

# The Merrill Presidential Scholars

## **26th Annual Convocation**

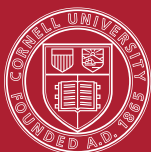
Wednesday, May 21, 2014

11:30 a.m.

Memorial Room

Willard Straight Hall

Cornell University



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  
Gretchen Ritter, Harold Tanner Dean

College of Engineering  
Lance Collins, Joseph Silbert Dean

School of Hotel Administration  
Michael Sturman, Associate Dean

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

School of Industrial and Labor Relations  
Robert Smith, Associate Dean

## Closing Remarks

Susan H. Murphy, Vice President for Student and Academic Services  
Nancy Merrill '96



## The Merrill Family

**P**hilip 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 operating 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 2014 Merrill Presidential Scholars

### College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Ross Berger  
Thora Bjornsdottir  
Caitlin Bowen  
J. Carter Loftus  
Devin McMahan  
Alexandra Katharine Neuber  
Scott Newman  
Kelly O'Connor  
Madeline Olberg  
Anna Taylor Rassman

### College of Architecture, Art, and Planning

Xu Yang

### College of Arts and Sciences

Emily Dongxue Cai  
Michelle Eun-Jung Cho  
Emily Dando  
Robert S. McGehee, Jr.  
Philip John Perrone  
David Sadoff  
Emily Shearer  
Jillian Strayhorn

### College of Engineering

Dennis Chua  
Walker N. Grimshaw  
Manita Herlitz-Ferguson  
Tori Klug  
Sung Min (Sam) Park  
Natali Vannoy  
Beth Wright

### School of Hotel Administration

Silvie Cohen  
Nicholas Vasco

### College of Human Ecology

Andrew Freiman  
Scott Kim  
Hannah Zalusky

### School of Industrial and Labor Relations

Danielle Abada  
Simon Boehme

## Today's Convocation

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 2014 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.



## Cornell's STAR Scholarships

**E**stablished 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 2014 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.



# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

## Ross Berger Woodbury, New York

Honoring **Arthur Kalish** of Syosset High School  
and **Richard Curtis** of the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied  
Economics and Management

*Ross, an applied economics and management major in the Dyson School, was a Dyson Scholar, has been on the Dean's List every semester and will be graduating summa cum laude. He served on the executive board of Ho-Nun-De-Kah, the CALS honor society. He also served on the Dyson Council, the Student Assembly Finance Commission, and co-founded Apex Capital Fund, a student investment organization on campus. Ross was an active brother of Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity and Delta Sigma Pi Professional Fraternity. After graduation, Ross plans on working for Barclays in their investment banking division.*

I was first introduced to Mr. Kalish after showing interest in the math research program as a freshman. That short meeting made an indelible impression on me, as his enthusiasm for math was contagious. Over the next three years, serving not only as my math teacher, but also as my research mentor, Mr. Kalish's wisdom, passion, and constant encouragement enabled me to develop the self-motivation that continues to push me forward. The joy in his eyes and his genuine smile serve as a constant reminder to find and cherish what makes me happy.

Professor Curtis runs a tight ship. This is well known within the Dyson School; it is also well known that he is a world-class professor. He makes sure to memorize and remember the names of every student, which was something I admired. It is this preparation and dedication to his craft that I hope to emulate as I move on from Cornell. I will always remember the time we crossed paths at Turning Stone while conducting experiments in applied probability, and our conversations about Big Red basketball after class, but more importantly, I will always be thankful for his commitment to teaching and for the valuable knowledge he imparted on me.



## **Thora Bjornsdottir** **Kopavogi, Iceland**

Honoring **Gretchen Diercks Ospina** of Orono High School  
and **Melissa Ferguson** of the Department of Psychology

*Thora received multiple grants to fund her psychology honors thesis research on the effects of American national cues on trustworthiness judgments of faces. She also completed an honors thesis in German literature, arguing for the necessity of language, mythology, and out-groups to German nationalism. She is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society and has been on the dean's list every semester. She also has positions in various organizations, including drawing and editing art for The Lunatic, the campus humor magazine, and leading the German Club. After graduating, Thora will begin a PhD program in social psychology.*

German class was always my favorite in high school – and Frau Ospina's presence there was a large factor. I started studying German in middle school, but developed no great fondness for it until I entered Frau Ospina's class. Her teaching style was effective in helping me learn and in stimulating my interest in the language. She always managed to bring humor into her classes, with her book and film choices and her dry jokes. Overall, learning German from her for four years led to my choice of German as one of my majors, and my continued enjoyment of the language.

Working in Melissa's Automaticity Lab as a research assistant provided me with a wonderfully positive research experience, both teaching me many valuable skills and inspiring me to pursue my own research ideas. This, in turn, led to my honors thesis project and my application to graduate school. Melissa served as my advisor during both these processes, and her incredible support and enthusiasm was integral to my success in these endeavors. Not only has she been a remarkable advisor, but also provided a model of an excellent scientist and professor, which I hope one day to be able to emulate.





## Caitlin Bowen

Rochester, New York

Honoring **David Wiener** of Penfield High School  
and **Roger Spanswick** of the Department of Biological and  
Environmental Engineering

*Caitlin, a biological engineer, has been conducting research on congenital heart disease for the past three years. She received a grant from the American Heart Association and was named a Rawlings Presidential Research Scholar for her work. She is a published author in the journal Cells Tissues Organs. She is a member of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honors Society and Alpha Epsilon Honors Society. She held leadership roles in eMed: Society of Engineers in Medicine and Tau Beta Pi and she taught traditional Irish step dancing to children in Ithaca. She will be conducting research at the National Institutes of Health after graduation and plans on attending medical school.*

Mr. David Wiener's AP Physics class was challenging, educational, and rewarding. He was the first teacher to show me how I could apply knowledge from different subjects to arrive at solutions, which led me to pursue a multidisciplinary degree at Cornell. The final project, building a Rube Goldberg Machine, required us to incorporate what we had learned from the entire year. He encouraged a hands-on approach to learning, which has inspired me to look at education as a way to develop a complete understanding of different systems and their interactions. His passion and enthusiasm for physics has continued to motivate me in pursuing my own interests with the same attitude.

Dr. Roger Spanswick was the most encouraging, supportive, and knowledgeable mentor I could have had. Our conversations were always enjoyable and he offered genuine interest, invaluable advice, and unwavering support for all my pursuits on campus and beyond, in addition to his personal experiences and entertaining stories. When we met my freshman year, he told me my goals were ambitious but he agreed to support them. Thanks to Dr. Spanswick's faith and encouragement, I was able to complete many of those freshman-year goals, including an honors thesis, pre-med requirements, and a minor in biomedical engineering. I am grateful for his advice and guidance, and I will carry it with me for many years to come.



