

Kelly Link '91SOA, Adrian Krainer '81CC, and Other Alumni in the News

Winter 2018-19



Kelly Link

Writer [Kelly Link](#) '91SOA won a 2018 MacArthur Fellowship — also called a “genius grant.” Link is known for her genre-bending short stories, which blend elements of science fiction and fantasy with realistic depictions of modern life. Link also runs [Small Beer Press](#), which publishes new voices in fantasy and literary fiction.

Biochemist [Adrian Krainer](#) '81CC and Columbia pharmacology professor C. Frank Bennett won this year's [Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences](#). Often called “the Oscars of science,” the \$3 million awards are the world's most lucrative scientific prizes.

Krainer and Bennett were recognized for their work using RNA splicing to develop new drugs to treat spinal muscular atrophy, a devastating genetic disease found in children.

Sigrid Nunez '75SOA won the National Book Award for her novel *The Friend*. Two other Columbians were finalists: **Diana Khoi Nguyen** '12SOA, for her poetry collection *Ghost Of*, and Sarah Smarsh '05SOA, for her memoir *Heartland*. Additionally, the National Book Foundation included novelist **Hannah Lillith Assadi** '08CC, '13SOA on its annual "5 Under 35" list.



Elissa Slotkin

Elissa Slotkin '03SIPA was elected to the United States House of Representatives, unseating a Republican incumbent in Michigan. During the Obama administration, Slotkin worked as an analyst for the CIA and as an assistant secretary of defense.

Leyla Martinez '18GS was selected for a [Soros Justice Fellowship](#) and will use her stipend to continue her work as an advocate for criminal-justice reform. [Martinez](#), a formerly incarcerated mother, founded an organization that supports students affected by incarceration.

The [Alliance for Justice](#) honored attorney [Roberta Kaplan](#) '91LAW at its annual gala. Kaplan is best known for representing Edith Windsor in the case that toppled the Defense of Marriage Act, and she is also a cofounder of the [Time's Up Legal Defense Fund](#), which provides legal support to women in sexual-harassment cases.



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