirts, or staying after school with the entire class so we could understand acid-base titrations, she made AP chemistry one of the most enjoyable, educational, and valuable classes I have ever taken. Not only did her class inspire me to consider science/engineering as a career, but also it gave me the necessary confidence and background to excel in all my college-level science courses. Ms. Groman was an invaluable asset to my experience at Jamesville-DeWitt, and is one of the most fun, dedicated, and enthusiastic teachers I have ever had.

Dr. Spanswick was an invaluable asset to my experience at Cornell. Whether it was seeking out summer internships, applying for the Churchill/Gates scholarships, or joining a research lab, Dr. Spanswick was always willing to offer his advice and encouragement for all of my endeavors on campus. Dr. Spanswick was also very friendly, offered great academic and career advice, and all the while threw in hilarious stories of his own experiences as a young scientist. Thanks to Dr. Spanswick’s advice and encouragement, he also enabled me to discover my academic path early on, and helped clarify my post-graduation plans. Dr. Spanswick is one of the most supportive, friendly, and knowledgeable mentors I have ever had, and my experience at Cornell would not have been nearly as enjoyable or rewarding without him.
Mikhail Grinwald

Honoring Louise Doornek of Pewaukee High School and Andrea Simitch of the Department of Architecture

Mikhail recently completed his thesis on the representation and consumption of a recombinant architecture through the tourism, lore, and superstition of Appalachian North Carolina. He was an editor of the Cornell Journal of Architecture and the student-led publication Association. He was a Meinig Family Cornell National Scholar and was selected to be on the program’s leadership board as well as those of the Cornell chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students, the Milstein Advisory Council, and the Cornell Symphony Orchestra. He has interned for architecture firms that include Bernard Tschumi Architects in New York and Wolfgang Tschapeller in Vienna. After graduating, Mikhail will pursue a post-professional master of architecture degree at Harvard University.

As my calculus teacher and an academic decathlon advisor, Mrs. Louise Doornek made math exciting. She explained abstract relationships through both practical applications and vivid conceptual analogies, which likely informed my early understanding of architecture as fundamentally both technical and conceptual. As a high school junior returning from a year abroad, I had the challenge of taking classes in algebra, trigonometry, and pre-calculus in a rush to fulfill the requirements for Mrs. Doornek’s calculus class. Rather than be limited by the sequence of the school’s math curriculum, she motivated me to work through these subjects simultaneously and instilled in me the independence, confidence, and fascination that encouraged me to work fluidly [within] a range of mathematical topics. The quality of her teaching is only exceeded by her trust in her students’ abilities, recognized and pushed to their full potential.

I first worked with Andrea Simitch during my second year in a core architecture studio. Her passion for teaching and architectural practice was infectious. I was obsessed with the project, examining its apparently simple problems for their complex potentials, but also trying to render its complexity in the simplest terms. This balanced approach to architectural design . . . has been the foundation of my undergraduate education. As my professor, thesis advisor, and mentor, Andrea has pushed me to critically engage my work and encouraged me to reimagine the role and scope of architecture.
Andrew Baim

Honoring Kim Deamer of Montville Township High School and Slava Paperno of the Russian Language Program

Andrew Baim was admitted into the College of Arts and Sciences as a Tanner Dean’s Scholar. He has since been heavily involved with several groups on campus, including the social justice theater troupe, Ordinary People, and the mental health initiative, Coffee Hour, of which he is the co-founder. He has been a member of the Student Library Advisory Council and the Educational Policy Committee for his major. At the Schwartz Center, he has performed in the plays God of Carnage and A People, and has served as an actor in multiple student films and class works for courses in screenwriting, directing, and adaptation.

As a high school senior I was finally able to take a class with Mrs. Deamer, who had also been the head of my class council. I already realized her aptitude for inspiring students to relish the chance to make the most of a high school education. As a teacher, she engaged personal creative processes, such as when she allowed my creation of a group video presentation on statistical analyses of trends in image perception of optical illusions. She even provided us with the book of optical illusions, taking a personal interest in making the project more enjoyable and comprehensive.

I walked into my introductory Russian class completely unsure of what to expect, having never heard the language spoken outside of movies and video games. Then, Slava Paperno walked in, and for the next 50 minutes not a single word of English was spoken—intimidating, yet invigorating. Professor Paperno not only literally wrote the textbook on our class, but also found time to make movies [about] Russia on the side. That ability to pursue interests within and beyond the classroom to such an extent always inspired me to strive to do the same.
Kristen Fletcher

Honoring Thomas Page of Half Hollow Hills High School and Sofia Villenas of the Department of Anthropology

Kristen was a study coordinator and experimenter for research investigating how people form first impressions. One of her most meaningful experiences has been working as a peer counselor, training coordinator, and beginning trainer with the EARS short-term counseling service. Other highlights of her Cornell years include serving as a youth mentor and studying abroad in Spain. During the summers Kristen ran children’s programming in a homeless shelter, organized ESL classes at a domestic violence center, and led goal pursuit groups for recovering adults with severe and persistent mental illness.