## **J. Carter Loftus** **Cazenovia, New York**

Honoring **Elizabeth Wheeler** of Fayetteville-Manlius High School and **Thomas Seeley** of the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior

*Carter completed a senior honors thesis summarizing his research on honey bee health and behavior. In May 2013, he received a Goldwater Scholarship honoring excellence in his academics and research. Carter has been on the dean's list every semester at Cornell, and is a Degree Marshal at this year's commencement ceremony. He has held leadership positions within his fraternity, Lambda Chi Alpha, and as a Biology student advisor. He has been an avid member of the men's varsity polo team every year, and is culminating his final season as Vice President of the team.*

As a sophomore in Miss Elizabeth Wheeler's interdisciplinary English class, I learned so much more than English. Miss Wheeler is the kindest, most caring person that I know, and her ability to teach lasting life skills and lessons was truly inspiring. She did not demand respect from her students, but rather earned it through her own respect for each and every student with whom she interacted. She always taught by example, showing me that I could be ambitious without ever sacrificing my morals. Miss Wheeler was so much more than a teacher; she was a friend and a life mentor.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to work closely alongside Professor Thomas Seeley for the past two years. With his vast intelligence and gentle nature, he is prone to being an excellent mentor. Seeing the value that he places on the ideas of every member of his lab, it is obvious that Professor Seeley truly cares about his students. The passion that he has for uncovering the mysteries of honey bee life and the effort he puts forth in pursuing his passion has been truly inspiring. I aspire to one day be the same scientist that Professor Seeley is today.



## Devin McMahon Seattle, Washington

Honoring **Mary Marsh** of Redmond High School  
and **Jun Liu** of the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics

*At Cornell, Devin has researched cell fate reprogramming in nematodes, salamander abundance in managed forests, and Californian oak demographics, among other things. Her undergraduate thesis is on the role of woody material in promoting regeneration of northeastern forests. She has received the Barry Goldwater scholarship, as well as the NCAA's Elite 89 award for the highest GPA among competitors at the Division I national cross country championship. This fall, Devin will start her PhD at Stanford University, where she will study the interaction of plant communities, nutrient cycles, and climate change.*

Taking Ms. Marsh's biology/chemistry class as a freshman was intense. In terms of the amount of material presented, the depth to which we were expected to understand the material, and Ms. Marsh's almost alarming enthusiasm for science, it surpassed any class I'd taken to that point, and many of the classes I've taken since. Ms. Marsh's curriculum introduced me to biotechnology, Environmental Impact Statements, eukaryotic cell structure, and many more concepts I found fascinating. Her exams and reports forced me to develop the study habits that I would need throughout high school and college. And Ms. Marsh's passion for biology and for helping her students succeed, both in and out of the classroom, inspired me to pursue a career in research.

When I entered her lab as a freshman, Kelly Liu went well out of her way to teach me the skills I needed to complete my projects, the genetic basis for the experimental designs, and the overall motivation for the research. Even when I didn't understand what was happening in lab meeting, she made me feel welcome, and in time I was able to pick up the details. Dr. Liu offered me my first full-time research job, and helped me create my first real scientific poster. Even after I left her lab to pursue ecology, she has been extremely supportive, writing letters of recommendation with much shorter turnaround than I had any right to expect. Dr. Liu has opened up many research opportunities for me, while giving me the confidence to interpret my own results and aim high in the next step of my career.



## Alexandra Katharine Neuber Clifton Park, New York

Honoring **Brenda Sugarman** of Shenendehowa High School and **Kathy Berggren** of the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management

*Through her coursework, Alex discovered a passion for marketing within the retail, food, and consumer packaged good industries. She nurtured this passion through involvement in Food Marketing Fellows, the Produce Marketing Association's Pack Family scholarship program, a Johnson School marketing agency, and summer internships with Sam's Club and Unilever. She also held leadership positions in the Phi Gamma Nu professional fraternity, was a teaching assistant for three courses, and studied a semester abroad at the University College Dublin's Quinn Business School in Ireland. After graduation, she will move to Boston and join Wayfair.com's marketing team as a Business Analyst.*

Magistra Brenda Sugarman has an infectious passion for Latin and Ancient Roman culture; she brings the subject to life and conveys its relevance to our everyday lives and numerous other fields of academia. Her enthusiasm continually inspires students to learn and actively participate in every class. Furthermore, Magistra dedicates herself to helping every student succeed. Due to her patience and persistence, I developed analytical reasoning skills that have extended far beyond high school Latin to essentially every class I have taken at Cornell. Her constant support through the years has been an invaluable contribution to my success.

On the first day of Oral Communication, Professor Berggren told us public speaking is a fear paramount to death for many people. Although I did not echo this sentiment, I lacked confidence in my speaking abilities. From day one Professor Berggren facilitated a supportive classroom environment where I felt comfortable exploring and ultimately overcoming my personal challenges with oral communication. She couples constructive feedback with positive encouragement to help students conquer their speaking fears. My personal improvement throughout the course inspired me to TA for Professor Berggren. With her guidance, I developed the confidence and skills to mentor my younger peers.



## Scott Newman Carmichael, California

Honoring **Alan Posner** of El Camino Fundamental High School and **Sharon Poczter** of the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management

*Scott is a Dyson Scholar, has been on the dean's list every semester, and is a member of the Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity. He has held leadership positions in the Golden Key International Honour Society and Social Business Consulting. His paper "A Classical Geopolitics of Contemporary Europe" co-authored with Dr. James Leigh is pending publication in the European Journal of Geography. After graduation he will pursue a career in management consulting with Deloitte in Seattle.*

Mr. Alan Posner's economics class my senior year solidified my desire to major in business. Entering Mr. Posner's class each day was a guarantee in variety; economic material was interspersed with general knowledge and life lessons. My locker was just outside his classroom and we frequently chatted about a host of topics outside the realm of econ, especially soccer. Mr. Posner recognized my fascination and penchant for economics and challenged me with harder problems and increased expectations. He forced me to think outside the proverbial box, but also encouraged me to have fun with the material. One of my favorite memories in his class was the day he read us the "rules for dating his daughter."

I was unsure what to expect from AEM 2600: Managerial Economics, but Professor Sharon Poczter challenged me. She was fantastic about connecting the material from class to current events and forced us to move beyond the textbook. For instance, her problem sets incorporated not only traditional economics, but game theory and logic questions we would likely see in consulting or banking interviews. Professor Poczter has also been a tremendous resource outside the classroom. I took her class sophomore year, but have kept in touch regularly seeking guidance on internships and job decisions. She has been a major presence in shaping my Cornell experience.



## Kelly O'Connor North Andover, Massachusetts

Honoring **Meredith Tracey** of North Andover High School and **Pilar Parra** of the Department of Developmental Sociology

*Kelly is a biology major, concentrating in animal physiology, and a business minor. During her time at Cornell she played an integral part on the Women's Club Lacrosse team, serving as the president the past two years. Kelly has also been a committed member of the sorority Pi Beta Phi, for which she held a position on the Leadership Nominating Committee. This past year she became a biology student advisor and a CALS tutor. Additionally, she worked with a former professor on research that studied immigrant integration through the church. Next year, Kelly will be attending Tulane University School of Medicine.*

I was very fortunate to have Mrs. Tracey for two years in high school—sophomore year English Literature and junior year American Thought. She not only developed me into a critical reader and writer, but also inspired me to love learning for the sake of learning. One of her favorite phrases was “love it and embrace it,” a motto that has continued to motivate me into exploring all different subjects and perspectives here at Cornell. Mrs. Tracey’s enthusiasm for teaching changed my entire approach to learning and I will always be grateful for that.

