Cuba

Students, faculty, and alumni explore an island in transition

Plus

Executives on Campus: Why Mentors Matter
Throughout the year, I work with faculty, staff, alumni, and student ambassadors to build strong relationships with the governor’s office and on both sides of the political aisle in the New York State Assembly and Senate. My goal is to promote Baruch College’s excellence and protect and enhance our operating budget.

As I write, the Fiscal Year 2017 budget has just been completed, and unfortunately, it was not a good year for CUNY or Baruch. Thanks to strong support from many alumni, we were successful in persuading the legislature to reject the governor’s proposal to shift $485 million in the CUNY budget from the state to the city. However, the University did not receive funds to cover the cost of a new contract for faculty and staff, who have been working without one for six years. Nor did it receive any money to offset a tuition freeze. Fortunately, Baruch had anticipated a shortfall and planned accordingly, though, of course, we will continue to lobby to increase funding in future budgets.

One very welcome outcome of our intensified efforts in Albany has been the opportunity to connect and work with more alumni in that area. The Office of Alumni Relations recently hosted an Albany Alumni Reception where four elected officials—the Honorable Ronald T. Kim (MPA ’06), Francisco P. Moya (MPA ’14), J. Gary Pretlow (’78), and Diana C. Richardson (MPA ’10)—shared their insights with several dozen of their fellow alumni from the Capital Region.

While the majority of our alumni live and work in the tristate area, Baruch graduates reside across the U.S. and in nearly 100 countries. Alumni Relations is working with local volunteers in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Boca Raton, Tampa, Naples, Houston, Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Francisco to establish alumni clubs. Meanwhile, alumni gatherings in São Paulo, London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Istanbul, and Dubai, among other international locations, have provided opportunities to socialize and support the College’s international admissions efforts.

Meanwhile, in our hometown, the volunteer-led Baruch College Alumni Association engages thousands of New York City–based alumni with social gatherings, sports nights, and special programs. Alumni Relations is also collaborating with Dr. Myung-Soo Lee, vice provost for global strategies, to bring the world closer to home for students and local alumni. One recent highlight was the event China @ Baruch: The Role of China in the Global Economy. Kam Wong (’81), president of the Municipal Credit Union, served as emcee for a panel of top professionals who discussed business trends in China.

Building on Baruch’s intrinsic diversity, I have set an aspirational goal to have 15 percent of our students benefit from an international experience at some point during their college years, including study and internships overseas, as well as cultural and international events on campus.

In the spirit of internationalism, this issue of Baruch College Alumni Magazine focuses on Cuba, the newest frontier in our hemisphere. Baruch was connected to Cuba long before President Obama’s historic visit there in March.

As ever, I hope you enjoy reading about what your classmates and College are up to. And to the nearly 4,000 students who proudly graduated on May 27, welcome to the Baruch alumni family!

Sincerely,
MITCHEL B. WALLERSTEIN
President

If you are interested in getting involved—locally, nationally, or internationally—with your Baruch community, please contact Janet B. Rossbach, director of alumni relations and volunteer engagement, at janet.rossbach@baruch.cuny.edu.
6 | COVER STORY
Destination Cuba: Student Voices, Faculty Insights, and Alumni Views

Curious about Cuba? Let Baruch’s students, faculty, and alumni share their experiences of this island nation. Over the last five years, more than 50 Baruch students and faculty members have undertaken life-changing journeys to Cuba.

IF YOU PLAN TO GO: Learn how to get the most from your journey—including how and where to buy the island’s legendary rum and cigars—with tips from a Cuba-savvy faculty expert.

9 | PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT
Empower Trip: EOC Shows Why Mentors Matter

Charles Hwang (MBA ’15) (shown) was eager to position himself for a job in forensic accounting. With the guidance of Baruch’s Executives on Campus (EOC) program and mentor Dennis Hickey (’70), Colgate-Palmolive CFO, Hwang landed a senior associate position at Ernst & Young. Fifteen years strong, EOC has played a key role in hundreds of Baruch success stories.

13 | ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
Change Agent Nneka Norville (MPA ’06)

As director of corporate social responsibility at Black Entertainment Television, Nneka Norville leverages her “diverse interests in social change, business, brand management, and marketing strategy” to create transformative social campaigns. The Emmy winner is proudest, though, of her “ability to affect real issues that impact real people.”

ALSO INSIDE

16 | BENEFITS NEWS
Learn how, as a member of the Baruch alumni community, you can join the Penn Club. See your other privileges on the inside back cover.

15 | CLASS NOTES
Sonja Kostich (’15), once a professional ballerina, finds a dancer’s diligence highly advantageous in her new career at Goldman Sachs.

ON THE COVER: When President Obama visited Cuba last March, he compared the United States and Cuba to “two brothers who’ve been estranged for many years, even as we share the same blood.” That recognition of bonds that transcend borders is captured in the cover photo by Baruch College Fund President Max Berger (’68), who visited the island last February. Bracketed by the Cuban and U.S. flags, a Cuban street musician plays his horn. Music, dance, and baseball are among the often-cited shared passions of both nations.
Weissman School Welcomes New Dean

AFTER AN EXTENSIVE NATIONAL SEARCH, Dr. Aldemaro Romero Jr., previously the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), was selected as the new dean of Baruch’s George and Mildred Weissman School of Arts and Sciences. He will assume the deanship and a faculty position in the Department of Natural Sciences this summer.

Weissman School Welcomes New Dean

NEW DEGREE TAKES ON THE WORLD

When the School of Public Affairs (SPA) welcomes its first class of Master of International Affairs (MIA) students in Fall 2017, their arrival will be the culmination of two years of planning, preparation, and approvals.

SPA Dean David Birdsell says, “There is no single career path for a student pursuing a Master of International Affairs at the School of Public Affairs; there are many.” Students will prepare for leadership roles at international foundations and nongovernmental organizations; internationally focused agencies in city, state, and federal government; and globally oriented businesses and corporations committed to promoting development through international public-private partnerships.

Through an integrated, multidisciplinary curriculum, MIA candidates will study national and international public policy and its underlying principles. Specializations include international nongovernmental organizations, Western Hemisphere affairs, and trade policy and global economic governance. Students also have the opportunity to design, in concert with a faculty adviser, a concentration tailored to their needs.