In high school I didn’t see myself as a “science person.” So I was surprised—almost apprehensive—when Mr. Thomas Page approached me about joining the school’s Science Olympiad team. Needless to say, our team took first place and we earned the opportunity to travel to the statewide competition, a trip that remains one of my fondest memories. Whether it was guiding me in my first psychology research project or talking to me about a personal issue, Mr. Page expressed a confidence in me that I did not yet have in myself. I am delighted to honor him today because his wisdom and genuine care for his students is truly extraordinary.

Sofia Villenas has inspired me equally with her teachings and her example. Through her thought-provoking and self-reflective assignments, I learned how to challenge the dominant narratives told about race, class, sexual orientation, and immigration in the educational system. An unfailingly kind and modest individual, the most valuable lessons that I took from Professor Villenas are that a teacher can be a feminist, and the most gentle supporter of individual students can be the fiercest advocate for equality for all students. Her belief in each individual’s potential to achieve not just good, but great things continues to guide and inspire me as I encounter issues of resilience, empowerment, and social justice.
Marcella “Sally” Hayes

Honoring Elizabeth Plank of New Trier Township High School and Holly Case of the Department of History

Sally Hayes majored in history and Spanish. She received the Frederic Conger Wood Fellowship from Cornell’s European studies program to spend the summer of 2012 researching her thesis, “The Rebel Gesture: Anarchist Maquis of Barcelona.” In 2012, she won the DeKiewet Prize for the Junior History Major of Outstanding Promise. She represented the Cornell Forensics Society’s debate team at three national championships and one world championship, and joined the society’s prison education program, teaching debate to juvenile offenders debate. She received the Fuerst Award for Outstanding Library Student Employees, and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Historical Society, and Cornell Democrats.

Ms. Plank taught me not only what it means to learn, but also what it means to teach. In her junior AP U.S. history class I was inspired by her passion for the subject; consequently, history became my passion too. She taught us to ask incisive questions and look for patterns in historical events. As a senior, I was her student teacher for the same class, and this only increased my admiration for her. She showed me by example how to give constructive feedback, help someone who is struggling, and be invested in students’ lives inside and outside the classroom.

I was extremely fortunate to be randomly designated Professor Case’s advisee as a freshman. She found out about all my interests, keeping an eye out for classes, programs, books, or people that would help me further them. When I finally was able to take one of her courses I learned that she was a brilliant lecturer and scholar. As part of my thesis committee she was uncompromising in her pursuit of excellence, ensuring every last word was purposefully chosen. She holds my work to the highest possible standard while also continuously showing her consideration for me as a person.
Jing Jin

Honoring Anna Loonam of Bellaire High School and Aaron Sachs of the Department of History

Jing received Tanner Dean’s Scholar and Department of History research grants for her senior honors thesis on the literary representation of oil-related traumas. As a Meinig Scholar, she received support to attend the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Jing has been active in advancing campus sustainability through the Sustainability Hub and the Cornell Team & Leadership Center. She has been a senior science writer and opinion columnist for the Cornell Daily Sun. Jing is a member of the Mortar Board Senior Honor Society, Kappa Delta Sorority, and 2013 “Vagina Monologues” cast.

Although Anna Loonam’s students performed impressively on the AP and IB biology exams, she never prioritized test scores. She was dedicated to making biology relatable to our diverse lives and interests and accessible to all students. She always pushed us to think biologically, rather than just memorize facts, and she created numerous extracurricular opportunities for us to explore topics in depth and learn about cutting-edge research. Her relationships with researchers at the Texas Medical Center and Rice University enriched our learning, and it afforded me the opportunity to intern at the Strassmann-Queller Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Lab at Rice.

I first met Professor Sachs as a confused sophomore in the College Scholar Program. He made time, as he does for all of his students and many others, to give me guidance. Every lecture in his environmental history course was meticulously and thoughtfully prepared. For our discussions, he chose works ranging from academic scholarship to memoir, manifesto, photography, and literature. These texts in turn engaged different aspects of us as learners and thinkers. His initiative in founding the Cornell Roundtable on Environmental Studies Topics has brought together people from around the world for intimate and thought-provoking intellectual conversations.
Adam Kroloff

Honoring Nicholas Ripatrazone of Bridgewater-Raritan High School and Michael Goldstein of the Department of Psychology

Adam is an English and psychology major. During his time at Cornell, he conducted research at the B.A.B.Y. Lab on infant development. He held leadership roles in his social fraternity and APO service fraternity. Adam also volunteered regularly with the Franziska Racker Centers and at Cayuga Ridge Nursing Home. His poetry has been featured in Rainy Day and Ink magazines. After graduation, Adam will be working with City Year, mentoring at-risk kids in Jacksonville, Fla.

I have met few people who are as passionate about literature as Mr. Ripatrazone. His love of language rubbed off on me and inspired me to continue reading and writing poetry and short fiction in college. His love for teaching showed in his commitment to bringing out the creativity in each of his students. I’ll never forget our final “exam,” which involved writing and performing a play that, among other quirky requirements, had to include a philosophical debate about cheese. Although quite difficult, it was a liberating and fun experience. Mr. Ripatrazone was really everything I could hope for in a teacher; he made class fun and helped me learn a little about myself along the way.