Dr. Parra was my professor for Sociology of Health Inequalities the fall of my senior year. One of the most memorable assignments was to read a news article from a different source each week to see how their different intended audiences influenced the content of the writing. This exercise taught me how to scrutinize and identify biases in sociological and scientific studies. I am very appreciative to have learned about health care inequalities in America in such an analytical manner. In the coming years, I hope to be able to address some of the inequalities we discussed in class in the medical field.



## Madeline Olberg Niskayuna, New York

Honoring **Christopher Jennings** of Niskayuna High School and **Bill Miller** of the Department of Horticulture

*Madeline has received various awards, honors, and scholarships throughout her time at Cornell. In fall 2012, Madeline earned funding from the CALS Charitable Trust for her research, which has now been submitted for publication. Madeline is a member of Pi Alpha Xi, the honors horticultural society, is on the Cornell Varsity Polo team, is a CALS ambassador, has held a leadership role in the Delta Delta Delta sorority, and is currently president of Hortus Forum, Cornell's undergraduate horticulture club. After graduation, Madeline will be pursuing a Master's degree in horticulture with Dr. Roberto Lopez at Purdue University.*

Mr. Jennings' wit and individuality when teaching allowed us to laugh and be captivated while learning biology. Thanks to Mr. Jennings, I will never forget the difference between mitosis and meiosis, as I picture our class with our feet on our desks, repeating in unison, "My toe does not have sex." But how I really got to know Mr. Jennings was during my time as the horticulture club president. As club advisor, Mr. Jennings noticed my interest and integrated me into all parts the horticulture club — from plant care, to pest troubleshooting, to sales logistics. Mr. Jennings helped ignite my passion for plant sciences, which has led me to where I am today.

During my junior year, I took Hort 3000 and Hort 3100 with Dr. Bill Miller. During these classes, Dr. Miller not only shared his expertise in horticultural crops and production, but also his passion for the horticultural industry as a whole. Dr. Miller engaged fully with all of us, planning a weekend-long trip to Longwood Gardens and other greenhouse businesses. As my research advisor, Dr. Miller has supported and challenged me intellectually and has spurred my pursuit of a career in this field.



## **Anna Taylor Rassman** **Washington, District of Columbia**

Honoring **Robert Gibb** of Montgomery Blair  
and **Ian Merwin** of the Department of Horticulture

*Anna has been on the dean's list every semester while at Cornell. She contributed to the Ithaca community through her volunteer work with the Ithaca Children's Garden, Dilmun Hill Student Farm, and College Discovery Program. After graduation, she plans on exploring her passion for horticulture with the Thomas Jefferson Foundation.*

Without fail, whenever I walked down the hall towards Mr. Gibb's World or European history class, I could hear music seeping out from under the door. Always appropriate for the day's theme, the sound system blasted anything from Gregorian monk chants of the Middle Ages to Pink Floyd's "Money" as a discussion opener of Louis the XIV's extravagances. Gibb pushed his students to develop creative final projects (like rap albums for renaissance figures) and prodded us to look at historical eras from multiple perspectives. He transformed learning history, and learning in general, into an engaging, exciting, and self-motivated process for which I am indebted. Thank you Mr. Gibb for all your support and good music taste throughout my Blair years.

Professor Merwin's course "Ecological Orchard Management" solidified in me the lingering question of why exactly I was in school to study agriculture. His lectures opened my eyes to the wonderful complexity of the plant world, as well as the joys of delving into how plant physiology, pathology, and cultivation shape growing fruit. His obvious passion for pomes and stimulating questions pushed me to look deeper into the biology and physiology of events. Always open to discussion and questions, Professor Merwin never put getting "through the material" before supporting student curiosity and working through confusion. Years later, I still find myself thinking about the class, trying to estimate the impact of the week's weather on bud break or pest pressure for the region. Thank you Professor Merwin for inspiring me to pursue my own passion for pomology.





# College of Architecture, Art, and Planning

**Xu Yang**  
Ellicott City, Maryland

Honoring **Tracy Heim** of West Chester East High School  
and **Xu Xin** of the Department of China and Asian Pacific Studies

*Xu was the recipient of the Sherman Cochrane Prize from the China and Asian Pacific Studies department in 2013. He has been on the dean's list every semester, and is a member of the Golden Key International Honor Society, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and the Phi Beta Kappa Society. Xu participated extensively in Cornell's theater community, including performances in Our Town, The Learned Ladies, Melancholy Play, and others. He has also been an active member of the Cornell Quiz Bowl Team and the Chesterton House Christian Residential Center. After graduation, he plans on attending law school.*

In a class of only five, Mrs. Heim somehow managed to engage us all in an adventure through European history. However, my fondest memories of her come not from the classroom, but from those wonderful years as a member of the academic team. As our coach, she guided, taught, and corrected us. From Arlington to New Orleans, she accompanied and encouraged us. More than our win-loss record, she cared about our love of learning and camaraderie as a team. I'm thankful to say that, through her efforts, those experiences and values will always be a part of my life. Since my sophomore year, Professor Xu Xin has listened to a fair share of my complaints and grievances. I know that I'm not the only one to enjoy this privilege; numerous CAPS students undoubtedly see him as someone who listens. In many ways, his chosen field reflects this value. Navigating Sino-U.S. history requires an attentive ear to multiple points of view, schools of thought, and ways of life. Both in and out of the classroom, Professor Xu has demonstrated to me the significance of this approach to today's most important bilateral relation, as well as its more fundamental virtue.



## College of Arts and Sciences

### Emily Dongxue Cai San Diego, California

Honoring **Brinn Belyea** of Torrey Pines High School and **John Lis** of the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics

*Emily is a Pauline and Irving Tanner Dean's Scholar, member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, and was on the dean's list all semesters. Her passion is discovering innovative scientific applications, and she has conducted research including grants and manuscripts in inter-professional education, telemedicine, and RNA molecular technology. She served in leadership roles for the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers, and is dedicated to service as a peer counselor for EARS, and a volunteer at local nursing homes. Emily's plans after graduation are to attend medical school and establish cutting-edge communication technologies to improve healthcare access, affordability, and patient-centered care.*

Mr. Brinn Belyea is genuinely invested in the future of his students. As I conducted experiments in his AP Chemistry class, Mr. Belyea pushed us to take initiative and develop our individual analytical abilities. The skills to critically synthesize and interpret knowledge that I gained from Mr. Belyea have been an invaluable foundation for all of my academic and leadership pursuits. Mr. Belyea always encouraged me to consistently aim for the top and make a difference through intelligence and passion. Mr. Belyea has been an immense influence in my perseverance, determination, and drive for improving healthcare systems through science.