This new program directly aligns with the College’s Strategic Plan 2013–18, which calls for students to acquire “a global perspective on world affairs and a critical awareness of the political and ethical issues of the day.” The MIA also represents the next step in SPA’s deepening commitment to internationalizing its curricula.

“In a world of globalizing opportunities, challenges, and threats, the Master of International Affairs meets the rising demand for professionals with a passion for the world and the knowledge and skills to be strong, forward-looking, and responsible leaders,” says Dr. Carla Anne Robbins, clinical professor of national security studies and the program’s director. –DIANE HARRIGAN

WORLDVIEW ADVANTAGE: Internship opportunities will abound for MIA students in universities abroad as well as in New York City’s almost 1,000 international organizations. Prominent among local institutions is the United Nations, already a key School of Public Affairs partner. In January more than two dozen SPA students toured the UN with alumni-employees Acheampong Akoto (’05), John Ericson (EMPA ’98), Curtis Hosang (EMPA ’01), and Ricardo Panchoo (MPA ’14). “Our alumni know what it takes to get a foot in the door at this prestigious institution,” said Edward Yao, SPA’s graduate alumni relations specialist. “We can’t thank them enough.”
ON THE MOVE
Mishkin Gallery Warhols Travel to China

What do the Chinese think of the art of Andy Warhol, undisguised critic and interpreter of Western consumer culture? “They showed real interest, especially in the silkscreen prints Sitting Bull, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, Saint Apollonia, and Lincoln Center Ticket,” recalls Mishkin Gallery Director Sandra Kraskin, who spoke at the December 2015 opening of Warhol and Photography: By Andy Warhol & Christopher Makos at the Tan Guobin Contemporary Art Museum in Changsha, China.

The show, which ran through February, featured Baruch’s collection of Warhol photographs and silkscreen prints, along with Christopher Makos’s photographs of the artist and his world.

Prior to the exhibition, Director Kraskin explains, some of the Chinese museumgoers knew the Pop Art icon’s name, but no one was familiar with his photography. Warhol and Photography is an example of “China’s growing interest in collecting Western and modern art and borrowing it for museum exhibition.” She adds, “The Chinese want to be up to date and have a global perspective.”

The exhibition—the first time that Baruch art has traveled internationally—represented four years of collaboration between Dr. Kraskin and organizers at J. Young Art USA and the Hunan Provincial Museum. —Diane Harrigan

A CUT ABOVE: Rankings Showcase National Prominence

S tudents seeking great academics, outstanding career preparation, generous financial aid, and measurable return on their tuition investment need look no further than Baruch College, according to recent reports and rankings.

In its 2016 edition of Colleges That Pay You Back: The 200 Schools That Give You the Best Bang for Your Tuition Buck, the Princeton Review applauded Baruch’s affordability and value, stating that Baruch is widely considered “the best college value in New York City.”

In March the U.S. Department of Education issued a report highlighting public and private universities that excel at enrolling and graduating low-income students. Baruch was among the top 13 public, four-year institutions nationwide cited as having the best track record serving this population. Among the factors weighed were advising and mentoring opportunities.

In its rankings for 2017, U.S. News & World Report awarded Baruch College’s School of Public Affairs (SPA) and Zicklin School of Business top graduate program honors. SPA’s Master of Public Affairs (MPA) degree was ranked #45 nationally, with its MPA specialty in city management and urban policy #15 nationally. Several positions on Top 100 lists went to the Zicklin School, including a #85 ranking for the Full-Time Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program and a #66 slot for the Part-Time MBA Program. MBA specialty programs in healthcare management and accounting took home #29 and #35 national honors, respectively.

Individual disciplines that also earned special recognition included the College’s Lawrence N. Field Programs in Entrepreneurship, with two Top 10 spots in the Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine’s annual Top 25 Schools for Entrepreneurship Studies: The undergraduate program placed #6 in the nation, and the graduate program, #9. Also receiving nationwide honors were the Zicklin School accountancy program, ranked #8 by College Factual, and the Weissman School actuarial science program, ranked #13 best value by College Values Online.

Ambassador Caroline Kennedy on the Importance of Study Abroad

On March 30, Baruch hosted Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy and Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Evan Ryan for a State Department–sponsored discussion of the role of study abroad in U.S. relations. Speaking to the audience of students, faculty, and staff from Baruch and other CUNY schools, Kennedy said, “There is nothing more important right now than people who can work with people from other countries and have an understanding of different cultural traditions, heritages, and problem-solving techniques.”
Fulbright Professors Lead Scholarly and Cultural Exchange

FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS were honored with Fulbright awards this academic year: Weissman School faculty Gail Levin and Karen Shelby and Zicklin School faculty Donna Gitter and Aloke Ghosh. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, Baruch College is among the country’s top producers of U.S. Fulbright scholars in 2015–16.

Dr. Levin earned a Fulbright Distinguished Chair Award for research in India. The professor of art history, American studies, and women’s studies recently completed a four-month fellowship, which she called “a great opportunity to represent my country and my culture and have a window into Indian art and culture in all its diversity.”

Dr. Shelby earned a Fulbright–Terra Foundation of American Art Fellowship for work at Ghent University in Belgium. The art historian conducted research in support of her project “Does Art of the US Really Only Begin After WWII? American Art in Belgian Museums.” She also collaborated with Ghent faculty to create programs for both Ghent and Baruch students as well as expanded her research interests.

Professor of Law Gitter earned a Fulbright Distinguished Lecturing Award for travel to the Philippines. “I am eager to meet colleagues in the Philippines to begin a relationship of cultural and scholarly exchange relating to the law of business,” she said.

Dr. Ghosh is also eager to pursue his research this summer in Finland and other European countries. The professor of accountancy describes this endeavor as exemplifying “the power of international academic exchange ... with the ultimate goal of a more peaceful and prosperous world.”

“These prestigious appointments confirm that Baruch is an engaging academic community,” said Baruch’s Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs David P. Christy. “One of our shared goals is to deepen students’ engagement with the world. These four scholars will bring fresh insights to their classrooms and to their research.”

