

THE MEDALLION

Spring 2008

NATIONAL RECOGNITION WEEK 2008

By MELISSA APOSTOLIDES

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What are your strongest memories of being a Presidential Scholar? Apart from the pride of receiving the letter confirming your selection, or the look and feel of your medallion, chances are you most remember National Recognition Week (NRW), when you joined your peers in the Nation's capital to celebrate your achievements and look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Forty-three classes of Presidential Scholars have traveled to Washington, D.C. as guests of the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, and the tradition continues this summer: June 21st–24th, the 2008 Presidential Scholars

will join together for an NRW agenda packed with educational, fellowship and celebratory events, including opportunities to meet and mix with Presidential Scholar alumni.



Scholars at NRW 2007

They will take part in seminars, perform community service, and attend recitals, receptions and ceremonies held in their honor. They'll

gather with family and friends to meet the Commissioners who selected them and to hear congratulations from President Bush and members of his Cabinet. And, they will be guided through the week by a team of up to 18 Advisors - recent Scholars from 2004 – 2007 - who donate between two weeks to a full month of their time to make sure that this latest class has the same great experience as they did.

During the first recognition ceremonies in 1964, Scholars heard from then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk, then-Chief Justice Earl Warren, and Rear Admiral Alan Shepard, the first Ameri-

(Continued on page 2)

Presidential Scholar Trivia

Presidential Scholars represent some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. About what percentage of Scholars attend the "Big Three" Ivy League schools of Harvard, Yale and Princeton?

- A. 90%
- B. 67%
- C. 50%
- D. 33%

(For the answer, see the bottom of page 3)

FROM THE EDITORS...

MICHELLE WU and JOHN KNOX

Dear Scholar Alumni,

Welcome to the first issue of *The Medallion*, official newsletter of the Presidential Scholars Association! With over 5,000 Scholar alumni now scattered around the world, we hope that this quarterly newsletter will serve to highlight the diverse lives and accomplishments of our fellow alumni while connecting the community as a whole.

To that end, the feature piece above details the upcoming **National Recognition Week 2008, June 21–24**, and all the opportunities for alumni to meet this year's new Scholars.

Our recurring "A Day in the Life..." column (p.3) will feature the stories of individual alumni from all walks of life. We provide the author's e-mail address and encourage you to

reach out to ask for advice, provide advice, ask for an internship, offer a job, offer funding, etc. The first installment in this series was kindly written by Matt Anestis, Presidential Scholars Foundation VP for Alumni Relations and globetrotter extraordinaire.

Thank you to all our sponsors and contributors who jumped on board so enthusiastically to produce this first issue. If you are interested in contributing to future issues, please email us at: medallion.newsletter@gmail.com. We look forward to your help in making *The Medallion* an important part of our growing family!

Yours truly,

Michelle Wu (PS '03) John Knox (PS '83)

NATIONAL RECOGNITION WEEK (CONTINUED)

By MELISSA APOSTOLIDES

(Continued from page 1)

can astronaut in space. Today, the program strives to maintain this standard of excellence and access. Speakers in recent years have included First Lady Laura Bush, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, former Citigroup CFO (and 1983 Scholar) Sallie Krawcheck, National Science Foundation Director Arden Bement, and a host of other distinguished professionals.

Highlights of this year's NRW include a planned, private meeting with President Bush and U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings in the East Room of the White House, a month-long exhibit of artwork by the Scholars in the Literary and Visual Arts at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, the Teacher Recognition Dinner, a morning of community service, and an evening at the Kennedy Center with performances by the Scholars in the Performing Arts and a medallion procession by all the 2008 Presidential Scholars.

Another important addition to the NRW agenda, first instituted three years ago, is a series of career-oriented workshops led by alumni in a variety of fields. This

Sunday afternoon session, scheduled this year for June 22nd, has been well-received by Scholars and alumni alike, and is part of a larger effort by members of the Presidential Scholars Association to enrich the program and provide opportunities for new Scholars to connect with mentors from prior years.

NRW 2008 includes a number of events to which alumni are warmly invited, including an alumni-only mixer, and some special opportunities to welcome the latest class of Scholars. Alumni are encouraged not to miss out on the evening at the Kennedy Center, Monday, June 23rd, both for the performances and for the dessert reception to follow. If you will be in Washington between June 21st and 24th, please e-mail the Department of Education's Program Manager, Caryn Grimstead, at caryn.grimstead@ed.gov, so that your alumni liaisons may share further information as the festivities draw near.