Professor John T. Lis truly inspired me to expand my horizons as a scientist. I was fascinated when I began my research with Professor Lis to develop RNA molecules as new technology for improving molecular visualization. Professor Lis encouraged me to think critically about the minute and broader purpose of each step, and how to make my work more impactful. Working with Professor Lis strengthened my abilities for logical analysis, troubleshooting, presentation, and experimental design to overcome scientific limitations. Professor Lis's immense passion and vision motivated me to become a strong innovative scientist who can apply her ability to any field.



## Michelle Eun-Jung Cho

Palo Alto, California

Honoring **Casey O'Connell** of Henry M. Gunn High School  
and **Richard Swedberg** of the Department of Sociology

*During her freshman year, Michelle was a member of the Korean Language House that received a grant from Cornell University to research the metropolitan transportation system in Seoul, Korea. She wrote a report on the innovations of Seoul transportation as part of a final case study. Michelle has been on the dean's list every semester and was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society in her junior year. She holds leadership positions in the Phi Beta Kappa Society and the Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity. After graduation, Michelle plans to attend law school.*

Chemistry Honors was one of the most challenging courses I have taken, but Mr. O'Connell always provided immeasurable support for his students. I remember one of the times I sought his help that he sat down with me to share a collection of study strategies that his previous students had reported were helpful to them. I not only learned more effective ways to study for the class, but the individual attention he gave me also motivated me to work even harder. Mr. O'Connell helped develop my work ethic that has brought me to where I am today.

I had the privilege of getting to know Professor Swedberg both in and outside of class. As my professor, Professor Swedberg not only laid the foundation for my knowledge in Classical Theory, but also inspired me to think critically of abstract ideas. As my faculty advisor, he gave me very honest advice, pushing me to become more aware of my own potential. He asked questions that challenged me to think deeply about my own interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Professor Swedberg taught me to have a realistic perspective on the world outside of academics and kept me on the path toward my future goals.



## Emily Dando Edwards, Colorado

Honoring **Brian Hill** of Quaker Valley High School  
and **Gerald Feigenson** of the Department of Molecular Biology and  
Genetics

*Emily Dando is a biological sciences major and is concentrating in biochemistry. She works in Dr. Hening Lin's lab, where she studies the biosynthesis and function of diphthamide. She is also a member of Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society and Cornell University Emergency Medical Services (CUEMS). Emily served as the Community Education Officer for CUEMS on the 2013-2014 Executive Board, which included teaching CPR/First Aid classes to members of the Cornell community. During the summers, Emily taught SAT preparation classes and also conducted clinical research at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. After graduation, Emily will attend medical school.*

Throughout high school, Mr. Hill was an incredible mentor. He was my sophomore year biology teacher and first introduced me to the subject that I'm so passionate about today. He also was my advisor for my IB Personal Project and guided me as I analyzed several inheritable traits in my family. Mr. Hill made biology class interesting and enjoyable, which certainly influenced my decision to pursue the subject further in college. Mr. Hill was not only a special teacher; he was also a great friend. He added a lot of fun to my high school experience, and I'm so appreciative of the fond memories he created that I still treasure today.

Professor Feigenson has been my advisor since sophomore year and also taught biochemistry, one of my favorite courses at Cornell. When I took his class, I was struck by his dynamic personality and greatly respected how much effort he put into ensuring that his students succeeded. As an advisor, Professor Feigenson has provided incredible advice, from giving feedback on my schedule to proofreading all my medical school applications. I would not have been as successful at Cornell or in the medical school admissions process without him, and for that I am very grateful.



## **Robert S. McGehee, Jr.** **Virginia Beach, Virginia**

Honoring **Maureen Morse** of Kempsville High School and **Saul Teukolsky** of the Department of Astronomy and Physics

*Robert was recently awarded the Yennie Prize by the physics department for excellence in physics research. His latest research under Professor Saul Teukolsky is numerically embedding spherical 2-metrics in 3-space with applications for black hole simulations. He gave a talk on this research during his REU this past summer in Cornell's Astronomy Department. He has been on the dean's list every semester, and is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and the Golden Key International Honor Society. After graduation, Robert will attend graduate school to earn his PhD in Theoretical Physics.*

During AP Chemistry my junior year, Ms. Morse acted as an enthusiastic, knowledgeable guide into the mysterious world of science. She made chemistry fun by telling us about well-known chemical principles and then letting us discover them for ourselves with beakers and chemicals. Almost every other class was a new, lively experiment. I still have a Starbucks bottle I silver-plated during one experiment. Although I decided to pursue physics, her class was a catalyst for my developing scientific curiosity. I will always owe any chemical understanding I have of the world to her dedicated and passionate teaching.

Over the past three years, Saul has been my research advisor, my professor, my academic advisor, and my go-to physics role model. He has introduced me to professional scientific research by carefully guiding me through several research projects. His thorough, polished approach in his course on quantum mechanics aptly taught me this apex of theoretical physics. The only reason I took and succeeded in graduate physics courses is because one day Saul said, "You can do it." I am so excited about my future in physics, and I gratefully thank Saul for that.



## Philip John Perrone Merrick, New York

Honoring **Sean Formato** of Sanford H. Calhoun High School and **Derk Pereboom** of the Department of Philosophy

*Philip completed a double major in Philosophy and Psychology after transferring from the College of Engineering during his freshman year. He has participated in the Behavioral, Computational, and Systems Neuroscience Journal Club for three semesters and his senior honors thesis is on a topic at the intersection of metaphysics, neuroscience, and cognitive science. Philip was on the dean's list each semester and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa Society. After graduation, Philip intends to work on a non-profit startup for open access to education and plans to pursue a PhD in philosophy.*

When Sean Formato signed my high school yearbook, he wrote that he hoped that our philosophical discussions had been as instructive to me as they had been for him. Four years later, I can say that Mr. Formato's AP English Language & Composition class was the most formative and worthwhile aspect of my time spent in high school. Mr. Formato was not merely the first teacher to expose me to philosophy, but was a distinguished instructor whose ability to teach his students how to critically analyze and construct arguments has been a continuing foundation for my success at Cornell.

It was my experience in Professor Pereboom's History of Modern Philosophy class that solidified my interest in philosophy as a sophomore. I was struck by Professor Pereboom's distinctive teaching style, which introduces students to the vastness of philosophy through a careful balance of lecture and open discussion. As my major and honors thesis advisor, Professor Pereboom always made time for me, and encouraged me to explore my own ideas, even when they conflicted with his own. I am positive that Professor Pereboom's humility and rigor as a scholar, advisor, and teacher will continue to inspire me as I pursue a professional life in academia.



## David Sadoff Tallman, New York

Honoring **Robert Wilson** of Suffern High School  
and **Isaac Kramnick** of the Department of Government

*David is a Tanner Dean's Scholar in the College of Arts and Sciences and in 2013 won one of their research grants to support his senior honors thesis on the manifestation of eugenic themes in literature in the interwar period. He is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, the Golden Key International Honour Society, and the Phi Beta Kappa Society. He has enjoyed spending entirely too much time participating as a subject in various studies conducted by Cornell's Lab for Experimental Economics and Decision Research.*

My classmates and I used to joke that Dr. Wilson had always wanted to be a history teacher. While other high school English classes ended their year with Shakespeare, our class concluded with analyses of Supreme Court cases. Dr. Wilson showed us the literary significance underlying those opinions and dissents, delighting in highlighting particularly elegant prose and uncommonly lucid arguments. He threw in sharp relief the importance of writing with clarity and the rich continuities between American literature, history, and politics. I am grateful that he always took the time to give discussion free reign, whether the topic was Moby-Dick or Plyler v. Doe.

