Alumni

David Kocieniewski, Paul LeClerc, and Other Alumni in the News

Summer 2012



David Kocieniewski (Richard Perry / The New York Times / Redux

Pulitzerlandia

Columbians made a strong showing in this year's Pulitzer Prizes.

In the journalism categories, **David Kocieniewski '86JRN** of the *New York Times* took the explanatory-reporting prize for his work exposing the ways in which wealthy individuals and corporations drive down their tax bills, while a story by **Eli Sanders**

’99CC in Seattle’s alternative weekly newspaper the *Stranger* won for feature writing. Sanders, a former *Spectator* editor-in-chief, followed the victim of a violent crime through her attacker’s trial and beyond.

In the arts categories, **Tracy K. Smith ’97SOA** claimed the poetry prize for her book *Life on Mars*, and the late Columbia professor of African-American studies **Manning Marable** was awarded the history prize for *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*.

Karen Russell ’06SOA was named a finalist in the fiction category for her novel *Swamplandia!* (There was no prize awarded for fiction this year, for the first time since 1977.) Russell also recently won the New York Public Library’s Young Lions Award, a $10,000 prize given annually to a fiction writer age 35 or under.

He's got their backs

In partnership with New York’s Hospital for Special Surgery, where he works as chief of the scoliosis service, **Ohenaba Boachie-Adjei ’80PS** has opened a specialty hospital in his native Ghana, which provides comprehensive and affordable orthopedic and rehabilitative services for adults and children. Boachie-Adjei, who has treated more than 17,000 patients in the US and internationally, hopes the hospital will become the premier orthopedic teaching hospital in sub-Saharan Africa.

New directions

The former president of the New York Public Library, **Paul LeClerc ’69GSAS**, will be the new director of Columbia’s Global Center in Paris. LeClerc, a scholar of French literature, led the NYPL for sixteen years, served as president of Hunter College and provost of Baruch College, and is currently a visiting scholar in Columbia’s French department.



Paul LeClerc (Beowulf Sheehan)

Deborah Cullen has been appointed the next director of Columbia's Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery. Cullen comes to Columbia from El Museo del Barrio, in New York, where she is director of curatorial programs. The Wallach Gallery is currently located in Schermerhorn Hall but will move to the Lenfest Center for the Arts on the Manhattanville campus in 2016.



Deborah Cullen (Courtesy of the Record)

Cardboard lions

In an effort to improve its lackluster recycling record, the Bloomberg administration named **Ron Gonen ’04BUS** as its first-ever deputy commissioner for recycling and sustainability. Gonen, an adjunct lecturer at Columbia Business School, is the cofounder of Recyclebank, which encourages recycling by awarding consumer

incentive points redeemable at stores and restaurants. His priorities in his new role are to provide more recycling bins in public spaces and amp up curbside composting programs.

Jennifer Wright ’09BUS has devised an eco-friendly pizza box that is now being used in several Central American countries, with plans in the works for national distribution in the US. Made from recycled cardboard, the GreenBox also has perforations that break it down into easy serving plates and leftover-storage containers.

Lions and Cowboys and Angels, oh my!

Jeff Adams ’12CC signed a free-agent contract with the Dallas Cowboys, becoming the eighth Lion in Columbia history to sign with the NFL. Adams, a left tackle, was an All-Ivy first-team member for three consecutive years and a third-team Associated Press All-American player during his senior year.



Pat Lowery (Courtesy of Columbia Athletics)

Two members of the Columbia baseball team have been drafted by Major League franchises. Outfielder **Dario Pizzano**, a Columbia College senior and the 2012 Ivy League Player of the Year, was taken by the Seattle Mariners in the fifteenth round. Pitcher **Pat Lowery ’12CC**, a 2012 first-team All-Ivy ace, was drafted in the twenty-first round by the Los Angeles Angels. They are the first players drafted from Columbia since 2004.

Millions served

iFood.tv, a website cofounded by **Alok Ranjan ’06BUS** that has the biggest collection of online cooking videos, has started seven new specialty channels and

opened its first New York office. The site, which Ranjan started when he was a student at Columbia, gets about four million unique visitors a month.

Daniel Hillel, an adjunct senior scientist at Columbia's Earth Institute, has won the World Food Prize for his work with micro-irrigation, which saves water by releasing small, targeted amounts onto crops. The award, announced in June at a Washington, DC, ceremony keynoted by US secretary of state Hillary Clinton, honors Hillel's work in improving crop production in arid regions in more than thirty countries.



Adrian Benepe (Tina Paul / Camera Press / Redux)

Park place

Adrian Benepe ’81JRN stepped down as the New York City parks commissioner to take a newly created position with the Trust for Public Land, a national conservation group based in San Francisco. Benepe, who has worked in New York City parks since he was sixteen, has been commissioner since 2002. In his new role, Benepe will be attempting to establish parks in urban areas across the country using the same public-private partnership model with which he had success in New York.

Let the games begin

Seven Columbians are headed to London in August to participate in the 2012 Summer Olympics.

Rower **Nick LaCava ’09CC** will be a member of the US men’s lightweight four boat, which secured its bid to London after defeating teams from the Netherlands and Serbia. The Serbian boat, which was closely edged out in the qualifying match, included LaCava’s former Columbia teammate **Milos Tomic ’06SEAS**.

A Columbia College sophomore, **Nzingha Prescod**, joins alums **Nicole Ross ’10CC** , **James Williams ’07CC, ’09GSAS**, and **Jeff Spear ’10CC** on the US Olympic fencing team. (The women foilists and men sabre fencers clinched their spots at the Division I fencing championships this past spring.)



Nzingha Prescod (Reuters / Mike Segar)

Distance runner **Lisa Stublić ’06CC** will compete in the marathon on the Croatian team, after finishing ninth in the Berlin marathon in 2010. She is Croatia’s first-ever female Olympic marathon runner. At Columbia, she helped earn four consecutive Ivy League cross-country championships. Sprinter **Erison Hurtault ’07CC** will represent Dominica in the 400-meter race. Though Hurtault was born and raised in New Jersey, both of his parents are from the small Caribbean nation, which granted him dual citizenship.

Guide to school abbreviations

All categories >