I first met Dr. Goldstein as a high school senior, when I came to visit Cornell and attended one of his developmental psychology lectures. I remember working up the courage to approach him after class and talk to him about my interest in language development. I soon realized that I had no reason to be nervous. He was extremely friendly and happy to talk about his research and Cornell. I have now taken Dr. Goldstein’s full course and worked in his lab for almost three years, but my impression of him is still the same as it was after that first meeting. He is always approachable and is one of the most passionate people I have ever known. He can get me excited about any topic, whether he is talking about psychology, cats, or Reuben sandwiches. He has been one of my most enthusiastic supporters and I am so grateful and honored to have been able to learn from him.
Suzana Markolovic

Honoring Nancy Brizzolara of the Academy of the Holy Angels and David Collum of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology

Suzana majored in chemistry and chemical biology with minors in Spanish and education. Outside of her academics, she spent her time as an undergraduate researcher in Professor David Collum’s laboratory, a member of the varsity cross-country and track teams, and a leader and volunteer in the Cornell Catholic Community. Suzana was also a member of Quill and Dagger Senior Honor Society, Phi Beta Kappa, and the 400 Club. She will be pursuing a DPhil in organic chemistry at the University of Oxford after graduation.

I had the honor of formally learning chemistry from Mrs. Brizzolara for three years. After completing AP chemistry in my junior year, five students and I approached Mrs. Brizz about continuing chemistry during our senior year. Though a small group, Mrs. Brizz managed to convince the administration to allow her to teach an organic chemistry elective course to the six of us. Her care was evident through her actions, and her elective course gave me the confidence to become a chemistry major at Cornell. Mrs. Brizzolaro has continued to mentor me throughout my time at Cornell, and she has greatly inspired my decision to pursue organic chemistry in my graduate studies.

There is no other professor that has had more of a positive impact during my time at Cornell than David Collum. It was during my search to join a research laboratory in my sophomore year that I had the pleasure of meeting Professor Collum. Besides his entertaining stories, lighthearted nature, and sense of humor, what I appreciate most about Professor Collum is his sincere willingness to support, encourage, and guide me. As an aspiring future educator and scientist, I hope to emulate Professor Collum’s care for his students and his expertise in chemistry. If I am lucky, I might even acquire his sense of humor.
Patricio Martinez-Llompart

Honoring Diana Escobar of the Academia del Perpetuo Socorro and Raymond Craib of the Department of History

Patricio’s research, including his senior thesis, examined the impact of zero-tolerance crime control policies on legal aid and incarceration in Puerto Rico and the United States. Following graduation, Patricio will be a New York City Urban Fellow, after which he plans to attend law school. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and current president of Pi Sigma Alpha Government Honor Society. Patricio was also a senior editor for the Cornell Daily Sun and vice president of affinity relations for the 2013 Senior Class Campaign.

From impersonating Don Quixote’s faithful sidekick, Sancho Panza, to spending countless hours in the newsroom discussing current affairs and ideas for articles, being Mrs. Diana Escobar’s student provided me with experiences that were highlights of my junior and senior years in high school. Through her courses, Mrs. Escobar introduced me to the power of writing and of being critically outspoken about political and social issues. Her rigor and high-expectations, yet unwavering belief in my potential, instilled in me renewed appreciation for the value of hard work. But most importantly, having Mrs. Escobar as a teacher made me fully appreciate the intellectual endeavor that I most enjoy: thinking, discussing, and writing about the ideas that shape our world.

Although I intended to only pursue a government major, enrolling in Professor Raymond Craib’s history courses as a freshman made me reconsider. Since his first assignment for Colonial Latin America, which asked us to “define America,” Professor Craib challenged me to think of history, not in terms of dates and events, but as a tool for understanding the origins of concepts and distinct social dynamics. Through such an approach to historical analysis, Professor Craib opened my eyes to the activism inherent in the study of our past’s forgotten chapters. Thanks to him, I learned to regard historical writing as a form of both art and social justice—a perspective that informed my study of the discipline and reformulated my views about the transformative implications of academic work.
Andrew Santana

Honoring Kevin Nelson of Burlingame High School and Richard Polenberg of the Department of History

Andrew is a government major who recently completed his honors thesis on the role of economic thought on American political development. During his junior year he was a visiting scholar in philosophy, politics, and economics at Pembroke College, University of Oxford. Andrew was also a law and public policy fellow at the University of California-Berkeley in the summer of 2012. Professionally, Andrew served as a staff assistant to California Attorney General Kamala D. Harris. At Cornell, Andrew has been involved in improving campus diversity, served as a resident advisor for two years, and was a teaching assistant in Cornell’s Prison Education Program. He plans to go to law school.

