

BARD COLLEGE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTIETH

COMMENCEMENT



The Bard College Awards Ceremony

Saturday
the twenty-second of August
two thousand twenty
11:00 a.m.

*Commencement Tent, Seth Goldfine Memorial Rugby Field
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York*

PROGRAM

Welcome

Jane Andromache Brien '89
Director, Alumni/ae Affairs, Bard College

KC Serota '04

President, Board of Governors, Bard College Alumni/ae Association

Remarks

James C. Chambers '81
Chair, Board of Trustees, Bard College

Recognition of Reunion Classes

1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015

Remarks

Leon Botstein
President, Bard College

The Bard Medal

Barbara S. Grossman '73

Elizabeth Ely '65
Trustee Sponsor

Robert Kelly
Faculty Sponsor

The John and Samuel Bard Award in Medicine and Science

Juliet Morrison '03

Roger N. Scotland '93
Trustee Sponsor

Felicia Keesing
Faculty Sponsor

The Charles Flint Kellogg Award in Arts and Letters

Xaviera Simmons '05

Mostafiz ShahMohammed '97
Trustee Sponsor

An-My Lê
Faculty Sponsor

The John Dewey Award for Distinguished Public Service

Nicholas Ascienzo

Fiona Angelini
Trustee Sponsor

Jonathan Becker
Faculty Sponsor

Matthew Taibbi '92

Andrew S. Gundlach
Trustee Sponsor

Wyatt Mason
Faculty Sponsor

The Mary McCarthy Award

Carolyn Forché

Emily H. Fisher
Trustee Sponsor

Dinaw Mengestu
Faculty Sponsor

The Bardian Award

Peggy Ahwesh

James von Klemperer
Trustee Sponsor

Jacqueline Goss
Faculty Sponsor

Matthew Deady

David E. Schwab II '52
Trustee Sponsor

Ethan D. Bloch
Faculty Sponsor

Bonnie R. Marcus '71

Stanley A. Reichel '65
Trustee Sponsor

Janet Stetson '81
Director of Graduate Admission

Richard Teitelbaum

Charles S. Johnson III '70
Trustee Sponsor

Joan Tower
Faculty Sponsor

Closing

KC Serota '04

THE BARD MEDAL

Barbara S. Grossman '73

Barbara Grossman, with her keen mind and quick wit, left a lasting impression on her teachers and fellow students during her undergraduate years at Bard. The awards she received remain testaments to her exceptional achievements: the John Bard Scholarship, Wilton Moore Lockwood Prize for creative writing, and William J. Lockwood Prize for contributions to the general welfare of the College.

After Bard, Grossman decided to focus on writing and attended the celebrated Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, where she met her future husband, Michael Gross. Two years later, master of fine arts in hand, she found a job as an editorial assistant at Alfred A. Knopf in New York. She moved up through the ranks in a difficult profession, that of being an editor and a publisher. Although often maligned by authors and readers, both roles have been vital to the development of literature and the dissemination of knowledge in our society. From Knopf she moved on to Harper and Row, Simon and Schuster, Crown, then Charles Scribner's Sons. At the summit of her profession, she was named publisher at Viking Penguin—a company, she said, with “an incredibly rich, wide, deep list” and an “enormous inventory.”

Her directness and sincerity must have been bracing to the authors she welcomed—ranging from Jacquelyn Mitchard, whose best-selling novel *The Deep End of the Ocean* was the first-ever pick for the Oprah Winfrey book club, to Alan Wolfe, who penned *One Nation, After All*, an insightful study into how Americans define “middle class” and their place in it. By the time she retired, Grossman had become a member of a small but pioneering group of women in high-ranking positions in publishing.