Preparing Nonprofit Leaders

Direct service to nonprofits through customized leadership training programs has been a hallmark of School of Public Affairs (SPA) outreach since its founding in 1995. That year SPA ran a series of workshops to introduce nonprofit managers and their staffs to database management, website development, and remote connections with service sites. “This seems so old hat today,” says Dean David Birdsell. “But at the time, it was an intimidating set of new technologies.”

This modest start launched ventures with the United Way of New York City and Partnership for After-School Education. And today those beginnings have grown into SPA’s robust slate of noncredit certificate programs. Made-to-order programs are taught through the lens of real-world issues and trends with projects that address on-the-ground challenges and opportunities.

Programs for such “umbrella organizations” as United Neighborhood Houses, the Hispanic Federation, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, and the New York Community Trust followed. With scores to hundreds of members, these organizations enable SPA to leverage the demands of many agencies.

In February the New York Community Trust (NYCT) awarded the School of Public Affairs a $465,000 grant to continue its Emerging Nonprofit Leaders Fellows Program for a second year; NYCT has invested a total of $915,000 in the program. Pat Swann, senior program officer at NYCT, called SPA “the best match to nurture future nonprofit leaders.”

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For more information, contact Edgar Zavala at 646-660-6718 or edgar.zavala@baruch.cuny.edu.
From Toronto to Omaha: Top Moments for Top Students

“Have talent, will travel” should be the motto of Baruch’s student ambassadors.

In February a team of six Master of Financial Engineering (MFE) students won the top prize and set a new record in the two-day Rotman International Trading Competition (RITC) in Toronto, the world’s premier contest of its kind. The Weissman School of Arts and Sciences quants prevailed against 52 teams from four continents.

MFE Program Co-director and Professor Dan Stefanica described the unprecedented win: “The Baruch MFE team’s overall score established a new all-time record, held by MIT since 2011, and the largest difference between first place and second place recorded in 13 years.”

On March 31, a delegation of 20 Zicklin School of Business students—11 MBA students and 9 undergraduate honors students—traveled to Omaha, Nebraska, to visit Berkshire Hathaway (BRK) headquarters and subsidiaries. Accompanying the student group were Executive Director of Graduate Programs Paquita Davis-Friday and Zicklin’s Undergraduate Honors Program Advisor Tara Sinclair.

The highlight of the students’ whirlwind, one-day tour was the opportunity to engage BRK chairman and CEO Warren Buffett, first during the official two-hour Q&A session and later at an informal steakhouse lunch. Baruch College was one of seven universities selected to participate in the April 1 visit.

After lunch, the student delegation gave Buffett, a self-proclaimed admirer of College namesake Bernard Baruch, a 3D plaque fabricated in the College’s Maker Hub, with the apt Baruch quotation: “I get the facts, I study them patiently, I apply imagination.”

—DIANE HARRIGAN

Treasures Discovered in New Archive

A letter from Albert Einstein and a ceremonial FDR signing pen are among the many treasures discovered in the College’s newly acquired Archive of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) and the Luther Gulick Papers.

Core to the archive are the letters and memorabilia of extraordinary public servant Luther Halsey Gulick III (1892–1993). Gulick began a 78-year career in the New York Bureau of Municipal Research in 1915 and later helmed its successor, the Institute of Public Administration. Coming of age in a time of rampant government corruption, he worked tirelessly to reform and transform government, to make it accountable and efficient.

The Baruch-IPA archive—a joint venture of the William and Anita Newman Library (where it is housed) and the School of Public Affairs—came to the College through the intervention of Associate Professor of Public Affairs Daniel Williams. Dr. Williams arranged for the collection, which had been stored for years at a record center in Queens in 700-plus fraying cartons, to be deeded to Baruch, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York provided grants for transportation and partial digitization for scholarly use.

Luther Halsey Gulick III was a visionary public administrator and one of the 20th century’s leading reformers. His papers and memorabilia from generations of mayors, governors, and U.S. presidents form a rare historical collection at Baruch.

Social Climber

“We’re always looking for ways to engage and provide our hardworking students with fun, laughter, and an overall great time,” said Savanna Ramsey, assistant director of student activities, of Baruch’s Winter Carnival 2016 (aka Candyland), which featured a giant inflatable Hershey’s Kiss–like climbing wall (shown). “All of us need an opportunity to get in touch with our inner kid,” added Ramsey.
LIFE-ALTERING EXPERIENCES

Two years ago, Miguel Machado (’17) was a part-time student who worked 45 hours a week as a jewelry store manager. Feeling a kinship inspired by his Puerto Rican heritage, he applied to a journalism study abroad program in Cuba. When he returned, Machado quit his job, enrolled full time, and declared a double major in journalism and Spanish. He aspires to become a foreign correspondent in Latin America.

“My trip to Cuba changed everything—when I saw what people were able to live without, and the ingenuity they needed to survive each day, I felt incredibly fortunate,” says the budding journalist. “Their spirit gave me the confidence to bet on myself.”

Machado’s life-changing experience is far from unique on campus. Since 2012 more than 50 Baruch students have made transformational journeys to the Caribbean island as part of winter session courses that have focused on culture and society, journalism, and natural sciences. With the support of the George and Mildred Weissman School of Arts and Sciences and the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba, a nonprofit organization fostering cultural exchange, the study abroad program has been able to thrive at a time when U.S. citizens have been largely restricted from Cuban travel.

A CADRE OF CUBA EXPERTS

“There has always been an American fascination with Cuba, the forbidden fruit,” says Katrin Hansing, associate professor of anthropology and sociology. Dr. Hansing created the Cuba program and brought the first group of Baruch students to Havana to study art, music, and culture. “The program really does justice to the idea that contact between peoples and cultures is much more important than isolation.” The social anthropologist arrived at Baruch with a profound expertise in Cuba and a CV that included the associate directorship of the Cuban Research Institute at Florida International University in Miami.

Her scholarly expertise was shared by other Baruch professors. According to Gary Hentzi, Weissman School associate dean, who also has traveled to Cuba, Baruch was in the fortunate position of having a unique group of faculty members who had been traveling to the island for research since the late nineties. Their contacts paved the way for later, formal student trips. “Our program is part of a broader global strategic initiative to increase Baruch’s connections abroad and break down cultural barriers,” explains Dr. Hentzi. “Sending educators and students to Cuba is a robust way to further that project.”
AN ISLAND IN TRANSITION
To visit Cuba is to experience the dichotomy of a nation caught between two worlds. In many areas, the city of Havana remains as Americans picture it, a land frozen in time, hampered by more than 50 years of trade embargoes with the U.S. Vintage fifties-era Chevys and Cadillacs line the streets, historic buildings fall apart from neglect, and store shelves are often barren of essential items. Other parts of Havana, however, resemble a vibrant metropolis.