At the height of the Great Recession, Mr. Nelson taught me to view economics as a force for social progress. His AP macroeconomics class exposed me to the perennial debates that shape public policy and politics. Not only did Mr. Nelson’s class prepare me for college, but it also opened my eyes to economic inequality and the dynamics of a modern economy. He constantly challenged me to critically assess economic modeling, substantiate my own beliefs, and think creatively about societal dilemmas. I am forever grateful for his ability to relate economic theory to real-world problems.

Professor Polenberg taught me to view history through the struggles and experiences of all but forgotten Americans. His lectures tell the stories of the indigent, marginalized, and oppressed and their pursuit of justice. I will never forget Professor Polenberg’s kindness and compassion as a historian and a human being. Teaching at Auburn prison with Professor Polenberg was a defining moment in my life. His warm heart, patience, and encouragement always uplifted and inspired the class. I will never forget our long conversations on topics ranging from FDR and the New Deal to forgiveness and life lessons.
Sara Trongone
Honoring Daniel Gill of Montclair High School
and Lori Khatchadourian of the Department of Near Eastern Studies

Sara currently serves as the co-president of Friends of Farmworkers, a student organization that provides ESL tutoring to local migrant farm workers as a means of self-advocacy and empowerment. She is also an executive board member of the Knitting Club, a collaborative network dedicated to cultivating community engaged learning, and works as a student ambassador for the Engaged Learning + Research center. Sara recently interned with Covenant House International’s Department of Anti-Human Trafficking Initiatives and plans to attend law school to further assist trafficking victims and homeless youth. She is a member of the National Society for Collegiate Scholars and the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

Mr. Gill is unlike any public educator of our time and I could not have flourished as a student (and as a person) without having been exposed to his unique and holistic teaching pedagogy. Through interactive role playing, I was immersed in a world where I could be anyone and do anything—a potent concept for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. In House Gill, you can run for president and learn the ins and outs of campaign finance; you can represent the English crown for a day and negotiate trade routes with Portugal in the 1600s; you can donate your hard-earned “podestas” (dollars) to the cancer fund, or “buy” a real-life ice cream cone supplied by Mr. Gill himself, the man who stays after school with you as long as it takes to help you with your homework, or to simply sit and chat when he senses that there may be trouble at home. With a little creativity and a heap of compassion, Mr. Gill redefines what it means to educate young adults.

As I sat in Professor Khatchadourian’s class, Archaeology of Empires, I remember thinking to myself, “This must be what a liberal arts education is all about.” Her class stirred a voracious intellectual curiosity within me—a hunger for knowledge and a desire to approach life through a critical lens—that has fueled my academic journey at Cornell. Professor Khatchadourian manages to make antiquity come alive as she challenges her students to engage creatively and deeply with the course material. By actively listening to my remarks in class and valuing my opinions and ideas, Professor Khatchadourian taught me to be comfortable with my own voice when, as a timid transfer student, I was in jeopardy of retreating into silence.
Jason Wang

Honoring Bob Durrett of Dublin Jerome High School and Terry Herter of the Department of Astronomy

Jason is graduating with a major in physics concentrating in astronomy and computer science. As an undergraduate, Jason has worked with Professor Terry Herter on NASA’s newest airborne observatory, SOFIA. Outside of research, Jason was a two-year president of the Cornell Computer Reuse Association, a student group that refurbishes and donates used computers to humanitarian organizations around the world. He also helped found another student group, the Zambian Community Education Initiative, which is working with Professor Muna Ndulo to build a high school in rural Zambia. Jason plans to attend graduate school in astronomy next fall.

Mr. Durrett never had a boring Latin class. Whether it was the absurd mythological backstory, the comedic personal anecdote, or the corny pun, he always had some flair up his sleeve to keep our attention even in the dreariest of mornings. In the advanced Latin classes, Mr. Durrett was flexible enough to let us take tangents into what we thought was interesting. For example, we spent a week memorizing and reciting the text we were translating. Not only did this give me the ability to deliver Latin poetry on demand, but also it taught me the finer details of poetic meter. In all, Mr. Durrett gave me a reason to look forward to class and fostered my curiosity.

I came into Cornell not knowing what I wanted to do and am now leaving with a great interest in astronomy, thanks in no small part to all the great experiences I have had doing research with Professor Terry Herter. Professor Herter has introduced me to a broad spectrum of astronomy, taught me the tools to do research, and guided me through a successful undergraduate career. In addition, he has given me the opportunity to fly on a NASA aircraft to do science; this, by far, is the coolest thing I have ever done. My research experience with Professor Herter will be valuable for graduate school and memorable always.
Guo Jie Chin

Honoring Jacqueline Tano-Phua of Hwa Chong Institution and David Delchamps of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Guo Jie Chin completed two degrees in four years, and was on the dean’s list every semester. He served as president of the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society, co-president of the International Student Admissions Ambassadors, and operations director of the Social Business Consulting Group. He also held leadership roles in the Malaysia Students Association and Engineering Peer Advising, and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Omicron Delta Epsilon Economics Honor Society. In addition, he was a physics teaching assistant and worked on the MineSweeper and AguaClara engineering projects. After graduation, he will be working for Citigroup as an investment banking analyst.