In her recollection in the May 2015 *Bard Free Press*, “Was Bard Cooler in the '70s?,” Grossman describes how activism accompanied being a student: “We marched nearly every spring in DC and Poughkeepsie and Kingston against the war. . . . We harbored draft dodgers and enrolled Vietnam vets who extinguished any doubts we had about the real costs of that war.” But in addition to being “mostly hippies, . . . we read like demons” and “spent inordinate amounts of time

with our teachers, demanding attention that was almost always freely and graciously given.” Then, as now, Bard valued its “core asset: teachers.” The “one big difference” between Bard past and present, she says, “is our public reputation as an important college with outsized ambition, a world-class faculty, and extraordinary creative, entrepreneurial energy.”

Since her retirement, Grossman has devoted herself to what she modestly refers to as volunteer work, which has included chairing the board of the independent Berkeley Carroll School. She is an active member of her synagogue, Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn, serving on the board and leading a capital campaign. And she has long been a trustee of the College. Her clarity and keen judgment are assets that have been of immeasurable value to Bard, and we are honored by the faith she has shown in her alma mater. We trust that her three children—Max, Gilda ’16, and Willa Gross ’08—will carry her commitment and wisdom into the future.

Elizabeth Ely ’65
Trustee Sponsor

Robert Kelly
Faculty Sponsor

The Bard Medal honors individuals whose efforts on behalf of Bard and whose achievements have significantly advanced the welfare of the College. The Bard Medal was the inspiration of Charles Flint Kellogg, who believed that Bard should establish an award recognizing outstanding service to the College.

THE JOHN AND SAMUEL BARD AWARD IN MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

Juliet Morrison '03

No one who knew Juliet Morrison when she was a student at Bard is surprised that she became a successful and innovative scientist. Morrison came to Bard from Campion College, a Jesuit preparatory school in Kingston, Jamaica. At Campion, Morrison—whose mother worked seven days a week to support the family—met students from very different backgrounds. She learned from them about opportunities she'd never considered, like the possibility of attending college in another country. When Morrison heard about Bard's Distinguished Scientist Scholarship, she saw a path to studying in the United States.

At Bard, biology Professor John Ferguson was reviewing the scholarship applications. Morrison's contained a photo of her with Sean Connery. The two looked like the best of friends. The rest of the application was outstanding, and Ferguson enthusiastically recommended her for the scholarship. Months later, when Morrison arrived at Bard, Ferguson asked her how she'd met the star. Morrison let out a hearty laugh and told him that Connery had been a cardboard cutout, revealing what Ferguson recalls as "her rollicking sense of humor" from the start of her years at Bard. Morrison's Bard education is also remembered by her First-Year Seminar professor, Peter Gadsby, who recollects animated discussions of *Tristram Shandy* among Morrison and her classmates.

Morrison began doing biology research right away, and for her Senior Project, she conducted an ambitious experiment to clone a gene so that it could be expressed in *E. coli* bacteria. Morrison did more than science, though. She was an emergency medical technician, and was active in the International Student Organization (ISO). In her senior year, she served as master of ceremonies for the annual ISO production. Given how she introduced herself to Bard, perhaps it's not surprising that Morrison donned a pink wig and entertained four hundred people as readily as she excelled in the lab.

After graduating from Bard, Morrison immediately entered a PhD program in microbiology at Columbia University, where she began studying viruses. She discovered an enzyme that helps poliovirus and rhinovirus resist the host's immune responses, which could lead to potential drug development. She built on that foundation for her postdoctoral research at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, where she located two new mechanisms by which the dengue and yellow fever viruses evade the host's immune responses to enhance their own replication. Morrison continued her work at the University of Washington, where she used computational approaches to explore host reactions to infection with the influenza and dengue viruses.

Morrison returned to Columbia in 2016 as an associate research scientist at the Mailman School of Public Health, where she investigated the behavior of emerging and reemerging viral pathogens using computational, virological, and immunological methods. In 2018, she moved to the University of California, Riverside, as an assistant professor, where she is studying ways to target viral infections. It's hard to conceive of a more appropriate year in which to offer Juliet Morrison an award, nor an audience more appreciative of her work.