I am grateful and still rather amazed that Professor Kramnick – a bastion of the Cornell community and someone I was enormously fortunate to encounter before he retired – found the time to so often personally speak to me and encourage my study of political philosophy. Whether it was reading *The Cornell Daily Sun* with students before class or sharing bits of Cornell's history, Professor Kramnick has been instrumental in shaping my experience at the university. He showed that, from the powerful metaphors of Burke and Paine to the vast imagination of Rousseau, political philosophy can be beautiful as well as enriching.



## Emily Shearer Lafayette, California

Honoring **Edward Seelenbacher** of Acalanes High School and **Sean Nicholson** of the Department of Policy Analysis and Management

*Emily is captain of the varsity cross country and track teams, where she holds the 3,000 meter school record. She holds leadership positions within Red Key Honors Society, Quill and Dagger Honors Society, and Phi Beta Kappa and volunteers in her spare time as an EMT. Emily's honors thesis explores cellular mechanisms of folate deficiency. She also writes memos for the campus think tank, one of which was published last fall in the Harvard Health Policy Review journal. After graduation, Emily will study in the UK as a Marshall Scholar and return to the US for medical school.*

Mr. Seelenbacher, or "Seelen," was as much a friend and mentor to me as he was a teacher during my high school years. Inside and outside the classroom, Seelen pushed me to think critically, defend my arguments with eloquence, and, above all, display good character no matter what the circumstances. It is rare to find such a caring, intelligent mentor at such a young age, and words cannot express my absolute gratitude for our three years of laughs, DBQ's, debates, and conversation.

Though I always knew I wanted to pursue a career in medicine, it was not until I took Sean Nicholson's courses that I saw my interests in Biology and Government unite within the larger context of health policy. Dr. Nicholson's expertise is invaluable to his students, but what makes him truly remarkable is the investment he is willing to put into individual students. Outside of class, Dr. Nicholson has contributed significantly to my personal and academic development. Whether by proofing policy memos, helping me prep for scholarship interviews, or hashing out the latest Ivy League track results, I can honestly say my future plans would be much different had I not benefitted from his mentorship.





## Jillian Strayhorn Ithaca, New York

Honoring **Susan Richman** of Pennsylvania Homeschoolers Accreditation Agency  
and **Harry Segal** of the Department of Psychology

*Jillian is a psychology major and co-director of a psychoeducational intervention for children. She has worked directly with kids as a tutor in the intervention program for over a decade, and has worked more recently to recruit and train other tutors. At Cornell, she founded Project SOLVE and was awarded a 2013 Robinson-Appel Humanitarian Award. She co-presented a workshop on the intervention's psychoeducational approach at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and is now carrying out an honors thesis on quantitative aspects of the project. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.*

Mrs. Richman's AP US History course was a formative experience for me; her passion for the subject – and her high expectations – left a lasting impression. But Mrs. Richman was also more than just a teacher for me; as my homeschool evaluator, she shared with me her great passion, her high expectations, and her incredible wisdom, support, and guidance all throughout my education, 3rd through 12th grade. Most of all, she enabled me to become a truly independent learner, and inspired me to use my independence well. For as long as I can remember, I've been working to make her proud.

Long before I even met Professor Segal, I knew him as “the guy on campus” for those interested in clinical psychology, interested in community outreach, or just interested in people, period. Now I'm lucky enough to know him also as an advisor, a mentor, an ally, and a friend – for this, I am so incredibly grateful. Professor Segal put such great trust in me that I almost had to trust myself! And he is the reason I've remained grounded at Cornell – that I've been able to work, as much as possible, with people and purpose in mind.



# College of Engineering

## Dennis Chua Singapore

Honoring **Chee Keong Lee** of Raffles Institution  
and **Lynden Archer** of the Department of Chemical Engineering

*After 2 years in the military, Dennis pursued chemical engineering at Cornell, ranking 1st in his major, and graduating within 3 years. Dennis is a Hunter Rawling's Presidential Research Scholar, Tau Beta Pi Scholar, John Karrer Scholar, and Capital One Scholar. He received the President's Volunteer Service Award for exemplary service. Dennis served as president of Tau Beta Pi and Base Productions dance group, and held leadership positions in Phi Sigma Pi and AIChE. He represented Cornell in the Mathematical Contest for Modeling, where his team emerged top US team. Dennis will be working in investment banking at Goldman Sachs.*

Mr. Lee was by far the most entertaining and caring teacher I had in secondary school. Chemistry was considered one of the more difficult subjects in school, but he managed to make it surprisingly manageable and fun. I was never a fan of chemistry, until Mr. Lee charmed me into it. I will always remember how he taught chemistry in his laidback, and fuss-free manner. On a personal level, he made it a point to know his students outside of the classroom setting – he was a friend. Mr. Lee was my inspiration to do chemical engineering in Cornell.

When I first walked into ChemE Fluid Mechanics as a freshman, I felt intimidated by Director Archer's high expectations and immense genius. Since then, I had the opportunity to know Director Archer on a personal level, and he has been the most amazing mentor. When I worked in his lab, he treated me like a graduate student, and that motivated me to live up to his standards. Although Director Archer is a busy man, he always makes time to catch up with me. I am constantly inspired by his experiences and insight. He was always there to encourage and guide me, and it is with his support that I was able to succeed in my endeavors at Cornell.



## Walker N. Grimshaw Boise, Idaho

Honoring **Tatia Totorica** of Boise High School  
and **Monroe Weber-Shirk** of the Department of Civil and  
Environmental Engineering

*After realizing a deep passion for providing water and energy to resource poor settings, Walker is graduating with a major in Bioenvironmental Engineering and a minor in Global Health. The many clubs and student organizations on Cornell's campus have been a way for him to learn and make changes outside the classroom. Beyond academics, he has helped lead Take Back the Tap, Cornell Health International, and Engineers Without Borders while participating extensively in the AguaClara program and as a member of the University's Ultimate Frisbee team.*

Mrs. Totorica was easily the best teacher I had in high school and managed to turn introductory calculus into a simple concept. She made sure we did not waste our class time and her homework was challenging in a way that prepared my classmates and me for college. I cannot imagine how difficult it would be to teach a bunch of teenagers anything at all, much less calculus. Yet Mrs. Totorica made it appear effortless through her immense preparation and willingness to take the extra time for her students.

Monroe was one of the first professors I had that made sure his students understood why they were learning complicated fluid dynamics, and that this why was not simply to earn an A on your college transcript. I learned from Monroe how to pursue socially responsible engineering and that the objective of higher learning is not simply to publish papers but to learn how to help others. Though his title in CEE is a lecturer, he does little lecturing and instead empowers his students to learn from their peers' creativity and has inspired me to empower others to do the same.