Nowadays, large crowds can be seen huddled in the streets of Havana attempting to access the 35 or so existing WiFi hotspots, a shocking sight to U.S. students who take for granted cellphone reception and widespread internet.

After the collapse of its ally, the Soviet Union, in 1991, Cuba suffered an extended economic crisis. “Life was very grim,” says alumnus Max Berger (’68), senior founding partner at the law firm of Bernstein Litowitz & Grossman LLP and president of the Baruch College Fund. He traveled to Cuba in 2001 and again this February. “Every citizen received a ration card, which still exists today, that could be exchanged for commodities like rice and matches at local stores,” recalls Berger.

Forced to adapt, the communist state allowed entrepreneurs, known as cuentapropistas, to open small home-based businesses. Since 2010 small business licenses in Cuba have more than tripled.

“The island has changed dramatically over the past 20 years,” confirms Wayne Finke, professor of modern languages and comparative literature, who first visited Cuba in 1996 and has since traveled with students to explore literature and cinema. To illustrate his point, Dr. Finke cites as an example the paladares, small private restaurants. “When they first began, people were allowed to set up a maximum of 12 tables in their home, but were unable to get the food they needed for service. Streets had no garbage pails, because there was nothing to throw out. Today it is hard to find a hotel room.”

ENTERPRISE REPORTING
Since 2015 journalism students have been traveling to Havana to explore its emerging entrepreneurial sector and the surging cultural scene. They interview jazz musicians, young tech entrepreneurs, and historians and visit experimental farms and auto repair shops. Stevie Borrello (’16) says the most exciting part of the experience was the opportunity to report in the field.

“I had an opportunity that many journalists would love to have,” says the Macaulay Honors student, who reported on female entrepreneurs defying a culture of machismo to operate successful companies specializing in vintage car refurbishment and interior design services.

After each trip, the student journalists publish their articles as part of a multimedia project for the award-winning online student magazine Dollars & Sense. Last year Julissa Soriano (’16) reported on an underground service that distributes flash drives of American television shows at local copy centers. This year Jessica Nieberg (’16) and Jared Swedler (’16) explored one of the

READY FOR YOUR CUBAN ADVENTURE?
7 Tips from Professor and Cuba Expert Ted Henken

Uno: Authorized travel. You can only travel legally to Cuba from the U.S. if you fit into one of 12 categories, and “tourist” is still not one of them. Prepare to self-certify that you fit into a proper category. Check havana.usembassy.gov to find out how.

Dos: Expect a warm welcome. Cubans are friendly and gregarious and love to engage with Americans.

Tres: Cash is king. It’s still virtually impossible to use American credit or debit cards in Cuba. So bring plenty of cash, which you exchange for convertible pesos.

Cuatro: Skip the hotels and use a service like Airbnb to reserve a room in a private home. You get a more authentic experience, the family gets hard currency, and you’ll participate in the concept of “empowerment through engagement.”

Cinco: Experience the paladares. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cubans strapped for income have set up paladares, tiny, home-based restaurants. With recent reforms, the paladar phenomenon has grown.

Recommended in Havana: L’Atelier, Doña Eutimia, Starbien, 304 O’Reilly, Decameron.

Seis: Vacationing offline. Internet access in Cuba is among the slowest and most expensive in the Western Hemisphere, even at luxury hotels. Try connecting at one of 35 WiFi hotspots in public plazas and parks.

Siete: Bring home legendary rum and cigars. It’s legal up to $100 worth for both. Rum: Buy at the airport. Cigars: You may find a better deal at the factory.

¡BUEN VIAJE A CUBA!

PROFESSOR TED HENKEN (RIGHT) WITH CUBAN FRIENDS.

Streetscape photo by Max Berger (’68)
Dr. Ted Henken, who holds a joint appointment in the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology and Black and Latino Studies and is co-author of *Entrepreneurial Cuba: The Changing Policy Landscape*, says these constraints cause many highly educated individuals to work as cab drivers, while others have to survive by bending or breaking the law. “Cuba is still easily the most un-free country in the Western Hemisphere,” he says. “While we have seen significant economic readjustments, there have been almost no political changes that will make the revolution more economically viable.”

**STUDENT SCIENTISTS IN THE FIELD**
In addition to the flourishing cultural and evolving business scene, Cuba has a fascinating natural history. This January Associate Professor of Biology and Environmental Science David Gruber organized a trip to study marine and terrestrial ecology in the remote wetlands of the Peninsula de Zapata National Park. For two weeks, his students learned about biodiversity alongside Cuban scientists from the University of Havana, examining coral reefs, observing birds and lizards, and collecting samples of medicinal plants.

Says Dr. Gruber, “Cuba is unique because more than half of the terrestrial species are endemic—only found in Cuba—and the coral reefs remain virtually intact because of the low-intensity fishing and land use.”

For Aleksandra Mikhaylova (’16), this learning trip opened her eyes. “I look at the world a different way now,” she wrote in her class journal. “I want to pay attention to every insect, bird, reptile, and flower that crosses my path.” That awareness of detail, she says, will be helpful when she begins working in finance this summer.

**A NEW FUTURE**
As U.S.-Cuban relations evolve and more opportunities for travel open up, Dr. Hentzi hopes Baruch’s Cuba program will continue to grow. Plans for 2017 include another culture-and-society class and a course on Cuba’s efforts to modernize agriculture and fisheries and their impact on the environment.

“Cuba is an ideal place to study because of its rich culture in race, food, dance, and music, but also because it is significantly different in terms of the politics, economics, and language than what Americans are used to,” says Dr. Henken.

“That contrast is why students come away from the trip with a different understanding of the world,” he adds.