Roger N. Scotland '93
Trustee Sponsor

Felicia Keesing
Faculty Sponsor

The John and Samuel Bard Award in Medicine and Science is named after two 18th-century physicians, father and son, whose descendant, John Bard, was the founder of Bard College. This award honors scientists whose achievements demonstrate the breadth of concern and depth of commitment that characterized these pioneer physicians.

THE CHARLES FLINT KELLOGG AWARD IN ARTS AND LETTERS

Xaviera Simmons '05

Even before I became her Senior Project adviser, I thought Xaviera Simmons was more worldly and mature than most Bard College students: she had taken time off and returned to Bard with focus and a determination to learn as much as possible. She held several jobs to support herself while carrying a full course load. She was an engaged photographer who understood the medium's possibilities and limitations. She also deejayed, loved film and performance, and was politically and socially engaged. So I was not surprised that she became a multidisciplinary artist.

Xaviera received her BA after spending two years on a pilgrimage retracing the transatlantic slave trade with Buddhist monks. She completed the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program in studio art while simultaneously enrolled in a two-year actor training at the Maggie Flanigan Studio. Her sweeping body of work centers on photography and includes performance, choreography, video, sound, and sculpture. Her interdisciplinary practice is rooted in shifting definitions of landscape, character development, art, political and social histories, and the interconnected formal elements of the mediums in which she works.

I was very proud when I saw her powerful installation *Superunknown (Alive In The)* in the 2010 MoMA PS1 Greater New York show. It is a wall-sized grid of photographs, appropriated from news sources, of boatloads of migrants in the open ocean. The work engages with the devastating content of the images but also reveals their function as an archive. I was again thrilled when, in 2016, I stumbled upon her impressive *Gold Miner's Mission to Dwell on the Tide Line*, a text-based sculptural work commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art for its Modern Window exhibition. Our own formidable Luc Sante, visiting professor of writing and photography, calls Xaviera "a benevolent magician, dazzling but tender, gnomic but inviting." He also notes that "she is as much in love with words and music as she is with sights, so much so that she regularly arranges for those three forms to switch hats."

Xaviera is currently a visiting lecturer in the Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies at Harvard University. With a grant from the Art for Justice Fund, she is collaborating with Fair and Just Prosecution to invite lawyers to create audio, video, and narrative works focusing on efforts by reform-minded leaders to change our justice system.

She is deeply caring of others, a characteristic that perhaps is what led to her political involvement. She is completing a commission for the Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens, New York, consisting of sculptural forms holding landscapes of language fragments culled from historical documents that continue to perpetuate social inequalities. Asked about the role of activism in her work, Xaviera has said she considers herself an engaged citizen who hopes her art can inspire changes. As Sante puts it, “She is a historian who knows that things are as much and as little now as they have ever been, and that the proper approach to the past begins within the present moment.”

Mostafiz ShahMohammed '97
Trustee Sponsor

An-My Lê
Faculty Sponsor

The Charles Flint Kellogg Award in Arts and Letters is given in recognition of significant contributions to the American artistic or literary heritage. It is named in honor of Charles Flint Kellogg (1909–80), a Bard College alumnus and trustee, who was an internationally respected historian and educator. Dr. Kellogg was instrumental in establishing the Arts and Letters Award, which, before his death, was given in the name of Alfred Jay Nock, the noted journalist and biographer, who was also a Bard alumnus and faculty member.

THE JOHN DEWEY AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE

Nicholas Ascienzo

Nick Ascienzo has dedicated his life to serving the Red Hook, New York, schools; the Hudson Valley; and people across the United States. He is the definitive example of community minded and engaged.

Ascienzo grew up in nearby Kingston and began teaching in the Red Hook Central School District after graduating from the State University of New York at Albany, where he majored in mathematics and was named a SUNY Albany Hall of Fame athlete in baseball. For the next forty-two years, he taught mathematics—seven years at the Linden Avenue Middle School, then more than three decades at Red Hook High School, where he ran the AP Calculus and IB Mathematics programs, and coached baseball and softball teams. He also worked at Dairy Queen, co-owning several franchises from 1979 to 2000.