## Manita Herlitz-Ferguson Larchmont, New York

Honoring **Christopher Allen** of The Masters School  
and **Tracey Brant** of the Kessler Fellows Program

*Manita is a four-year varsity athlete on the swimming and diving team. She is a three-time recipient of the Diving MVP award and was selected as a member of the 2013-14 Big Red Leadership Upper Class Cohort for varsity athletes. Manita was awarded the Cornell Engineering Kessler Fellowship in 2013. She has been on the dean's list every semester and was inducted into Omega Rho honor society last year. She has also been involved with the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives as a peer tutor. After graduation, she will be working as a business analyst for Capital One in Chicago, IL.*

As a junior attending Mr. Allen's honors physics class, I always found myself excited and eager to learn. My eagerness was a result of Mr. Allen's enthusiasm for the subject and his use of interesting demonstrations and relevant examples. As a senior, I had the opportunity to take his AP physics course, in which he challenged me even further and helped me develop my critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Working with Mr. Allen sparked my interest in the field of engineering, and the skills I learned in his classes prepared me to be successful in my coursework at Cornell.

I had the opportunity to work with program director Tracey Brant throughout the year-long Kessler Fellows Program for engineering students interested in entrepreneurship. Through weekly meetings and group activities with my peers, Tracey consistently challenged me to reach new levels of self-discovery. She pushed me to the boundaries of my comfort zone, allowing me to grow personally, academically, and professionally. She supported and motivated me to take control of my future and discover my potential. The lessons Tracey taught me are the most important ones that I will take from my Cornell experience; they already have and will continue to impact my future.



## **Tori Klug** **Benicia, California**

Honoring **Marie Barde** of Benicia High School  
and **Monroe Weber-Shirk** of the Department of Civil and  
Environmental Engineering

*Tori has completed her degree in Environmental Engineering and plans to pursue a graduate degree within the same area of study beginning in the fall. She aims to specifically focus her graduate studies and research on international water, sanitation, and hygiene issues. She held leadership roles in AguaClara and the Sustainability Hub. She has been on the dean's list every semester at Cornell and is a Meinig Family Cornell National Scholar, as well as a Jacobs Scholar.*

Ms. Barde always expected more of her students than they thought themselves capable of. While my classmates and I spent most of our sophomore literature class with Ms. Barde in fear of each graded paper we would receive, her honest feedback trained us to grow intellectually. Ms. Barde not only helped to develop my ability to analyze literature and craft written arguments, but also to constantly focus on improving my work—that I should not be complacent with my achievements of the day, but instead focus on my goals of the future.

Since my first day in his Intro to Environmental Engineering course during the fall of my freshman year, Dr. Monroe Weber-Shirk has continuously inspired me to dedicate my growing engineering knowledge to make a positive impact on the world. By taking several courses with Monroe and having a leadership role within AguaClara, the program he founded and directs, Monroe has shown me how idealistic objectives, when backed by practical knowledge and awareness, can lead to real change.



## Sung Min (Sam) Park Seoul, Republic of Korea

Honoring **Mark Guggisberg** of Singapore American School and **Ramin Zabih** of the Department of Computer Science

*Sung Min (Sam) majored in computer science, with a particular interest in theory. Sam has done research in various areas, in algorithm design with Professor Bobby Kleinberg, in computer vision with Professor Ramin Zabih, and in programming languages with Professor Andrew Myers. He greatly enjoyed working as a Teaching Assistant for CS 3110 and CS 4820. He was also a member of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society. During his summers, Sam worked as a software engineer at Google and Dropbox. Sam will be continuing his study in a PhD program in computer science this fall.*

I learned a great deal about writing and life from Mr. Guggisberg. His attention to detail and high standards seemed a bit demanding at the time, but his guidance was critical in propelling me from a novice user of English to someone who can write clearly and, most importantly, think critically. He also taught me how to appreciate literature from a wider perspective and to apply it to life; to this day I believe this is one of the most valuable skills I learned in my secondary education. With his sense of humor and charisma, Mr. Guggisberg is one of the favorite people I have had the pleasure of knowing.

I took my first computer science class at Cornell with Professor Ramin Zabih, and soon enough I fell in love with the field. Under his light and humorous exterior, Professor Zabih has a unique way of bringing out the best in his students as well as TAs. He also advised me in a wonderful research opportunity in computer vision, which allowed me to appreciate theoretical insights from a different perspective. I was lucky to be one of his last undergraduate students and TAs at Cornell, as he has now moved to the tech campus in New York City. I am grateful to have met and worked with Professor Zabih, and for all the help and advice he has given me.



## Natali Vannoy Lyndhurst, Ohio

Honoring **Norm Althausen** of Beachwood High School  
and **Charles Williamson** of the Department of Mechanical and  
Aerospace Engineering

*Natali has been on the dean's list every semester and is a member of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society, the Cornell Tradition, and the Society of Women Engineers. She was a member of the Baja SAE racing team for three years, one of which she was co-team leader. Natali has also received funding through Engineering Learning Initiatives for research on vertical axis wind turbines in the Fluid Dynamics Research Lab and is currently working as structures lead on a lunar satellite project. In addition to her work at Cornell, she has held internship positions at General Motors and SpaceX. Natali plans to work at Ball Aerospace this summer and then return to Cornell next fall to finish her master of engineering degree in mechanical engineering.*

AP Physics B and C with Mr. Althausen was my first experience with mechanics and played a major role in my decision to study mechanical engineering. From exciting class demonstrations like playing guitar and making flaming methane bubbles to intense discussions about physics and non-physics topics to stories from his previous job as a civil engineer, every day was different and I looked forward to going to his class because he made it interesting and engaging. Mr. Althausen also taught me how to learn on my own, which was critical for success in college. He never spoon fed us information or answers to homework problems. He expected us to try to think through things on our own and work with our classmates to solve problems. Without this skill, I would not be the engineer I am today.

Professor Williamson is known by every Cornell mechanical engineering student for his passion for teaching and his impressive collection of classroom demonstrations, such as throwing paper airplanes and “loo” rolls and blowing out candles from across the room with vortex rings. It is not uncommon to see him in the basement of Upson Hall at 2am carefully preparing demonstrations for his introductory fluids class the next morning so that his students can understand the physical phenomena behind the equations they are learning. Professor Williamson made class more exciting because he wasn't just reading equations at us, he was showing us what they meant and teaching us to have a physical intuition that would improve our understanding and set us apart from other engineers.



## **Beth Wright** **Parsippany, New Jersey**

Honoring **Robert Stevenson** of Parsippany Hills High School and **Derek Warner** of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

*Beth is graduating Cornell with her Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering and will start graduate studies in Structural Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this fall. Since her sophomore year, she has enjoyed being an Academic Excellence Workshop Facilitator for multi-variable calculus, helping students better understand the course material. Throughout her time at Cornell, she has held the leadership positions of co-design leader of the Steel Bridge Project Team, marshal of Chi Epsilon, treasurer of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and treasurer of the Women's Rugby Football Club.*

I took various technical and architectural drawing classes with Mr. Stevenson during all four years of high school. Every day, I looked forward to attending his class because he kept me excited about the material and pushed my critical thinking skills. My junior year, I joined the Technology Student Association, which Mr. Stevenson was the advisor of. When working on projects for TSA, Mr. Stevenson was always there to provide advice and encourage me on my progress. I can honestly say that my involvement in that club, as well as Mr. Stevenson's classes, drove me to study engineering in college.