Entering my junior year in high school, I viewed chemistry as nothing more than a pre-requisite for college, but Ms. Phua’s enthusiasm made a dry subject bearable. Eventually, I came to enjoy it. She is an educator who sets meaningful expectations for each of her students, and inspires them to overachieve. Always understanding of my extracurricular commitments, she gave me leeway to balance them with my schoolwork whenever possible. More importantly, she taught me that achievement required character just as much as it relied on inherent ability, and believed in me when even I had doubts.

I will always remember the pains that Professor Delchamps would take to make something understood. He is truly dedicated to teaching, and always makes time to answer your questions. Through the use of diagrams, proofs, and the occasional hand-waving argument, he is able to make complicated ideas look simple. His lectures on “The Mathematics of Signal and System Analysis” and “Evolutionary Processes, Algorithms, and Games” were always sharp, to the point, and crystal clear. He proved to me that brevity is the soul of wit, and showed me that true brilliance need not hide behind technical jargon and pedantic obfuscation.
Emma Lejeune

Honoring Stacy Kissel of Brookline High School and Kenneth Hover of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Emma is interested in research in civil engineering. For the past two summers she has performed research in earthquake engineering through the Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation REU Network. At Cornell, she is on the Engineers for a Sustainable World Solar Ovens Project Team, which collaborates with a women’s group in Nicaragua to develop sustainable technology, past president of the Cornell American Society of Civil Engineers, a peer advisor, a member of Chi Epsilon and Tau Beta Pi honor fraternities, and Alpha Chi Omega sorority. Emma plans to attend graduate school to pursue a PhD in civil engineering next fall.

[During my] senior year of high school I took AP physics with Ms. Kissel. That class was my first exposure to mechanics, which has been the foundation of many classes that I’ve taken since, especially the ones I’m most interested in. Ms. Kissel’s enthusiasm for physics and dynamic teaching methods made the class incredibly engaging, and made me love the subject. Ms. Kissel also encouraged me to pursue engineering. Without that experience, I don’t think I would be where I am today.

At Cornell I have taken four classes with Professor Kenneth Hover, three of them on concrete. In Professor Hover’s classes I have learned more than I would ever have thought would be possible. Every day his lectures manage to teach us about areas that we didn’t even know existed. In addition, the format of his classes makes everyone really learn and understand the material. Before this year, I didn’t even know that I was interested in concrete, but now I think it’s one of the most fascinating topics in engineering and, thanks to Professor Hover, I’m excited about learning more about concrete in the future.
Kimberly Lin

Honoring James McCormick of the Middlesex County Academy of Science, Mathematics and Engineering Technologies and Ashim Datta of the Department of Biological and Environmental Engineering

Although Kimberly is attending medical school after graduation, she will always be an engineer at heart. Kim conducts research in the biomedical engineering department under Professor Michael King, and is working towards publishing a study of the mechanotransduction of human neutrophils. She is vice president and co-founder of Cornell Christian Students, and started the Cornell University Unmanned Air System team’s business subteam. While Kim has been DPE Student of the Month and Freshman of the Year, and recipient of an Outstanding Peer Advisor Award, she finds serving her peers as both an EARS counselor and a teaching assistant across four classes most rewarding.

“Whatever doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” No truer words could serve Mr. McCormick’s notoriously difficult biology exams justice. His projects were equally demanding, but thanks to them, I now know how to build a functioning solar water heater, a model flying bird with steering capabilities, and an innovative septic system from household items. Mr. McCormick not only taught me science; he trained me to apply it to the world around me like an engineer. By setting high expectations for me, he prepared me to face the real world and empowered me to expand the limits of my creativity.

Professor Datta’s love for teaching was obvious; I often wondered what he wouldn’t sacrifice for his students. His constant encouragement for us to ask questions and challenge the norm compelled me to test his patience one day in a 45-minute debate over a homework solution. When we finally realized that I actually found a typo, he told me the value of my persistence. Professor Datta urged me to not always accept everything I am taught, but to question it, to have confidence in my gut feelings, and in the face of whatever opposition, to never give up.
Zachary Sherman
Honoring Eric Goldstone of Pinnacle High School and Abraham Stroock of the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

Zach worked in Professor Abe Stroock’s lab, where he used theoretical approaches to investigate the thermodynamical properties of metastable liquid water. He was also a course assistant for the courses Introduction to Chemical Engineering and Pre-freshmen Summer Program Chemistry. He has been principal trombonist in the Cornell Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra as well as an active member in the Big Red Marching Band. After graduation, Zach plans to continue his education at MIT to pursue his PhD in chemical engineering and, ultimately, a faculty position.

Mr. Eric Goldstone’s AP physics class generated great memories from high school. Tests were certainly more interesting when the questions involved, for example, projectile motion of classmates. I enjoyed physics so much that I entered Cornell interested in engineering physics. While I ultimately pursued other interests, the science skills I developed with Mr. Goldstone have been crucial to my success. Beginning with such a strong foundation enabled me to get the most out of each course by making connections and seeing subtleties that my peers couldn’t. I owe Mr. Goldstone so much for starting me off on this amazing journey.