At the high school, Ascienzo, or “Mr. A” as he is widely known to students, became one of the most admired members of the faculty, and also was a leader of the Red Hook Faculty Association.

Ascienzo further solidified his commitment to the community when he created the Ascienzo Family Foundation (AFF). Approaching retirement, he began pondering how to use the assets from his Dairy Queen franchises, and realized that his biggest assets were his students. He asked a handful of Red Hook High School students to help him create a foundation with a shared purpose and vision. These students became the AFF Board of Directors. The foundation was incorporated in 2015, the year before Ascienzo retired.

The Ascienzo Family Foundation focuses on poverty alleviation, educational opportunities for the underserved, and services for senior citizens. The programs it supports have ranged from the Red Hook Harvest Backpack Program, addressing food insecurity, to CultureConnect, providing after-school activities for English-language learners attending Red Hook schools. In response to COVID-19, the foundation played a central role in the development of Red Hook

Responds, a community volunteer initiative that offers meals, assistance to senior citizens, and resources for local families during the pandemic.

The foundation has also supported programs in which Bard students are active, including MLK Day of Engagement activities and the annual Middle- and High School Debate Tournament at Bard. AFF was an early sponsor of Brothers at Bard, which runs a mentorship program for young men of color at Kingston High School, Ascienzo's alma mater.

Ever the educator, Ascienzo has incorporated more than forty of his former high school students into the foundation as AFF Ambassadors, who play a central role in decision-making. "We learn as much from our students as they learn from us," says Ascienzo. Through Ambassador Grants, AFF has expanded its reach, assisting such endeavors as the Sunflower Bakery in Maryland, which provides employment opportunities to adults with learning differences, and Crossroads Family Center, a homeless shelter in East Boston.

Teacher, coach, volunteer, and AFF founder, Ascienzo is a model for young people on how a committed citizen can make a difference. As one colleague stated, he "will go out of his way to see a need and fulfill it."

Fiona Angelini
Trustee Sponsor

Jonathan Becker
Faculty Sponsor

The John Dewey Award for Distinguished Public Service was established in 1990 to recognize extraordinary contributions by Bard alumni/ae and others to the public sector or in the public interest. It continues Bard's tradition of honoring public service embodied in the Episcopal Layman Award, which was given until 1983. The Dewey Award honors the eminent American philosopher and educator John Dewey, the father of progressive education and an outspoken advocate of a system of universal learning to support and advance this country's democratic traditions.

THE JOHN DEWEY AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE

Matthew Taibbi '92

“Literature was born,” Vladimir Nabokov tells us in one of his lectures, “not the day when a boy crying ‘wolf, wolf’ came running out of the Neanderthal valley with a big gray wolf at his heels: literature was born on the day when a boy came crying ‘wolf, wolf’ and there was no wolf behind him.” Adapting Nabokov, we might say that journalism was born when a child cried “wolf, wolf” and the hungry creature was very much there.

Modern journalism arose in seventeenth-century England. Although the printing press had licensed new intellectual freedoms two hundred years earlier, the power it gave individuals to express themselves had come to rankle the powerful. Parliament, hoping to stymie journalistic criticism, passed the Ordinance for the Regulating of Printing in 1643, requiring printed materials to obtain a government stamp: without it, press owners could be jailed. This criminalization licensed a more virulent freedom. “Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties,” wrote John Milton in “Areopagitica,” a 1644 essay that crystallizes our idea of free speech. When the English Bill of Rights of 1689 finally liberated printers from the threat of incarceration, liberal journals proliferated. Daniel Defoe’s *Review* (1704); Sir Richard Steele’s *Tatler* (1709); Steele and Joseph Addison’s *Spectator* (1711): though each had its editorial character, all introduced a new format—the magazine. Magazines bred communities that shared frames of intellectual and experiential reference, a post-Enlightenment blossoming of the general interest. Public spaces opened where single voices could speak freely—to delight, inform, and protest.