That was certainly the case for Erica Hanger (’13), whose class inspired her to live abroad in Australia and New Zealand and obtain travel agent certification. “I developed a cultural sensitivity working alongside Cuban students and artists,” explains Hanger, who works internationally as a hotel bar manager. “Surrounding myself with locals, I discovered laughter, compassion, kindness, and resilience—characteristics I integrate into my daily life.” She adds, “I am grateful to have been one of the first Baruch students to travel to Cuba. I hope many more students follow.”

—CAROLYN SAYRE

Since 2012 more than 50 Baruch students have made transformational journeys to Cuba. Top: Students enjoy the city of Havana before traveling to the Peninsula de Zapata National Park to learn about marine and terrestrial ecology. Above left: In the field, Aleksandra Mikhaylova (’16) gets up close with a Cuban slider turtle (Trachemys decussate). Right: Journalism students interviewed Cuban entrepreneurs, whose home-based businesses reflect a new era of private enterprise in the socialist country. Among them was Paul Rodriguez (above), a licensed zapatero, or shoemaker. Through a translator, he told the students, “I don’t care about the politics. I just want to provide for my family.”

few synagogues in Cuba, writing about the tiny Jewish population in Havana that has kept its traditions alive despite challenging circumstances.

“Many of the stories came out of spur-of-the-moment activities,” says Journalism Professor Vera Haller, who led a Cuba study trip this January.

**ECONOMIC PATH UNCLEAR**
Despite progress, the government still exerts enormous control over business. In Cuba there is a list of 201 allowable private professions, from palm tree trimmer to computer programmer, yet such professionals as lawyers and architects are not legally allowed to operate independently—though that prohibition is often flouted.
EMPOWER TRIP

EOC Shows Why Mentors Matter

Charles Hwang (MBA ’15) was eager to land a job in forensic accounting, but he had one crucial question: How do I break through? The answer came courtesy of the Executives on Campus (EOC) program, a popular Baruch initiative—now in its 15th year—in which students are mentored by experienced professionals.

Hwang, at the time a first-year MBA student, was matched with mentor Dennis Hickey (‘70), CFO of Colgate-Palmolive. Hickey’s first piece of advice: Get out of your comfort zone. Hickey encouraged Hwang to run for president of the Zicklin Graduate Accounting Society, something Hwang hadn’t previously considered.

Hickey explained how hiring managers often look for extracurricular leadership to distinguish a résumé. Ultimately, Hwang took his mentor’s advice and won the election; today Hwang is a senior associate at Ernst & Young. “My EOC experience provided me with a clearer direction than I’d ever had,” he explains. “And I have Mr. Hickey to thank.”

For alumni mentors like Hickey, the EOC program is the perfect way to reconnect with Baruch and pay it forward. “Mentorship is critical in today’s professional world,” says Hickey, who has mentored on average two Baruch students each year for more than a decade. “With all of my mentees, it comes down to either seizing what you’re good at or getting out of your comfort zone. And with students like Charles, it’s so rewarding, because they take your advice and really put their hearts and souls into it.”

Stories like Hwang’s abound. On average EOC serves more than 2,000 students a year through its long- and short-term mentoring programs; approximately 500 mentors, half of whom are Baruch alumni, participate. Of course, EOC didn’t reach these heights overnight.

The program started informally. A professor and friend of Dick Merians (‘55) asked him if he would be willing to start a small mentoring program on campus. With no previous mentoring experience, Merians signed on and was joined by four alumni also from the class of ’55: Paul Koren, Norman Brust, and the late Joel Zweibel and Allen G. Schwartz.

“We literally went down the halls during club hours; grabbed five students; said, ‘Follow us’; and began mentoring them,” Merians recalls, laughing. “Talk about humble beginnings! But sure enough, those students came back for a second mentoring session, and we had 20 or 30 students by the second year.” Today EOC offers not only a yearlong mentoring program but multiple speed-networking events, special lectures, and panel discussions.

Koren is not surprised by the program’s success. “It’s a thrill to see what it’s become,” he says, “and it didn’t take very long for it to grow. Each of us brought in new mentors, and then they brought in new mentors. It was almost like a crowdsourcing project.”

With stories like Hwang’s, it’s no wonder EOC has become so popular. And Hickey, who still keeps in regular contact with Hwang, notes that the benefits of EOC continue long after the mentoring ends. “We aren’t simply handing students job offers,” Hickey explains. “We’re empowering them to further their goals, which lasts them a lifetime.”

Koren agrees and often remarks that mentors get just as much out of the program as students. “The gratification we get is all the compensation we need,” he says. “Simply put, people want to do good things, and EOC is a place to do it.”

—GREGORY M. LEPORATI

FOR MORE INFORMATION on becoming a mentor, contact ExecutivesOnCampus@baruch.cuny.edu.

Above left: Dick Merians (‘55) and Paul Koren (‘55), two of EOC’s five alumni founders. Middle: Charles Hwang (MBA ’15). Right: Part of EOC’s rapid growth is due to the hard work of dedicated administrative leaders. Shown here, from left: Karolina Novak-Choinska, Kimberly Chu, and Latoya Clarke.
BRILLIANTLY TWISTED: CARTOONIST SAM GROSS ('54)

Famed cartoonist Sam Gross has created some of the most memorable single-panel cartoons in *New Yorker* history—and that’s saying something. Gross’s work has graced cutting-edge publications (*The National Lampoon*, *The Realist*) and been published as collections, including *An Elephant Is Soft and Mushy*, *Cats by Gross*, and *I Am Blind and My Dog Is Dead*.

Persuaded by his father, a CPA, Gross came to then City College Downtown (today’s Baruch) to study accounting and later switched to advertising. So what remains of the artist’s accounting training? “Every one of my drawings is numbered,” he says. That number as of early March 2016: 30,593.

Joking aside, Gross credits his Baruch Cost Accounting class, taught by Professor John Kelly, with knowledge essential to surviving as a commercial artist. Modest about his talent, the once-practicing accountant describes his style as “going to the edge and off the edge ... striking a nerve.”

Gross returned to Baruch last fall as one of the artist-panelists at the Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center event “Brilliantly Twisted: Conversations with *New Yorker* Cartoonists.” —DIANE HARRIGAN

30s | Labor activist and emeritus president of the Joint Board of Fur, Leather and Machine Workers Union, **Henry Foner** ('39) became an inaugural member of the Brooklyn Jewish Historical Initiative (BJHI) Hall of Fame in fall 2015. Also honored were Alan Dershowitz and Fyvush Finkel.

