Alumni Newsmakers

Jennifer Lee, Ursula Burns, and Other Alumni in the News

Spring 2014 issue

Freeze-Frame

Two Columbians took home Oscars this year, and two others were nominated for them. Jennifer Lee ’05SOA won in the best animated feature category for Frozen, which she co-wrote and directed, and Dede Gardner ’90CC was honored for co-producing 12 Years a Slave, which was named best picture. Producer Albert Berger ’83SOA was nominated for Nebraska, a contender for best picture, and Judy Becker ’82GSAS
was nominated for production design on *American Hustle*.

**Fortune Calls**

*Fortune* magazine included **Ursula Burns ’82SEAS** and **Nancy McKinstry ’84BUS** on its annual list of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Business. Burns is the chairman and CEO of Xerox, where she has spent her entire career. McKinstry is the chairman and CEO of the Dutch publisher and information-services company Wolters Kluwer.
Thomas Jessell, a professor of neuroscience, biochemistry, and molecular biophysics at Columbia, won the 2014 Vilcek Foundation Prize in Biomedical Science. The $100,000 award honors immigrant contributions to American arts and sciences. The British-born Jessell, who is codirector of Columbia’s Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute, was selected for his work with the
vertebrate central nervous system.

Maison Française director **Shanny Peer** was awarded the Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government in recognition of her commitment to intellectual and cultural exchange between France and the United States.

Theater producer **Marla Rubin ’85CC** won a South Bank Sky Arts Award, which recognizes British cultural achievement, for her London stage production of *Let the Right One In*.

**Clerks**

Three Columbia Law alums were awarded US Supreme Court clerkships. **Jennifer B. Sokoler ’10LAW** will clerk for Justice Sonia Sotomayor, **Mark Musico ’11LAW** for Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsberg ’59LAW**, and **James W. Crooks ’13LAW** for Justice Anthony Kennedy.

**City Hall Bound**

New York City mayor **Bill de Blasio ’87SIPA** appointed fellow Columbians to posts in his administration. **Mary Bassett ’79PS**, a professor at the Mailman School of Public Health, will serve as the commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Bassett previously served as New York’s deputy commissioner of health promotion and disease prevention. **Alicia Glen ’93LAW** was appointed deputy mayor for housing and economic development. Glen has been the head of the urban investment group at Goldman Sachs for twelve years.

**Big Data**
Applied-mathematics professor Chris Wiggins ’93CC was named chief data scientist for the New York Times. Wiggins, who is a founding member of Columbia’s Center for Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, will help the newspaper analyze user data generated by its website.

Robert Wolven, the associate university librarian for bibliographic services and collection development, won the 2014 Melvil Dewey Medal, given to one person annually for excellence in library and information sciences. Wolven was recognized for his work with digital content, such as making e-books more accessible to public-library users.
Chris Wiggins

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