Matt Taibbi, who has been a mainstay at *Rolling Stone* for two decades, takes Miltonic imperatives as journalistic first principles. The son of a reporter father, Taibbi credits reading Noam Chomsky’s *Manufacturing Consent* at Bard as transformative; its revelation, he told a Bard audience last fall, of “the hidden kinds of censorship that go on in the American news media.” Taibbi’s own work

has been immune to self-censorship, his reporting imbued with a willingness to seek answers. “Journalism,” Taibbi has said, “isn’t brain surgery. It’s just asking the simple questions that pop to mind when you’re in a situation: Where did this happen? How do we know that? How do we know that’s true? There’s a whole generation of people in the press now who simply don’t go through the process.”

Taibbi’s work is fierce. His books—most recently *Hate Inc.: Why Today’s Media Makes Us Despise One Another*—are driven by that most uncommon public virtue: common sense. In another age, the radical pleasure his writing takes in poking and deflating the powerful would have seen him jailed. When journalist Jamal Khashoggi is murdered, allegedly by agents of the Saudi Arabian government, or the president of the United States calls journalists “enemies of the people,” Taibbi’s work dares to be dangerous. May his example call a new generation of truth tellers to the public service of journalistic practice, warning us of the wolves in our midst.

Andrew S. Gundlach
Trustee Sponsor

Wyatt Mason
Faculty Sponsor

The John Dewey Award for Distinguished Public Service was established in 1990 to recognize extraordinary contributions by Bard alumni/ae and others to the public sector or in the public interest. It continues Bard’s tradition of honoring public service embodied in the Episcopal Layman Award, which was given until 1983. The Dewey Award honors the eminent American philosopher and educator John Dewey, the father of progressive education and an outspoken advocate of a system of universal learning to support and advance this country’s democratic traditions.

THE MARY McCARTHY AWARD

Carolyn Forché

When Carolyn Forché published her first collection of poems, *Gathering the Tribes*, it was evident to the growing chorus of admirers who greeted that book that this collection (winner of the Yale Series of Younger Poets competition) was the work of a youthful poet determined to do more than gaze admiringly into the world. For Forché, who coined the term “poetry of witness,” the transformation of sight into language, of seeing into words that could be carved into poems, was always more than a literary act spurred by a search for beauty. In Forché’s hands, seeing is a moral and dangerous act, one that requires a close and considered gaze of the world alongside a type of moral imagination that can peer both into and beyond what stands before us.

In hindsight, it seems almost inevitable that Forché—who at the age of twenty-seven set off for Central America to document the political violence occurring in El Salvador—would go on to become one of the country’s greatest advocates for a poetic tradition of fierce engagement that has been present, in one form or another, for as long as poetry has been written. That engagement is one of the animating forces behind Forché’s second book, *The Country Between Us*, and its iconic poem, “The Colonel.” Written in 1978 against a rising tide of state-sponsored violence, “The Colonel” transforms the reader and narrator into witnesses of a violence that resides adjacent to the ordinary, one that we can not only see but hear through the author’s words.

The opening line of that poem became the title of Forché’s memoir, *What You Have Heard Is True*, which in 2019 was a finalist for the National Book Award. The judges, in their citation, noted that the book is “a brilliant hybrid of poetry as reportage-as-memoir,” an apt description that hints at the lifetime of engagement with language, politics, and literature that have shaped Forché’s work. In her most recent collection, *In the Lateness of the World*—her first book of poetry in seventeen years—Forché both returns to and expands her range of concerns, noting loss where there is loss, while also stitching together a seemingly fractured world buoyed by hope.

As a poet, activist, translator, and professor, Forché has long been recognized as one of the most important voices in contemporary literature, whose numerous honors include the Windham Campbell Prize, Lannan Literary Award for Poetry, and Academy of American Poets Fellowship for distinguished poetic achievement. That brief summation of awards, however, offers only a suggestion of the profound impact Forché has had on our cultural and political imagination. Over numerous collections of poems, anthologies, memoir, and translations, Carolyn Forché’s work has shown us what it means to imagine ourselves as more than just observers. Forché asks us, line by line, sentence by sentence, to see the troubled and difficult world before us. In doing so, we stand alongside her as readers and citizens, as witnesses asked to make society better.