No matter what, Professor Warner always walked into class with a smile on his face. I took structural modeling and solid mechanics courses with him, and his enthusiasm about the subject matter made me want to learn more. I especially appreciated the challenging nature of his assignments. They all required forethought, delving deep into the course material with room for interpretation. I enjoyed solving the complex problems he posed because they were truly a learning experience, not straightforward regurgitations of our lecture notes. Taking Professor Warner's courses assured me that structural engineering was the right path for my future career.





# School of Hotel Administration

## Silvie Cohen

Marblehead, Massachusetts

Honoring **Debora O'Reilly** of Essex Agricultural & Technical High School

and **Mark McCarthy** of the Department of Information Systems

*Silvie is a selected member in Big Red Consulting, a student run organization, which provides free consulting advice to local Ithaca businesses. Additionally, she is an active member of the Sigma Delta Tau sorority. Silvie is also very excited to be the Third College Banner Bearer for the School of Hotel Administration at this year's graduation ceremony. Following graduation, Silvie will be working for hotelAVE, a hospitality asset management firm, located in Providence, Rhode Island.*

I was a student in Ms. O'Reilly's chemistry class while in 10th grade at Marblehead High School. As a sophomore in high school, Ms. O'Reilly truly made me appreciate the subject of chemistry. She always presented course material in a fun, exciting manner. Whether it was relating class concepts to current events or presenting chemistry labs through doing fun activities, Ms. O'Reilly would always be willing to go the extra mile to make her classes entertaining. I would always stop by Ms. O'Reilly's classroom after school ended, if I was ever confused with subject presented in class that that day. Not only would Ms. O'Reilly help me until I understood the material fully so I became more confident in the classroom, but she also would ask me how I was doing outside of the classroom. She was interested in my participation on athletic teams and always attended my games to cheer me on. I know Ms. O'Reilly will continue to be my cheerleader, even after I graduate college.

I have been a student in two of Mark McCarthy's computer courses, and I also am a teaching assistant for his Business Computing class. Ever since enrolling in Summer College at The Hotel School in 2008, I have established a great relationship with Mark. Mark has also been my faculty advisor all four years at Cornell, and he has truly made my experience and transition into Ithaca seamless. His enthusiasm for teaching and his passion for wanting me to succeed have impacted me tremendously as a student. I will always remember Mark going out of his way to make sure that I was able to enroll in all of the classes I wanted to be in, even if there was a wait list of 50 students. Mark truly cares about my happiness, and I know he would do whatever it takes to make sure his students thrive, whether it is inside or outside of the classroom.



## Nicholas Vasco Columbus, Ohio

Honoring **Sara Brdar** of The Wellington School  
and **Jan deRoos** of the Department of Hotel Administration, Real  
Estate

*Nick served as a Representative-At-Large on the Student Assembly, where he has been passionate about addressing campus climate issues and improving campus infrastructure and technology to better the student experience. He also served as the Vice President of Events for the Cornell Real Estate Club and the Treasurer for the Cornell Club Managers Association of America. Nick also has been an active leader in his social fraternity, Phi Delta Theta, where he served as President, Rush Chair, Alumni Chair, and Marketing Chair. After graduation, Nick will be moving to Seattle to work as an analyst in a real estate private equity firm.*

Sara Brdar taught me one of the most valuable lessons I have learned to date, a lesson that has enabled me to excel both academically and professionally. She taught me to always try to understand other peoples' perspectives. When I took her 20th Century World History class, she challenged the class to look at the events throughout history, like World War II and the Iranian Hostage Crisis, through the lens of each party involved and to understand each person's motives and opinions. When I took her Comparative Religions class, she pushed me even more to consider differences in perspective. She not only pushed me to consider how religion can shape perspective, but also to consider how different people can have vastly different perspectives concerning the same religious beliefs. Learning to understand and consider differences in perspectives has enabled me to become a better leader and critically think through complex problems. Ms. Brdar's lesson has helped me greatly through my college career, and I am sure will prove invaluable as I move forward into the professional world.

Professor de Roos, has served as both a teacher and a mentor for me. I first met Professor de Roos when I took his Principles of Hospitality Real Estate class. He was a brilliant lecturer, merging his professional real estate experience, his conceptual understanding of the industry, and his research to enrich the course content. Doing so, made the course both interesting and directly applicable to the work that I wanted to do upon graduation. Professor de Roos, not only served as a teacher, but also as a mentor and an advisor. He played a critical role in helping me find an internship that fit my specific interests in the real estate field. The internship that he helped me find, not only led to my full-time employment after graduation, but also reinforced the practical application of the material that he taught me in his course. The foundational knowledge of the real estate industry that Professor de Roos provided me with will continue to be a valuable tool as I move forward into my professional life.



# College of Human Ecology

## Andrew Freiman Hewlett, New York

Honoring **Martin Kilkenny** of George W. Hewlett High School and **Rosemary Avery** of the Department of Policy Analysis and Management

*Andrew is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Policy Analysis and Management and minors in both Business and Real Estate. During his time at Cornell, he took on leadership roles as the President of Mortar Board Senior Honor Society, the President of the Mutual Investment Club, and as a Head Teaching Assistant for Professor Rosemary Avery. He also founded the Federal Reserve Challenge Team and became a brother of both Delta Sigma Pi and Pi Kappa Phi. Upon graduation, he will be joining J.P. Morgan in their Investment Banking Division after taking a year off to travel the world.*

William Ward once wrote, "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." Mr. Kilkenny is a perfect example of a teacher that inspires. I have never been passionate about biology or working on dissection experiments. However, through his unique teaching style and his passion for sharing knowledge, Mr. Kilkenny molded me into the student that I am today. He inspired me to question the world around me, work hard and, most importantly, to not take myself too seriously. He simultaneously made class fun while preparing me for the pressures that I would eventually face when I arrived at Cornell.

My parents gave up everything that they had ever known to uproot my family and bring me to this country for the opportunity that exists here. Having the opportunity to build a relationship with Professor Rosemary Avery epitomizes the success of their decision. From the moment I first sat in her lecture, I could tell that she was a remarkable professor. Her passion for impacting the lives of her students starts with learning their names and becomes an ongoing commitment to their success. I have since had the chance to work with her as a leader in her teaching assistant team. Through this experience, I have learned invaluable leadership skills and built lifelong friendships with her and the team. I cannot thank her enough for all that she has done for me and I will always have her to thank for my success.