Joining Professor Abe Stroock’s lab was the best decision I made at Cornell. Under his tutelage, I have grown intellectually, surpassing what I thought were the limits of my ability. Professor Stroock has gone well beyond his role as research advisor to become a truly influential mentor. His personal investment in my success has not only directly provided me countless opportunities, but has also given me a role model for my goal of becoming a professor. While I will always think of Professor Stroock as a mentor, I hope to one day be able to also call him a colleague.
Adam Trofa

Honoring Thomas Jacobs of Amity Regional High School
and Charles Williamson of the Sibley School of Mechanical
and Aerospace Engineering

Adam is a mechanical engineering major with interests in aerospace and
electromechanical systems. He has been a three-season athlete throughout
his time at Cornell, running for the cross-country and track and field teams,
Adam performs research in the Fluid Dynamics Research Laboratories, and
has received funding through Engineering Learning Initiatives for several
projects in the lab. He interned as a structural engineer for Ball Aerospace last
year, and will be working as an industrial fellow at FlexEnergy this upcoming
summer. Adam will be finishing his master of engineering degree at Cornell in
the fall.

I had already known Coach Jacobs for two years through the track team
when I signed up to take his AP chemistry course my junior year. I don’t
think either of us knew what to expect, but I do think we were both
pleasantly surprised. On the track he was strict, teaching us to be
gentlemen, scholars, and athletes—in that order. In class, expectations
were equally high, where he sought to replicate the college experience
with longer, but less frequent, assignments and tests. It was Coach
Jacobs who gave me the academic challenge I never realized I had
craved.

Across Cornell, I can say with certainty that no professor brings more
energy or enthusiasm to the classroom than Professor Williamson. He
carries his own reverent awe of fluid dynamics to each lecture, where
he passes his passion to his many students. I credit my own love of
fluids to the way he brings the esoteric equations to life with each of his
frequent demonstrations. Beyond fluid dynamics, Professor Williamson
is constantly thinking about ways to update and improve both his own
courses and the Sibley School as a whole, showing a true dedication to
his students.
Whitney Wenger

Honoring Lani Hoza of Western Ablemarle High School and Tobias Hanrath of the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

Whitney has conducted research with the Hanrath Energy Laboratory for three years. In that time she was co-author on a publication in Advanced Materials. She completed an internship as a Merck Engineering and Technology Fellow and an internship at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and was selected as the winner of the KAUST International Undergraduate Research Poster competition. She has served as the Cornell University Sustainable Design Solar Team leader for two years and has participated in numerous sustainability social outreach programs. After graduation, Whitney will pursue a PhD in chemical engineering with a National Science Foundation Research Fellowship.

I discovered the joy of applying mathematics to solve ‘real-world’ issues the year I took math analysis with Lani Hoza. Her practical, witty approach to tackling problems fed my passion for puzzles and gave me confidence in the tools I had to solve them. Lani also taught my AP psychology class, which continued to fuel my curiosity; we would often discuss everything from human nature to current events for hours after school. Lani was my teacher, but she also became a mentor and a friend. To this day, I am grateful for her inspiration and encouragement.

I started research with Tobias Hanrath the summer following my freshman year. From the first day, he has been a constant source of support and guidance. Tobias developed an engaging and exciting atmosphere in the lab by supporting me through ambitious projects with the motto “big risks, big rewards.” His support and confidence in my ability has allowed me to pursue huge personal and intellectual growth I never imagined I would achieve as an undergraduate. He has been an invaluable mentor and has helped me develop through conferences and additional research opportunities—opportunities which continue to inspire me today.
Lana Miller

Honoring Philomena Clement of Saint Anthony’s High School and Daphne Jameson of the School of Hotel Administration

Lana is graduating with a minor in real estate and a concentration in law. She was a finalist for the Joseph Drown Prize and has been on the dean’s list every semester. On campus, Lana is a sister of Kappa Kappa Gamma, president of the Hotelies Serving Society, and a member of Ye Hosts Honorary Society. She serves as a teaching assistant for three different classes. Lana studied abroad with Semester at Sea, traveling to 11 countries in 105 days. She interned for Land’s End Resort, Starwood Hotels, and PriceWaterhouseCoopers. After graduation, she will join Ernst and Young as a transaction real estate advisor.

Spirited, passionate, and kindhearted, Mrs. Clement impacted me greatly. I had the pleasure of having her for both junior English and AP literature. She saw within me a student who had a bright future—something I had yet to realize. She never hesitated to lend a helping hand and played an essential role in helping me craft a well-developed college admissions essay. Further, Mrs. Clement bestowed upon me the most prestigious English award at our graduation ceremony. I am grateful for the opportunity to recognize her and am thankful for the encouragement and knowledge she has shared with me.