Emily H. Fisher
Trustee Sponsor

Dinaw Mengestu
Faculty Sponsor

The Mary McCarthy Award is given in recognition of engagement in the public sphere by an intellectual, artist, or writer. Mary McCarthy taught at Bard twice, from 1946 to 1947 and again in the 1980s, at the end of her life. The Mary McCarthy Award honors the combination of political and cultural commitment exemplified by this fearless, eloquent writer and teacher.

THE BARDIAN AWARD

Peggy Ahwesh

“Peggy Ahwesh is one of the few artists who makes me really excited about making things, every time I hear her talk or see her work. That’s a precious thing.”

This observation, by renowned author Maggie Nelson, recounts the electric spark of an encounter with the art and teaching of Peggy Ahwesh, professor of film and electronic arts. It also suggests the imbrication of these two parts of Peggy’s creative life.

Over the course of nearly four decades, Peggy has crafted an impossibly diverse range of works—from scruffy feminist punk Super 8mm films and a badder-than-Bataille adaptation of *The Dead Man* in the 1980s, to creative rewirings of the digital age’s primary texts, to elegant multichannel installations exploring the material idiosyncrasies and porousness of today’s international borders. Made with a more varied set of tools than almost any artist working today, Peggy’s films and artworks have been shown at prestigious venues, including the Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London, and Centre Pompidou in Paris. She has received awards and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, Creative Capital, and Herb Alpert Foundation, among many others.

Possessed of a voracious intelligence, Peggy makes things that reveal abiding interests in literature, cultural theory, feminism, and all genres of filmmaking and music. This, and a spirit of working-class rebellion (which also fueled fellow Pittsburgher Andy Warhol), helped turn Peggy into a lover and hijacker of all genres of cinema. Horror, home movies, stag films, and animation all have places in her world—as do Pee-wee Herman, Lara Croft, Wilhelm Reich, Jacques Lacan, the Unabomber, Hélène Cixous—the list goes on. In Peggy’s work, ideas are dropped into new material, where they melt and recombine into smart and startling alloys.

For thirty years, Peggy has incorporated this unique combination of intelligence and endless curiosity about new genres into her teaching in both the BA and MFA programs at Bard. Her final class at Bard was a course on vampires. A charismatic educator, Peggy could intimidate at first. But the students who gravitated to her found a devoted teacher and an inspiring mentor. One former student writes, “She always motivated me to find stuff that interested me—from snack wrappings to shop fronts—and to explore those things without any self-doubt or shame.” Another states succinctly, “Peggy is Bard’s sorceress and she-pirate.” Poet Eileen Myles wrote about Peggy’s directorial style toward actors: “She’s not extracting performances, she’s easing them up to what they know.” The same can be said about Peggy’s teaching. Her imprint is found on a generation of filmmakers working now.

Although Peggy Ahwesh is retiring from teaching, she has put no brakes on her creative output. In recent years, she has worked with heat-sensitive photography, drone footage, and holograms. She’ll continue to turn over, dust off, twist, and polish the familiar and forgotten, the despised and the scary, to show us something new.

James von Klemperer
Trustee Sponsor

Jacqueline Goss
Faculty Sponsor

The Bardian Award formalizes the Bard College Alumni/ae Association’s tradition of honoring the service of longtime members of the Bard community.

THE BARDIAN AWARD

Matthew Deady

With retirement come thoughts of a professional legacy, which for professors at a college such as Bard is not a measurable accomplishment but is, hopefully, an impact upon generations of students. Physics Professor Matthew Deady has indeed inspired decades of both science majors and those nonscience students lucky enough to have taken courses with him, but he also—quite rarely for professors who do not become administrators—has the legacy of a broad and lasting impact upon his college as a whole.