50s | Carolco Pictures, Inc., announced in February that **Leonard Lauren** ('54) joined its board of directors. Lauren is a retired VP of Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation. After retiring from the business world, **Anita (Zlot) Shaw** ('57, MBA '66) (right) became an artist. She recently published the children’s book *Who Am I?*, which encourages exploration beyond the confines of computer screens. **Jay Berman** ('59) (*Lexicon photo left*) became a trustee of the Baruch College Fund. His distinguished career includes more than 30 years in the music industry, highlighted by his tenure as president and CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America.

60s | From his college years, **Frederic S. Goldstein** ('63, MBA ’67) recalls such legends as Dean Emanuel Saxe ('23) and Professors Irving Chaykin ('32), Max Zimering, and John Bauer. Goldstein is now something of a legend...

Hall of Famer

**Lou LaTorre (’75)**

Last fall Lou LaTorre was inducted into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame. The prestigious award, in its 25th year, recognizes industry pioneers, innovators, and stars.

LaTorre, a 40-year industry veteran, has served in executive sales and marketing roles with Turner Entertainment Group, New World Communications, and Fox Cable Networks. Earlier this year, he joined Active International, the largest global independent corporate trade company, as its executive VP global director of agency advocacy.

LaTorre has been recognized with 30 Under 30 and 40 Under 40 awards and has worked with such billionaire legends as Ted Turner, Rupert Murdoch, and Ron Perelman. Even so, sharing the stage with fellow 2015 Hall of Famers Kathie Lee Gifford, Dr. Phil, and Robert Isner, among others, was, he says, “overwhelming, very humbling, and extenuated the magnitude of the event.”

LaTorre began his undergraduate studies majoring in accountancy, but that changed when he met his classmate and soulmate Beth Javorsky ('75), a marketing major. “My wife convinced me I would like a career in marketing more than accounting,” the alumnus reveals. “She was instrumental in my success.”
himself, having taught computer information systems at Baruch since 1969. George Fina (’66) (right), chairman of Michael C. Fina Co., visited Baruch’s STARR Career Development Center last fall. His generosity helps fund the Passport to Partnership, among other center programs. Michael Strauss (MBA ’67) serves as associate dean, professor of management, and “entrepreneur-in-residence” at Yeshiva University. Richard A. Gonzalez (’69), COO of CIG Capital Advisors, was featured in the Detroit Free Press in December.

70s | American Capital Partners, LLC, a full-service investment firm, hired Jeffrey M. Zwirn (’72) as managing director of its Institutional Fixed Income Division. For the past 27 years, Menachem Y. Lubinsky (’74, MBA ’81), CEO of LUBICOM Marketing Consulting, has created and developed Kosherfest, the world’s largest and most successful kosher food trade show. Joseph M. Grimaldi (’75) is president of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra’s board of directors. Isaac Blech (’76) was appointed vice chairman of the board at InspireMD, Inc. International oil and gas exploration and production company Eos Petro, Inc., appointed Alan D. Gaines (’76) its CEO. Gerard Mortensen (’76) (left) retired from the U.S. Postal Service in January after 19 years. Arthur Gurwitz (MBA ’77), COO at the law firm Proskauer, has founded a nonprofit organization called The Art of Men, which connects volunteers to nonprofits. Gail (Newberg) Kaufman (’77) is an implementation project manager with Crown World Mobility. Ricardo Fernandez (’78) was appointed city manager of Tallahassee, Fla. The Cuban-born CPA has been a leader at Tallahassee’s City Hall for 27 years. Bruce J. Haber (MBA ’78) was elected chairman of the Mercy College Board of Trustees. Richard Scheckman (MBA ’78) (right) is the chairman of the board of the F.I.L.M. Archives, a web-based stock footage source specializing in archival film and news footage.

80s | In March John N. Kastanis (MBA ’80) became the CEO of University Hospital in Newark. Leo Ehrlich (’81) is co-founder of Cellceutix Corp. and has served as its CEO since 2010. Robin Koval (MBA ’83) (right), the CEO and president of the Truth Initiative, has co-authored Grit to Great: How Perseverance, Passion, and Pluck Take You from Ordinary to Extraordinary (Crown Business, 2015). Aflac’s global chief investment officer Eric Kirsch (’84) was named to the Power 100 List of CIOs by Chief Investment Officer Magazine. In November Rick M. Versace (’84) was named Limousine Operator of the Year at the industry’s national convention in Las Vegas. Jonathan H. Ross (MPA ’85) was appointed superintendent of the Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District in January. In December June Wilson (’86) published Parenting Back in Your Hands (AuthorHouse, 2015), a guide for parents to enhance their bond with their children. Cheryl L. Green (’87) was appointed deputy commissioner for the Department of Information Technology for the City of Yonkers, becoming the first African American to hold the position. Virginia Mampouya (’87), founder of
A BIRD IN THE HAND
THE CAREER OF ABRA MORAWIEC (’09) IS STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS

In fall 2015, this energetic Weissman School of Arts and Sciences alumna became New York’s first—and the nation’s second—organic quail farmer, founding Feisty Acres Farms in North Fork, Long Island, and gaining national acclaim.

Morawiec grew up in a family that often kept a modest stock of chickens and ducks, but “as a profession, farming certainly wasn’t on my radar,” she maintains. After graduating from Baruch, Morawiec served in the Peace Corps, a lifelong dream that landed her in Mali, where “it was difficult not to be involved in agriculture,” she says. “Over there, if you don’t farm, you don’t eat.”

Morawiec’s experience in Mali would profoundly shape her future. “I was afforded the opportunity to see firsthand how directly connected we are to the land and the whims of nature,” she explains. “It was very humbling.”

Returning home to Brooklyn, Morawiec worked briefly for AmeriCorps, managing an urban farm and pantry in Bedford-Stuyvesant. She landed apprenticeships at two Long Island organic farms, which inspired her to rent land and create Feisty Acres Farms.

Cornering the market on a unique fowl—organic game birds, known as “coturnix”—proved a savvy business move. “To survive out here as a farmer, you have to set yourself apart,” she says, “and allow the quality and integrity of your product to speak for itself.” Feisty Acres, conveniently located between New York City and the Hamptons, sells eggs and poultry to both restaurants and individual customers.