## Scott Kim Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Honoring **Enzo Vitullo** of St. Michael's College School  
and **Barbara Strupp** of the Department of Nutritional Sciences

*Scott has held leadership roles in Cornell Union for Disability Awareness, Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society, and Alice Cook House Collective in addition to being an active member of Students of Diabetes Awareness and West Campus House Leadership Forum. He has been on the dean's list every semester except one (due to health issues) and received the Robinson Award for Academic Excellence at the end of freshman year. After a positive experience conducting honors research on the benefits of perinatal choline supplementation on hippocampal memory, he plans on seeking a career involving medical research.*

Through my grade 11 and 12 biology classes, Mr. Enzo Vitullo not only helped to pique my interest in biology, but also taught me to be critical as well as curious. He accomplished this by challenging our assumptions and by encouraging us to search for information beyond what was typically covered in high school. For example, in his lecture on cellular respiration, he warned us that high school textbooks often showed incomplete and inaccurate diagrams of the true molecular mechanisms, challenging our assumptions about the infallibility of the textbook. He also challenged us to search beyond the textbook to find information on fat metabolism. Such a challenge stimulated my curiosity and developed my thirst for knowledge.

I am truly privileged to have worked in Dr. Barbara Strupp's lab. While I was never a part of any class she taught, I learned substantial amount about Down syndrome, rodent research, behavioral testing, and other relevant information that pertained to her lab's research projects. Even more importantly, the weekly lab meetings taught me to be critical when analyzing scientific papers. To this day, I am in awe of Dr. Strupp's ability to instantly identify every potential source of error and poor research design of a research paper. The critical attitude is essential in research setting since even a small omission in research design can lead to erroneous conclusions. This ability to critically analyze research work has served me well in my own research project. Combined with her infectious enthusiasm and constant cheer, Dr. Strupp's intellectual prowess has inspired me to pursue research and all of the challenges it offers with excitement and joy.



## Hannah Zalusky Chanhasseen, Minnesota

Honoring **Sonia Labs** of Minnetonka High School and **Rhonda Gilmore** of the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis

*Hannah has worked to bring value to the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis through leadership roles in the DEA materials library, the student chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers, and as a TA for the DEA course Digital Communications. Additionally, she currently works for Facilities of the College of Human Ecology, and had worked as a student supervisor in a dining hall. After graduation, she plans on working in an architecture and design firm before returning to school for a master's degree.*

Tenth grade was a notable year for me: I switched from homeschool to public school, where I enrolled in all advanced classes, including Mrs. Lab's accelerated English class. Amidst my challenges and disappointments in high school classes, Mrs. Labs' patience and heartfelt teaching style inspired me to keep trying and learning. I loved to read, so I expected English class to be easy for me. However, English class was not easy; I had much to learn. Mrs. Labs was always willing to meet with me and teach me one-on-one and gave useful, insightful criticism without harshness. She introduced me to literature analysis, teaching me to write and derive meaning from language. I've discovered that what I learned from Mrs. Labs is applicable to my career as a designer. Writing about design and writing about literature have much in common; both are inherently subjective and require connecting the abstract and the concrete. Thanks to Mrs. Labs, I have a greater confidence in my ideas and can write about what I do with clarity.

I have had more classes with Rhonda Gilmore than any other professor at Cornell University, and I would certainly not change that. Her energy and passion for design are absolutely contagious. Yes, I have learned about construction documents and materials with her, but I have also learned important life lessons. As a perfectionist at heart, I need to hear her phrases: "Choose what won't be your best work. Everything can't be your best work," and "Remember to take care of yourself," among others. She is one of the best teachers I have known, because she engages students in multiple ways, and enhances learning with real-life connections. Rhonda's field trips and studio lunches at her house have been highlights in my time at Cornell. She's real, she's funny, and she's fun—and she can teach like no other. I cannot name all the ways she has impacted me and the rest of my design studio, but am immensely grateful.



# School of Industrial and Labor Relations

## Danielle Abada Woodbury, New York

Honoring **Robin Stanton** of Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island  
and **Jack Goncalo** of the Department of Organizational Behavior

*Danielle is graduating with honors from the ILR School, with minors in Law and Society, English, and Inequality Studies. Her thesis project, on gender bias and creativity, developed out of her work as a research assistant in the OB Lab over the past three years. Danielle has won the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence and the Senior Irving M. Ives Award. She is also a Meinig Family Cornell National Scholar. Danielle served as the President of Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity and was an Assistant Sports Editor for The Cornell Daily Sun. Danielle will be attending Harvard Law School in the fall.*

English was always my favorite subject, but I grew to love it even more in Ms. Stanton's class. Not only did my reading and writing skills improve tremendously, but my confidence in myself grew too. After three years of editing the literary magazine with Ms. Stanton, she finally convinced me to publish my own poems. Whether my interest was English or law (or anything else), she supported me and helped me to follow my passions. To this day I look back on even the hardest classes on The Educated Imagination with fondness, and I still look to Ms. Stanton for guidance and comfort. I feel so fortunate to have developed such a close relationship with her.

Working with Professor Goncalo has been an important part of my ILR experience. He introduced me to the worlds of research and academia, and I have learned so many valuable skills from conducting research with him that I will continue to rely on going forward. The enthusiasm and knowledge he exudes when he teaches made me passionate about organizational behavior, a subject I barely knew about before. Professor Goncalo has been a wonderful mentor, helping me navigate all aspects of college and my future, and I really appreciate the time he has dedicated to me. He is the person who convinced me to write a thesis, which has been an extremely rewarding experience, especially with him as my advisor.



## Simon Boehme Kalamazoo, Michigan

Honoring **Von Washington Jr.** of Kalamazoo Central High School and **Alex Colvin** of the Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution

*Simon Boehme has conducted research at the intersection of conflict resolution and education policy during his time at the ILR School. His senior honors thesis is the first to examine New York's Annual Professional Performance Review teacher evaluation appeal processes. Simon has been a research assistant for three years at the Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution's Bargaining for Better Schools project. Simon is a 2013 Truman Scholar. He was appointed by Secretary Arne Duncan to serve on the Department of Education's National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) until 2019. Simon will study for a Master's degree in Ireland after graduation as Cornell's first Mitchell Scholar.*

It is a moment I will never forget: I was called down to the principal's office. As I walked in slowly, I was greeted by one of the biggest smiles I had ever seen. Mr. Washington said, "What do you think about bringing President Obama to Kalamazoo Central?" Together, we successfully won the first White House Race to the Top Commencement Challenge. Yet I am most grateful for Mr. Washington's constant mentorship and coaching during my high school career. He gave me the confidence to lead when there was dissent and how to unite people for a common cause. His favorite saying, "upwards and onwards" often replays through my head as an unceasing reminder to push myself to reach for new goals. Mr. Washington has provided unique and insightful wisdom to help me become the person I am today.

Professor Colvin has been instrumental in shaping my intellectual curiosity at Cornell. He exposed an area of research within conflict resolution, which has become the theme of my thesis and graduate plans. I am thankful for his advising throughout my time as an undergraduate. He taught me that a commitment to detail was always necessary. Professor Colvin would send me back drafts to rewrite or statistical analysis that needed revisions, ensuring I submitted the best work possible. Above all, he instilled in me the importance of having a sense of humor. I look forward to our friendship that will extend past Cornell. I am grateful for Professor Colvin believing in me and supporting me in my endeavors. Without his guidance, my intellectual interests and growth would have not been possible.