President Johnson opened the first meeting of his new Commission on Presidential Scholars by stating that the program was not just a reward for excellence, but a means of nourishing it. It was intended, he emphasized, to

stimulate achievement in a way that could be "revolutionary." As the program draws near the 50-year mark, that goal is unchanged. In 2007, Secretary Spellings said, "The Presidential Scholars represent the great gift we have in our Nation's youth. Their academic achievement and their spirit of leadership and service will ensure their success in the 21st century knowledge economy. They exemplify the standard of excellence that we are striving for in all our schools across the United States, and their skills, energy and innovation will enable America to set a competitive pace in our changing world." Each class of Scholars includes rising stars in nearly every profession, who continue to touch lives and make a difference for the better in every walk of life.

If your plans will bring you to Washington this June, consider joining us to welcome a new class to our special family, now over 5,000 strong. And if you would like to become more involved in strengthening the program's present and securing its future, please contact Matt Anestis at anestis.matt@bcg.com. While you're at it, add some new Presidential Scholar memories to the ones you already prize.

SCHOLARS CONNECT ON FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN

By BRIAN ABRAMS

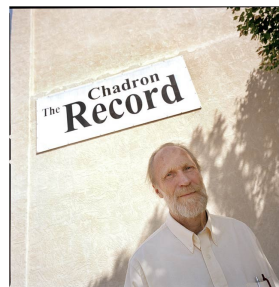
For Presidential Scholar alumni, 2007-2008 has been the year of the social network. Scholars everywhere have reunited online via Facebook and LinkedIn, using the virtual communities to reconnect with friends, collaborate on projects, and seek employment.

For the uninitiated, Facebook is an Internet-based social network where users create profiles of themselves—including biographical information, photos, and postings about their activities—and then interact with their friends using a seemingly infinite number of Facebook applications. LinkedIn is a more professionally-oriented online network in which

members post a professional profile and then link to their colleagues, associates, and friends to search for jobs, hire new employees, gather information or conduct business.

Already, the new networks have uncovered previously "lost alumni" from far and wide. The LinkedIn group, which attracted over 50 members in its first two months, includes former scholars who have pursued a wide range of careers such as:

- George Ledbetter, PS '69 (SD), Publisher at the *The Chadron Record*, a weekly Nebraska newspaper established in 1884 and [written up](#) last year in the *New York Times*.



George Ledbetter, PS '69 and LinkedIn member

- Scott Nowlin, PS '88 (NV), who is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force.
- Carlton Larson, PS '93 (ND), who is now a Law Professor at UC-Davis.

The Facebook group has grown to nearly 200 alumni. Members have been exchanging

messages, keeping track of each other via "mini feeds," and even using Facebook applications such as Scrabulous to compete in online games together. Alumni can also make an online donation to the Presidential Scholars Foundation through links on the Facebook group page.

To join these groups, just follow these simple steps:

LinkedIn: Join LinkedIn, sign in, then go to: <http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/51547/46B3A941FoB8>

Facebook: Create a Facebook.com account, go to this link, and click "Join Group." <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=10732811930>

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ALUMNUS ABROAD

By MATT ANESTIS

As a Presidential Scholar from Connecticut at NRW 1991, I could never have guessed that 17 years later, I would be working and living halfway around the world in China.

After that special summer experience in DC, I went off to Harvard, finding an amazing group of friends and developing a passion for politics and economics, but still focused domestically. After college, I took a job in Boston with the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), one of the world's top strategy consulting firms, and I am still here and happy 13 years later. But how did "here" come to mean China instead of Boston?

My career took a turn in 1997, when I took off a few years from BCG to return to Harvard for my joint Business and Law degree. Just as NRW first exposed me to scholars from all over the nation, graduate school exposed me to a student body from all over the world, inspiring me to look outside the community I knew. After first transferring in 2001 to the BCG Toronto office, I transferred again in 2003 to our Hong Kong office.

Since then I have been enjoying working throughout China and watching the amazing transformation of that region. My focus is on the consumer goods and

retail markets, so I primarily help western companies understand and tap opportunities available to them in China.

While there are many challenges to living in Asia (dealing with language issues, being far from family, making late night international phone calls with my US colleagues, having to stay up all night to watch my Pittsburgh Steelers on Slingbox, etc) . . . overall the exposure to a new part of the world has been an incredibly enriching chapter to my career.

Being in China has allowed me to become familiar with the Chinese consumers – a group of people going through breathtaking change. Each generation in China now assumes their children will grow up in a world unrecognizable to them, just as they grew up in a world completely different from that of their parents.

