Alumni

Ayad Akhtar, Diane Paulus, and Other Alumni in the News

Summer 2013



Ayad Akhtar (Nina Subin)

Pulitzers and a Peabody

Columbians were well represented in this year's pool of Pulitzer Prizes. In addition to Sharon Olds's poetry award, **Ayad Akhtar '02SOA**, who studied film at Columbia, won in the drama category for his play *Disgraced*, about a Pakistani-American lawyer grappling with his cultural identity.

The Pulitzer for explanatory reporting went to the staff of the *New York Times*, including **David Kocieniewski '86JRN**, **Bill Vlasic '82JRN**, and **Steve Lohr '75JRN**, for their nine-part series

“The iEconomy,” which investigated the global high-tech industry.

Habiba Nosheen ’09JRN, an adjunct professor of radio and video reporting at the Graduate School of Journalism, took home a Peabody Award for her reporting in “What Happened at Dos Erres,” about a boy abducted during a 1982 military massacre in Guatemala, which aired last spring on Public Radio International’s *This American Life*.

Magic to Do

Two members of the Columbia community took home top prizes at this year’s Tony Awards. **Diane Paulus ’97SOA** won for best direction of a musical for *Pippin*. Paulus, who is the artistic director of the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was previously nominated in the same category for her revival of *Hair*.

Hal Luftig ’84SOA was honored as a producer of *Kinky Boots*, which was the winner for best musical. This is his fourth Tony Award.

Eric Shaw ’03GS won for outstanding writing in animation at the Daytime Emmy Awards this June. Shaw was recognized for his work as the head writer of the PBS show *WordGirl*.

Kids R Us

Denise Adusei ’10BUS has made headlines for her work with Peartree Preschool, which she opened this May in Harlem. Adusei, a Harlem resident, was inspired to found the school after seeking options for her daughter and learning that there were twenty-five thousand children vying for five thousand pre-K spots in the neighborhood. She drafted the business plan as a student at Columbia, and earned grant money from the New York Public Library’s business-plan competition and Columbia’s Eugene M. Lang Entrepreneurial Initiative Fund.

weeSpring, a social networking and e-commerce site cofounded by **Allyson Downey ’03SOA, ’10BUS,** was a finalist in the NYU Stern Entrepreneurs Challenge,

and also won the audience-choice award in the same competition. The site allows members to shop for products geared toward infants and children, and to exchange information, reviews, and ratings with other parents.

Leagues of Their Own

Three Columbia Lions are headed to the pros next year. **Josh Martin ’13SEAS**, a 2013 All–Ivy League first-team football player, signed with the National Football League’s Kansas City Chiefs.

From the baseball team, first baseman **Alex Black ’13CC** could also land in Kansas City, drafted by the Royals franchise. Pitcher **Tim Giel** ’13SEAS will stay closer to home, joining the New York Yankees organization as a free agent.

Into the Wild

John Cochran ’09CC won the twenty-sixth season of the television show *Survivor*, outlasting his competition for thirty-nine days on the Caramoan Islands in the Philippines. Cochran, who also graduated this spring from Harvard Law School, originally appeared on *Survivor: South Pacific* in 2011, and is one of only two winners in the show’s history to make it through the full season without having a single vote cast against him. He takes home one million dollars in prize money.



Guide to school abbreviations

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