A nuclear physicist with a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Matthew commenced his service to Bard the minute he set foot on campus in 1987, immediately becoming the central person in the Physics Program and subsequently serving as program chair for decades. Even more unusual, after one semester at Bard he took over as chair of the Division of Science, Mathematics, and Computing, serving a record-setting ten years. Beyond physics, he taught courses in mathematics, computer science, chemistry, and biology; he regularly taught First-Year Seminar, and was its codirector; he taught Citizen Science; he set longevity records leading the Bard chapter of the American Association of University Professors (the faculty collective bargaining unit); and the list goes on. No other regular faculty member at Bard in the past three decades has made anywhere near Matthew's contribution to the functioning and well-being of the institution.

Thanks to both his remarkable classroom skills and the broad reach of his teaching throughout the College, it came as no surprise when Matthew was named the inaugural recipient of the Michèle Dominy Award for Teaching Excellence.

In everything he does, Matthew draws upon character traits that trace back to his childhood as a middle child of a large, Midwestern, Irish Catholic family, where no one ever got seconds at a meal, and argumentativeness was not an aspiration. He solves problems pragmatically, without ideology or ego; he supports even

those with whom he disagrees; he strives for peace among colleagues; he consistently takes on more than his fair share of the work; and he never complains. Matthew is the rare faculty member who is admired by, and able to work with, virtually all of his fellow faculty.

Beyond working hard for the College, Matthew has wide interests, especially music—though as a child of the Sputnik era he was steered away from music and toward science when his talent for the latter became apparent. A fixture at Bard musical events, he is the rare nonmusician who has brought an obscure composition to the attention of President Leon Botstein, renowned expert of neglected classical music.

Many retiring faculty members—about to be replaced by younger colleagues—like to think they are in some way irreplaceable. The sweet irony of Matthew's retirement is that, due to his genuine humility and innate tendency to place the good of his colleagues and college above his own, he is the last of us to think that he is irreplaceable—and is one of the very few of us who indeed can never be replaced.

David E. Schwab II '52
Trustee Sponsor

Ethan D. Bloch
Faculty Sponsor

The Bardian Award formalizes the Bard College Alumni/ae Association's tradition of honoring the service of longtime members of the Bard community.

THE BARDIAN AWARD

Bonnie R. Marcus '71

Many of us are familiar with the affectionate term “Bard family.” For Bonnie Marcus, this expression is altogether fitting. Her Annandale saga took root at age five when she visited her sister Lorelle Marcus Phillips '57 on campus. During her childhood Bonnie remembers attending a Blithewood auction, at which her family purchased a set of blue-and-white plates they still own. Lorelle married Roger Phillips '53, whose iconic sculpture *Three Discs in a Rectangle* is installed on campus. Over the years many members of Bonnie’s family came to study at Bard. That two of her nephews, a grandniece, and two cousins are counted in the ranks of Bard alumni/ae is a great source of pride to Bonnie.

In 1967 Bonnie reappeared in Annandale-on-Hudson as an undergraduate. Her proclivity for engaging others in community building was, and remains, a hallmark of her character. She became Bard’s first female student body president, spearheading the inauguration of the College’s coeducational residences. She was instrumental in helping to establish the Film Program as part of a student initiative; a psychology major, she submitted a feminist Senior Project on sex-role stereotypes. Her adviser, Stuart Levine, said her work “was well ahead of her time and done with a diligence and rare commitment.” Her familial ties to the institution expanded when Reamer Kline, the College’s thirteenth president, officiated over her marriage to her first husband, Ken Daly '71.

Hardwired to be an advocate for the underrepresented, Bonnie went on to receive her master’s degree from the Hunter College School of Social Work and was clinical director of Putnam/Northern Westchester Women’s Resource Center for the next seven years.

She took her valuable experience working with youth back to Bard in 1986, becoming senior associate director in the Office of Admission. Bonnie and Director of Admission Mary Backlund formed a fast friendship; their shared collaborative natures and passion for the College and its mission earned Bard a prominent reputation in the admission community. Bonnie had a compass the rest of us relied upon. When she noticed nuanced inconsistencies during

application reviews, she'd declare, "There's a story here," and dig for the truth. She discovered quite a few diamonds in the rough. Backlund recalls, "She could be bold—even loud—in defense of a candidate, but she was always fair and inclusive." During an admission event in the 1990s, Bonnie met her current husband, Ted O'Neill, then dean of admission at the University of Chicago, now senior admissions adviser at Bard College Berlin.