As a freshman, I enrolled in managerial communication with Professor Jameson. This class laid the foundation for every class I took at Cornell thereafter. Meeting with Professor Jameson on a weekly basis allowed me to build a strong relationship with her and, rather than just act as my professor, she became my career advisor and role model. Outside the classroom, she has supported me throughout my internship search; study abroad endeavors; and even assumed an advisory position for my organization, Hotelies Serving Society. I feel privileged to have been her student and I thank her for her support and encouragement, both inside and outside of the classroom.
Matthew Rubin
Honoring Steven McKenney of Horace Greeley High School and Robert Kwortnik of the School of Hotel Administration

Matthew has been on the dean’s list every semester that he has been on campus. In the fall of his junior year, he studied abroad in Dublin, Ireland, where he had the opportunity to explore and immerse himself in Irish culture and work life. He is currently the president of Ye Hosts Honorary Society and the donor relations and finance director for Hotel Ezra Cornell, where he had been a front-of-house function manager for the two previous years. His thesis explores the importance of relevance for advertgames—or branded videogames—in the restaurant industry.

I knew Señor McKenney long before he taught me Spanish my junior year of high school; by that time, he had already become a cross-country and track coach that I looked up to and considered a good friend. His sense of humor is infectious in any language. Despite the frustration, I loved that he insisted that we only speak Spanish in class, which helped me increase my fluency substantially. During a week-long trip to Spain, he insisted that we live like locals, by taking public transportation and eating outside of the tourist districts.

I was never supposed to have Professor Kwortnik; I switched into his class section while rearranging my schedule to accommodate courses I needed before I could study abroad. Having him was a happy accident; his sense of humor and wealth of knowledge provoked my interest in marketing, and launched the direction of my job search. He has been a huge source of knowledge and advice as I undergo my first massive research project: my thesis. I’m proud to say that he is my academic advisor, thesis advisor, repeat professor, and most importantly, friend.
College of Human Ecology

Jonathan Bar
Honoring Robert Pergolizzi of Bergen County Academies and John Belina of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Since 2009, Jonathan has been a dedicated member of Cornell University EMS (CUEMS). During his tenure, he served as the training officer and director of operations and helped lead CUEMS to a national championship in basic life support skills. During the past three years, Jonathan has also worked as an RA and Cornell Outdoor Education instructor, specializing in wilderness survival skills. Jonathan also holds membership in the Quill & Dagger Honor Society, the Golden Key International Honor Society, the National Society for Collegiate Scholars, and Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society. After graduation, he will be attending medical school.

“See one. Do one. Teach one,” said Dr. Pergolizzi. This simple mnemonic detailing the sequence of steps to master something has helped me achieve excellence in many pursuits. Moreover, doing immunology research with Dr. Pergolizzi in high school taught me advanced lab techniques but also to think critically, to maintain healthy skepticism, and to apply scientific reasoning to solve problems. Learning these methods and this way of thinking in high school gave me a head start at Cornell and facilitated my success. Dr. Pergolizzi’s influence is one of the major reasons that I am pursuing a career in medicine today.

As an undergraduate, I never had Dr. Belina as a professor. Despite this, he still made the most significant contribution to my education as a faculty fellow. We began working together when I became an RA. Since then, we have executed many programs, but the most stimulating program has been Sunday brunch. Nearly every week for the past three years, we have shared brunch together. Our conversations hit almost every discipline, exposed me to new ideas, and fostered an inquisitive spirit. My Cornell education would not have been the same without this deceptively simple but incredibly important weekly ritual.
John Boyle

Honoring Jeff Walters of New Hartford High School
and Rosemary Avery of the Department of Policy Analysis

John was a member of the varsity football team. He received both the Daniel N. Bondareff Award and Victor T. Grohmann Award for his academic achievement as a football player. He was also a member of the 400 Club for four years. He received the Robinson Award for Academic Excellence in 2009 and 2010 for his academic performance within the College of Human Ecology. John assisted in research investigating the relationship between genetic abnormalities and heart arrhythmias during the summer of 2010 at the Masonic Medical Research Lab in his hometown. John will be attending Upstate Medical School next year.

Mr. Walters was known to start many a class with an enthusiastic “Today is a great day to be alive.” This energetic attitude spilled over into his teaching of both history and government, which inspired me to take subjects I lacked intrinsic interest in and delve deep into them. He challenged me intellectually and built my self-confidence up through his patience, even if he had to read three rough drafts voluntarily before my final submission. He ran his classes identically to college courses, and I believe this early exposure to academia created good habits that were essential for my success.

Most people would consider memorization a part of student life, but few would think this part of a professor’s life. Yet Dr. Avery does this every year, taking photographs of every student in the class and learning every name, something unique among my professors here. Her desire to know her students is matched by her ability to communicate her expertise in policy, transforming a naive bio major like myself into a “budding policy analyst.” The information she presented changed the way I thought about and analyzed problems, which is a benefit I will continue to see for years to come.
Anne Laurita

Honoring Michael Scoblete of West Morris Mendham High School and Cindy Hazan of the Department of Human Development

Anne served as a research assistant in the Adult Attachment Lab and the Personality, Attachment, and Control Lab and as a teaching assistant for the course Research Methods. She was a student assistant in Alice Cook House and a Human Ecology ambassador. A member of Kappa Omicron Nu and Golden Key Honor Society, she has been on the dean’s list since freshman year. Anne pursued a minor in the history of art and participated in the Wind Symphony. During summers in New Jersey, she coached the Bernardsville swim team. This fall, Anne will enter the PhD program in developmental psychology here at Cornell.