China is now a top 3 market for many product categories and companies are scrambling to provide for it—many western brands have become so ingrained into the local environment that Chinese consumers believe they are Chinese brands. (In a recent BCG survey, many brands like Tide and Safeguard were thought to be Chinese brands by >80% of Chinese consumers – a phenomenon that BCG calls

"Chameleon brands").

Yet despite the prevalence of western companies, the country remains extremely different from the west. Store formats are completely different, and products frequently have special flavors or formulations to fit local tastes.

All this has left me impressed at how truly global business has become. The scholars attending NRW 2008 will surely go to work in a market where multinational companies demand an understanding of global trends. Personally, there is no telling how long I will stay in China—continuing to learn from, and sometimes helping to shape, this evolving new market—but this has been fun so far.

For younger scholars who might want to have an international career experience, this is something to keep in mind when you choose your employer. Companies like BCG have great programs that can provide exposure to international business for a few months or years, and they love to have employees who can comfortably operate in an increasingly global economy. You may leap right to an international post, or you may work your way there after proving yourself in the US first. But either way, I hope to host few more Scholars at a welcome dinner out here in Hong Kong soon.



Matt Anestis, PS '91 (CT), has lived and worked in China for the last 5 years

“exposure to a new part of the world has been an incredibly enriching chapter to my career.”

Answer to Trivia Question (p.1)

D) About 33% According to statistics from the 2006 Presidential Scholars, 32% of Scholars listed Harvard, Yale or Princeton as their college choice. While this percentage is up from 1983, when about 25% of Scholars headed to these schools, it's still lower than some people expect. Every year, Scholars go on to attend a wide range of colleges and universities throughout the entire U.S.

SCHOLARLY SHOUTOUTS!

Are you and your spouse celebrating an anniversary after meeting years ago at NRW? Are you involved in a service project that is touching lives? Would you

like to send a shoutout to other alumni for any other reason?

If so, please let us know! In future issues, this section

will feature shoutouts to or from anyone in the Presidential Scholar alumni community. Don't be shy—email the editors at medallion.newsletter@gmail.com.

A NOVEL APPROACH TO FINDING PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR ALUMNAE

By JOHN KNOX

As chair of the Distinguished Alumni Committee, it's my job to locate alums who have found fame and fortune (or at least some modicum of notoriety). I've discovered that one of my best "alumni search engines" is the local bookstore. Among our ranks are quite a few acclaimed novelists! Perhaps one of the novels below will land on your summer reading list:

I was leafing through an issue of *Entertainment Weekly* recently when I saw a familiar name and face from my own National Recognition Week. In it was a very positive (A-) review of **Rachel Pastan** (PS from Maryland, 1983)'s "deft novel" *Lady of the Snakes*. The novel's protagonist, a literature professor, is trying to "have both a fulfilling career and a storybook family life," according to the reviewer. According to her Web site rachelpastan.com, Pastan teaches at

Swarthmore College in Philadelphia and the Bennington College summer MFA program, and is the daughter of a poet and an astronomer.

The two cultures of literature and science permeate the writings of **Allegra Goodman** (PS from Hawaii, 1985). Goodman, who is married to an MIT computer scientist, examined scientific misconduct in her latest novel, *Intuition* (2006). Her 1998 novel *Kaaterskill Falls*, focusing on Orthodox Jews in upstate New York, was a finalist for the National Book Award. I also highly recommend her 1999 *Salon* essay "Marriage of Two Minds: Can a Novelist and a Mathematician Coexist?"

I was delighted to discover that an old Presidential Scholar pen-pal of mine, **Elizabeth (Johnson) Kostova** (PS from Tennessee, 1983), has hit it big.

Her first novel, *The Historian*, is a modern retelling of the story of Dracula (the person, not the movie caricature). Published in 2005 after winning the University of Michigan Hopwood Award, *The Historian* became an international best-seller and has been translated into at least 28 languages. A major motion picture based on the novel is slated for release in 2010. If you're looking for a novel that will completely immerse you in exotic cultures and periods, *The Historian* is for you.

For brief biographies of other distinguished alums, see our Web site: http://www.presidentialscholars.org/famous_Alumni_1.htm.

If you know of other "famous alumni," please contact me immediately at John_Andrew_Knox@yahoo.com.