An English major and French minor, Morawiec remains in touch with a handful of former professors. “They were always so supportive of my desire to serve,” Morawiec says. “Baruch is still cheering me on.” –GREGORY M. LEPORATI

A fistful of quail: Morawiec on site at Feisty Acres Farms, where she raises organic game birds.
Oscar N. Onyema (MBA ’98) has begun his second term as CEO of the National Council of the Nigeria Stock Exchange.

William P. Walsh (MBA ’98) joined SUNY Downstate Medical Center as senior VP, hospital affairs, and managing director of University Hospital of Brooklyn. NY1 reporter Ruschell Boone (’99) (left) moderated a panel hosted in March by Zicklin Women in Business entitled “Nice Is the New Black: Evolving from the ‘What Can I Get’ to the ‘What I Can Give’ Mindset.”

Michelle L. Goldstein (MPA ’00) is managing director, government affairs, at BNY Mellon. In December 2015, Real Estate Weekly profiled Joseph Berko (’02), president of commercial real estate firm Berko and Associates. Angelina Delgado (’02, MPA ’04, MSEd ’07) (right) is senior director of operations and finance at Baruch’s School of Public Affairs.

Peter B. Erdel (’02) graced the cover of Money magazine in January. In addition to modeling, the Mexico native has worked in sales for Staples for 14 years. John H. Hui (’02) is a board member of Twiage, a company that helps emergency departments triage incoming ambulances. It won Cleveland Clinic’s 2015 New Ventures Healthcare Challenge. New Mountain Finance Corporation appointed Shiraz Y. Kajee (’02, MS ’03) CFO and treasurer. Theresa A. Campbell (’03) authored her third novel, His Final Deal (2016), the story of a Jamaican drug lord, a costly underworld rivalry, and his resulting spiritual crisis. In December the New York Times ran the article “The Tax Sleuth Who Took Down a Drug Lord” about IRS special tax agent Gary L. Alford (’04), whose work helped identify and convict the mastermind of the Silk Road online drug bazaar.

Change Agent Nneka Norville (MPA ’06)

Nneka Norville has sound advice for aspiring professionals: “Be a lifelong learner.” That outlook inspired Norville’s transition from entertainment law to her true passion: social impact marketing. She currently serves as director of corporate social responsibility at Black Entertainment Television (BET), a job that merges her “diverse interests in social change, business, brand management, and marketing strategy.”

Norville discovered corporate social responsibility while working in marketing communications. The growing field so piqued her interest that she enrolled in the National Urban Fellows Program, which enabled her to work at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation while pursuing a Master of Public Administration degree from Baruch’s School of Public Affairs.

Those experiences—both in and out of the classroom—prepared Norville for what has been an impactful career. After graduating from Baruch, she worked for the Kaiser Family Foundation, partnering with media companies to create campaigns addressing public health issues across the globe.

She has spent the last seven years at BET, creating some of the network’s most transformative social campaigns. Additionally, she spearheads BET’s collaborative efforts with My Brother’s Keeper Alliance, President Obama’s campaign to improve life outcomes of boys and men of color.

Norville’s peers have taken notice: Her honors include an Emmy Award in 2008 for a campaign addressing HIV/AIDS; “40 Under Forty” recognition from The Network Journal, a business magazine for black professionals; and distinction as a Rising Leader from Women in Cable Television.

“It feels great to be recognized,” Norville says. “But the most rewarding part of my career has been the ability to affect real issues that impact real people. That’s what has made my journey so worthwhile.”

—GREGORY M. LEPORATI
IN BALANCE: Sibling Yogapreneurs

Tapasya Bali (MS ‘02) and her brother Rishi (’98) grew up with modest means in Dehradun, India, a region known as the “Yoga Capital of the World.” So it’s no surprise that these ambitious and entrepreneurial siblings would one day “manage a company from the ethos of yoga.”

That’s how Tapasya describes YOGASMOGA, a made-in-the-USA, ecofriendly designer, manufacturer, and retailer of women’s and men’s yoga-inspired apparel and accessories. YOGASMOGA launched on Valentine’s Day 2013. Tapasya is COO; Rishi, CEO. As for the whimsical name, Tapasya explains: “In Hindi it’s traditional to rhyme words. So our name is a jubilant nod of respect to our culture.”

The brother and sister came to New York City to pursue higher education. Careers on Wall Street followed, including 11 years at Credit Suisse for Tapasya and nine at Goldman Sachs for Rishi. For both, developing and launching YOGASMOGA represents going back to their roots, coming together as a team, and capitalizing on their business educations.

Of working with her brother, Tapasya says, “Rishi and I come from the same threads. We agree 99.9 percent of the time.” Their talents are complementary: He’s the big-idea person; she’s the execution person.

The Balis’ business model is bearing fruit: The company is valued at $74 million and, in addition to online sales, showcases its products in 12 (soon 14) stores in five states. The brand is buzzing, garnering coverage in the Los Angeles Times, Women’s Wear Daily, the Huffington Post, and Bloomberg Business, among others.

What’s their secret? “Entrepreneurship is very difficult. You have to put in a lot of hours,” Tapasya states simply. A typical workday for this passionate entrepreneur is often “the entire day—up to 20 hours,” she says, adding with a laugh, “and when I’m not awake, I’m probably thinking about YOGASMOGA subconsciously.” —DIANE HARRIGAN

Nair (’06) was elected partner at Klasko Immigration Law Partners, LLP. Steven A. Figueiredo (MPA ’07), senior VP at Capalino+Company, was named to City & State’s “40 Under 40 City of New York Rising Stars” list. In October Stony Brook University conferred its Distinguished Alumni Award on New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (MBA ’07) (left).

Melissa (Julian) Palermo (’07) opened the Island Sensory Shoppe in Staten Island, selling toys and apparel for special-needs children. Lia Eustachewich (’09) is a reporter at the New York Post; she previously worked at the New York Daily News. Baruch’s men’s volleyball coach Danial Levent (’09) was quoted in Volleyball Magazine’s December 2015 feature on college programs.