During freshman year, I would enter the classroom after Mr. Scoblete taught [the] junior-level Theory of Knowledge class and stare in wonder at the whiteboards filled with insightful questions, brainstorming, and seemingly unrelated doodles. The following two years, in his chemistry and TOK classes, Mr. Scoblete sparked my fascination with constructing thoughtful questions and unpacking intellectual prompts. His chemistry lessons encouraged me to actively consider the creative applications of scientific concepts, and his TOK classes prompted in-depth discussions of philosophical issues, including the definitions and areas of knowledge. Mr. Scoblete truly fostered my interest and confidence in grappling with academic unknowns.

I will never forget Professor Hazan’s engaging Human Bonding class lectures, in which she brought meaningful research on close relationships to life. My academic advisor and the Adult Attachment Laboratory’s principal investigator, Professor Hazan inspired and helped me develop specific academic questions in the realm of adult attachment through exploration of relevant courses and research. Throughout my undergraduate experience, she enthusiastically supported my scholastic and extracurricular interests and encouraged my growth as an individual. Continuing in academia—fortunately, with Professor Hazan as a mentor—I aspire to emulate the thoughtfulness and attentiveness she brings to her roles of researcher and educator.
School of Industrial and Labor Relations

Alexander Bores

Honoring Irving Kagan of Hunter College High School and Kate Bronfenbrenner of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations

Alex, who is graduating with a major in industrial and labor relations and minored in economics, serves as the undergraduate student-elected trustee. He is a Rawlings Presidential Research Scholar, through which he has done research on union organizing with Kate Bronfenbrenner in the Labor Education Research Office. He is an active member of the Cornell Forensics Society. He is a former president of Cornell Students Against Sweatshops. He is a Truman Scholar, an Irving M. Ives Award winner, the youngest-ever recipient of the Sol Stetin Award, and will serve as the ILR symbol banner bearer during commencement.

Mr. Kagan’s Constitutional Law class dared every high school student to be their own Supreme Court justice. Rather than lecturing, he turned the law into an interactive exercise, allowing us to debate the principles behind our country’s constitution. His excitement for constitutional law was infectious, managing the rare feat of keeping high school students enthralled during an 8:52 a.m. class. He also advised the student newspaper and Washington Seminar. His constant challenges to our arguments in class helped teach me many of the debate skills I use today. More importantly, as the teacher behind my first legal class, Mr. Kagan sparked my interest in law, and had a tremendous impact on my career aspirations.

Professor Bronfenbrenner has been my advisor, mentor, teacher, and friend. Her classes have taught me about the global labor movement of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Working on research with her has taught me valuable skills that I will use for the rest of my life. As an advisor for the student labor groups on campus, Professor Bronfenbrenner has been an invaluable resource that has enabled us to make tangible changes on our campus and around the world. Her support throughout my four years at Cornell went far beyond that of an academic advisor, and for that I am eternally grateful.
Lucas Kowalczyk

Honoring Alicja Szostek of the Eighth High School of Zabrze and Veronica Martínez-Matsuda of the Department of Labor Relations, Law, and History

Lucas recently finished his senior honors thesis on immigration reform and social movement unionism. He is the editor-in-chief and founder of the Cornell Undergraduate Law and Society Review, and has been on the dean’s list every semester. He is a member of the University Hearing and Review Boards, MENSA, and the Golden Key International Honour Society, as well as a dedicated member of the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble, where he plays Indonesian sitar. He is also the proud ILR degree marshal. After graduation, Lucas will attend law school.

Principal Szostek is an exceptional teacher and a friend who inspired me to discover and motivated me to learn. She recognized the importance of student activism, questioning minds, and liberty of expression, a true visionary in post-communist Poland. She was not only devoted to the classes she taught, but to education in general. Her zest was a steady source of inspiration for me throughout high school, and I always appreciated her support, especially when she was the only person who believed that I would one day realize my dream of studying in America. With Professor Martínez, no question ever goes unanswered, no idea unexamined, and no enthusiasm is ever wasted. She is an outstanding educator and a talented academician, but most importantly, a brave historian, unafraid to reexamine the status quo, who leads by example and encouraged me to explore outside of the mainstream. She is the epitome of a progressive educator, and through her labor history class I became more mature, sensitive, and intellectually curious. Our countless meetings allowed me to rediscover my heritage and to connect with a past I had ignored for years. She is truly an enlightened mentor.
“The Cornell faculty members and the secondary school teachers selected by the scholars therefore participate in this celebration in a dual capacity—as witnesses to the achievements of their students and as honorees that have enriched their students’ educational experiences.”