Bonnie's talent for building relationships with and between high school counselors, college colleagues, and applicants matches her commitment to President Leon Botstein's progressive ideas. She led by example and trained staff to appreciate the necessity of keeping an open mind. Few have been more steadfast in their work for the College. As she puts it, "Bard is a place in which I truly believe, and I am proud to be part of the history of its mission." We look forward to seeing Bonnie on campus—yet again.

Stanley A. Reichel '65
Trustee Sponsor

Janet Stetson '81
Director of Graduate Admission

The Bardian Award formalizes the Bard College Alumni/ae Association's tradition of honoring the service of longtime members of the Bard community.

THE BARDIAN AWARD

Richard Teitelbaum

To call Richard Teitelbaum an iconoclast is to encapsulate what made him unique as a composer, an innovator, and an educator of students and colleagues alike. He was a pioneer in the composition and performance of electronic music who was also associated with free jazz and world music, and a longtime teacher who preferred collaboration to compulsion.

Richard was born in New York City. He attended Haverford College, from which he graduated in 1960. (His Bard colleague Robert Martin was in the following year's class.) After earning his master's degree in theory and composition at Yale University in 1964, he worked in Germany with composers Karlheinz Stockhausen, György Ligeti, and Milton Babbitt. A Fulbright scholarship brought him to Italy. As a trendsetter, Richard is perhaps best known for cofounding the groundbreaking live electronic music group Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV) with composers Frederic Rzewski and Alvin Curran in Rome in 1966. MEV, active for more than fifty years, was motivated early on by the electronic experimentation of John Cage and David Tudor, as well as by free-jazz innovators John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. Richard “was the fundamental air around the music, surrounding it with knowledge, humor, occasional politically charged reminders—still never fearing to take over and wipe us all out with the whole history of electronic music,” Curran says.

Richard is also known for another partnership in the 1960s: with synthesizer inventor Robert Moog, who helped him use Moog synthesizers to turn human biological signals into “brainwave music.” Richard brought the first Moog synthesizer to Europe in 1967.

He returned to the United States in 1970 and created the World Band, among the first intercultural improvisation groups, consisting of master musicians from India, Japan, South Korea, the Middle East, and North America. He spent 1977 in Tokyo, studying shakuhachi (bamboo flute) with renowned teacher Katsuya Yokoyama. Richard’s “digital piano system” combined computer-controlled and human pianists, and his interactive, multimedia operas *Golem* and *Z’vi* (for which

he received a 2002 Guggenheim Fellowship) explored Jewish mysticism. He released albums with Anthony Braxton; recorded in a quartet with George Lewis; and presented his composed and improvised amalgamation of synthesized and “natural” instruments in his Concerto Grosso, recorded with Braxton and Lewis.

Before Bard, he taught at the California Institute of the Arts, Art Institute of Chicago, and York University in Toronto. Joining the Bard faculty in 1988, Richard said that one of his major pleasures was collaboration with his students: “They often surprise me.” He was admired for his intellect and quiet sense of humor. In his eclecticism, range of interests, and explorations of intercultural improvisation and composition, he brought exceptional depth to the Music Program in the “motel on the Hudson,” as music faculty called Annandale House, where the program was ensconced. He also was dedicated to teaching in Bard’s Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts program in music/sound.

Richard Teitelbaum died April 9, 2020, near his home in Bearsville, New York. He leaves to his colleagues and students a legacy of individualism, independence, and integrity.

Charles S. Johnson III ’70
Trustee Sponsor

Joan Tower
Faculty Sponsor

The Bardian Award formalizes the Bard College Alumni/ae Association’s tradition of honoring the service of longtime members of the Bard community.

Bard