10s Rosalba Messina (’10, EMPA ’13) is principal and founder of Messina Consulting Group, LLC, a management consulting firm that assists national and international nonprofits. The Chronicle of Philanthropy named Cristina Jimenez (MPA ’11) (right) to its first-ever “40 Under 40” list of extraordinary, young nonprofit leaders.

Samantha Slater (MPA ’11) is executive director of the House Democratic Policy and Communications Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. Kimberly Brutus (’12) joined Warren Lewis Sotheby’s as a licensed real estate salesperson based in Brooklyn.

Chelsea Chateauvert (’12) (left) is development coordinator at the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering. Jacomo Hakim (’12) and his father founded BookATailor.com, a custom clothing business. Principal Global Investors named Ming Tsu Monica Tang
GLORY DAYS REVISITED

For Bearcats past and present, the year started off with a win-win-win. In January the Office of Alumni Relations hosted Baruch’s first-ever Athletics Alumni Reception, offering former scholar-athletes from all of the College’s teams a chance to reconnect while cheering on three of Baruch’s current squads: men’s basketball, women’s basketball, and women’s swimming.

All three teams proved victorious, and Bearcats from the 1970s through 2015 enjoyed reminiscing as they caught the action. Another highlight of the event (pictured here): Men’s Basketball Head Coach John Alesi (’03) presented forward Raymond De La Cruz (’16) with a 1,000th-point basketball. De La Cruz is one of only 21 Bearcats to reach this milestone.

The following week, the men’s basketball team hosted its annual alumni event, with 14 former Bearcats lacing up to prove they still had game.

—GREGORY M. LEPORATI

Ron Zacchi (MPA ’13) (right) accepted a fellowship with the Empire State Fellows Program and currently works for the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Former Baruch swimming star and team captain Alyssa Lubrino (’13, MS ’15) (left) is working for Morgan Stanley in the internal audit department. The New York State Bar Association acknowledged Eugene Frenkel (’14) andArthur Shalagin (’13) with leadership awards at its annual bar leaders breakfast in January. Frenkel is currently an

Unexpected Steps: From Dance to Finance

Sitting in the audience watching the curtain rise is one of Sonja Kostich’s favorite childhood memories. “Anything was possible at that moment,” says Kostich (’15) of those formative trips to the symphony, ballet, and theater with her arts-loving parents.

Today the South Korean–born and Minneapolis-raised Kostich, who started studying dance at age 3, looks back on an impressive, varied 25-year professional career that includes dancing with the American Ballet Theater (ABT), San Francisco Ballet, and Zurich Ballet; performing a range of styles; and co-founding and co-directing her own modern dance company, OtherShore. And she looks ahead in a different direction, from the vantage point of a new career as an analyst in the Controller’s Department of the Finance Division of Goldman Sachs.

Kostich moved to New York City at 15 to study at the School of American Ballet (affiliated with the New York City Ballet). Within a year, she auditioned for her idol, Mikhail Baryshnikov, scouting for his new ballet school. Kostich was one of only seven girls chosen and the following year was offered a contract with the ABT. She was 17 and a high school senior.

Of dancing, she says, “It isn’t all glamour; it’s a job. It boils down to being diligent, working all day and all night doing the same thing over and over—perfecting it.”

Those qualities were to come in handy for her professional second act, sparked when Kostich and a fellow veteran dancer founded their dance company. Kostich soon recognized how valuable business training would be, and she realized she wanted a solid curriculum—in short, the college education she never had.

The nontraditional accounting undergrad more than embraced the challenge, graduating summa cum laude and class salutatorian. “The world of business was a complete unknown to me when I was a dancer,” says Kostich. “At Baruch I discovered how fascinating finance, business, and accounting were. My education opened up a new world.” —DIANE HARRIGAN
class notes

extern at the New York County District Attorney’s Office, and Shalagin is a legal intern at Criscione, Ravala & Tabachouk, LLP. Madeleine Villanueva (MPA ’14) (right) works as a family childcare business specialist at the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. Ellen Jin (’15) is a credit risk analyst at Morgan Stanley. Kareem S. Mumford (MA ’15) (left) recently accepted the position of marketing manager at Baruch’s Office of Communications, Marketing & Public Affairs.

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in memoriam

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Sylvester J. Bernstein ’37
Harry S. Reiter ’39
*Sydney H. Fields ’40
Morton Goldstein ’41
Herbert R. Maurer ’41
Mollie (Greenberg) Melamed ’43
Sherwin Fink ’45
Howard W. Friedman ’45
*Herbert J. Gladstone ’45
Leon Hariton ’46
Bernard N. Blashka ’48
Arnold Gitlin ’48
Herbert Kane ’49
Morton L. Manus ’49
Jacob A. Feinberg ’50
*John Klein ’50
Gloria P. Kleinman ’50
Norman M. Piltzin ’50, MBA ’58
Stephen H. Berger ’51
James S. Ketchel ’52
Harvey Margolin ’52
Gaelton R. Muoio ’52
Bernard Pittinsky ’52
Gloria R. Riklan ’52
Irving B. Spilman ’52
Edward Gadinsky ’53
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Morton L. Siegel ’53
*Gene Shapiro ’54
Lawrence H. Englander ’55
Herman R. Ford ’56, MBA ’60
Gerd Weindling ’56
Michael Sackler ’58
Marvin Klotz ’59
Lawrence Newman ’59
Warren Schumacher ’60, MBA ’66
Edward Toker ’61
Gunars Cace ’62, MBA ’68
Allen Faver ’62
Martin E. Tash ’62
Harry B. Verstandig ’62
Robert M. Pitter ’63
Raymond J. Dalo ’64
Robert L. McKenna ’64
Philip J. Albaum ’65
Claudia G. (Berkowitz) Goodman ’65
Patricia Goldstein ’66
Andrew J. Julien ’66
Sidney Yallowitz ’69
Ralph A. Yarosh ’69, ’73
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Gerald Hillman ’73
George M. Roach MBA ’73
Marvin S. Rosen ’73
Jack L. Home ’75
Vittorio F. Folino ’76
Stephen L. Nuccio MBA ’77
Mickey Wohl ’78
Carlos Mateu ’83
William G. Cronin EMBA ’85
Shirley A. Defeitas MPA ’86
Tatiana Patsimas ’88
Linda S. Stackhouse MBA ’91
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