Visit these famous alumni and find out more at: www.presidentialscholars.org



Kristin Forbes, PS '88,
Economist

Richard Alley, PS '76,
Climate Scientist

Rita Dove, PS '70,
Poet Laureate

Mitch Daniels, PS '67,
Governor of Indiana

Desmond Richardson,
PS '86, Dancer

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Tech Czar: to provide advice on streamlining and automating databases with online submissions as well as on maximizing the Web board application available on the PS Foundation website. If interested, please email Caryn Grimstead at caryn.grimstead@ed.gov.

Newsletter volunteers: want to submit an article? Are you a pro at layout and design? Do you have Photoshop skills or ideas for an official Medallion masthead? If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter in any way, please email medallion.newsletter@gmail.com.

Video visionaries: help needed for filming, editing and brainstorming about NRW video. Email Rena at renaxu@post.harvard.edu.

Other ideas? Contact us with any comments or suggestions on other ways to grow our alumni network at medallion.newsletter@gmail.com

NRW 2008 DEPENDS ON THE GENEROUS DONATIONS FROM ALUMNI, FAMILIES OF SCHOLARS, AND ALUMNI-AFFILIATED COMPANIES

McKinsey & Company
 The Boston Consulting Group
 Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Goodman (PS '95)
 Dr. John (PS '83) and Pamela Knox
 Family of Natalie Como (PS '07)
 Kristiana Garcia (PS '95)
 Family of Caleb Graham (PS '06)
 Gloria Hwang and Steven Hetts (PS '92)
 Dr. Anisha Abraham (PS '86)
 Family of Matthew Austin (PS '03)
 Marilee Benson in honor of David Tao (PS '07)
 Marcy Brown in honor of Billy Buss (PS '06)
 Brendan Carrington (PS '00)
 Family of Bryan Chen (PS '03)
 Family of Jennifer Claytor (PS '06)
 Laura J. David (PS '70)
 Dr. Linda Falcão (PS '78)

Andrew Farke and Sarah Nichols (both PS '99)
 Avery Gardiner (PS '93) and Edwin U
 Family of Samuel Haber (PS '07)
 Family of Aman Kumar (PS '05)
 Family of Leah Libresco (PS '07)
 Family of Timothy Moon (PS '07)
 Family of Jeffrey Rosen (PS '07)
 Uma Samant (PS '00)
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Senechal (PS '65)
 Family of Benjamin Shaby (PS '97)
 Family of Reema Shah (PS '07)
 Duane and Haley Smith
 Family of Jennifer Sternad (PS '00)
 Samantha Stoddard (PS '90)
 Family of Patricia Tsai (PS '07)
 Family of Daniel Viox (PS '07)
 Family of Bret Voith (PS '07)

Family of Craig Western (PS '07)
 John and Suwei Zhou
 Allinder-Anestis Family Charity
 Scott Rothkopf (PS '95)
 Jonathan Magruder (PS '04)
 Stephanie Waters (PS '99)
 Lynette Miller (PS '72)
 Teres Knirck for Jason Knirck (PS '89)
 Jodi Pederson (PS '91)
 Kyle Haddad-Fonda (PS '05)
 Patrick Barron and Juliet Wong Barron
 Tamara Fountain (PS '91)
 Family of David Kale (PS '00)
 Philip (PS '91) and Dawn Nadeau
 Jesse Baker
 Matt Anestis (PS '91)
 Brian Abrams (PS '96)

Thank you to all those who have already given to help support the program and NRW!

Visit us on the web at:
www.presidentialscholars.org

Your financial support is needed for future classes of Presidential Scholars!

Because no federal funds are mandated to support NRW, each year the Presidential Scholars Foundation raises funds from public and private sources to provide housing, transportation, meals, and enrichment activities for scholars during NRW. Your generous support will help continue the tradition!

Please **send a check** payable to the Presidential Scholars Foundation to:

Presidential Scholars Foundation
 c/o Avery Gardiner
 1220 29th St. NW
 Washington, DC 20007

Or **donate by credit card online!**



Hold down the CTRL key and click on the button above
 OR paste this address into your browser: <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=26658>

The Presidential Scholars Program is a nonpartisan, public-private partnership designed to recognize and provide leadership development experiences for the nation's most outstanding graduating high-school seniors. It is not a scholarship program, but it is one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The 141 students named annually as Presidential Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people.

The Presidential Scholars Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, founded in 1989 to help support the program. The Foundation is the sole organization authorized by the Commission to raise funds for the Presidential Scholars Program, and has a twenty-plus-year track record of raising and managing contributions on behalf of the program.

The Presidential Scholars Association is a group of Presidential Scholar alumni working together to create both a vibrant network of Presidential scholars and opportunities for new scholars and alumni to get to know each other and interact.