

BARD COLLEGE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SEVENTH

COMMENCEMENT



The Bard College Awards Ceremony

Friday
the twenty-sixth of May
two thousand seventeen
6:30 p.m.

*The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York*

PROGRAM

Welcome

Brandon Weber '97

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

Remarks

James C. Chambers '81

Chair, Board of Trustees, Bard College

The Bard Medal

James Haller Ottaway Jr.

Charles P. Stevenson Jr.

Trustee Sponsor

Johnathan Becker

Faculty Sponsor

The John and Samuel Bard Award in Medicine and Science

Mariana Raykova '06

Stanley A. Reichel '65

Trustee Sponsor

S. Rebecca Thomas

Faculty Sponsor

The Charles Flint Kellogg Award in Arts and Letters

Nick Jones '01

Elizabeth Ely '65

Trustee Sponsor

Richard I. Suchenski

Faculty Sponsor

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Betsaida Alcantara '05

Charles S. Johnson III '70

Trustee Sponsor

Omar G. Encarnación

Faculty Sponsor

The Mary McCarthy Award

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

James H. Ottaway Jr.

Trustee Sponsor

Dinaw Mengestu

Faculty Sponsor

The Bardian Award

Mario J. A. Bick

Brandon Weber '97

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Yuka Suzuki

Faculty Sponsor

Diana De G. Brown

Brandon Weber '97

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Laura Kunreuther

Faculty Sponsor

Marsha Rial Davis

Brandon Weber '97

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Mary Backlund

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The Bardian Award (continued)

Larry Fink

Brandon Weber '97
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Stephen Shore
Faculty Sponsor

Norman Manea

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Ian Buruma
Faculty Sponsor

Recognition of Reunion Classes

1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987,
1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, and 2012

Remarks

Leon Botstein
President, Bard College

Closing

Brandon Weber '97

Dinner will be served in Felicitas S. Thorne Dance Studio and
Stewart and Lynda Resnick Theater Studio.

Ushers will direct you.

Everyone is cordially invited to hear
Bard College student soloists and composers in concert
with The Orchestra Now (TÖN),
Leon Botstein conducting,
in Sosnoff Theater
at 9:30 p.m.

and to enjoy Annandale Roadhouse at
Kline Commons immediately
following the concert.

THE BARD MEDAL

James Haller Ottaway Jr.

James Ottaway Jr. is a child—indeed a grandchild—of the newspaper industry, the son and grandson of newspaper publishers. Early on, he signaled his deep interest in reporting and editing. Attending Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale, he fell in love with the classics and served as editor of the *Yale Daily News*. After graduation, he was publisher of the New Bedford *Standard-Times* in Massachusetts before becoming chairman and CEO of the family newspaper business. When Dow Jones bought Ottaway Newspapers, Jim served as senior vice president for international publication of the *Wall Street Journal*, overseeing its Asian and European business. He publicly resisted the company’s 2007 sale to Fox News’s Rupert Murdoch.

Indeed, Jim always set his sights on a wider vision behind the business of journalism. In New Bedford, he used his position to foster racial understanding. Later, he became chairman of the World Press Freedom Committee, created to oppose the Orwellian New World Information Order. Jim was active in fighting the “insult laws” that still make it a crime in many countries to criticize strong-arm leaders. “I realized what a rare and precious thing we have with our free press in America,” he has said.

When the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989, Jim was on a plane to Berlin the same day. Drawing on his contacts in Eastern Europe, he helped organize the international conference “The Recovery of Memory: Eastern Europe and the Question of Nationalism,” which led to the creation of Bard’s Program in International Education (PIE). Jim and his wife, Mary, offered years of irreplaceable personal and financial support to PIE students; today Jim serves as a one-man alumni/ae office for graduates in the Czech Republic.

Since 1996, Jim has served as a Bard trustee and since 2011 as life trustee. For two decades, he chaired the board of advisors of the Institute for International Liberal Education—and now chairs the board of the Center for Civic Engagement, lending his voice and guidance to the establishment of Bard’s international network of dual-degree partnerships. Jim’s appreciation for film and music

moved him to support the Jim Ottaway Jr. Film Center at Bard, Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, and Bard Music Festival, and chair the board of trustees at Storm King Art Center. His limitless curiosity and love of language drew him to the board of the online translation magazine *Words Without Borders*, where he is chairman emeritus. The James H. Ottaway Jr. Award for the Promotion of International Literature recognizes individuals who have taken extraordinary steps to advance literature translated into English. Jim himself is translating the *Odyssey* and has developed a virtual second career editing books by friends all over the world.

In honoring James H. Ottaway Jr. with Bard College's highest award, the Bard Medal, we celebrate his rare combination of old-fashioned loyalty and respect for the facts with a breadth of vision and active support that embraces education, global justice, translation, the arts and—not least—journalism and the qualities of clear, effective language.

Charles P. Stevenson Jr.
Trustee Sponsor

Jonathan Becker
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

Mariana Raykova '06

Mariana Raykova arrived at Bard College in fall 2002 from Aprilov National High School in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, to which she had “brought fame,” in the words of her guidance counselor, by ranking first in a number of national mathematics competitions, besting rivals from Gabrovo’s Mathematical High School, and traveling as far as Australia for math competitions.

At Bard, Mariana completed a double major in mathematics and computer science. Her Senior Projects concerned sequential dynamical systems that use words as updating schedules (mathematics, advised by Mark D. Halsey) and a statistical anomaly in the SHA-1 iterated hash function (computer science, advised by Robert W. McGrail). She also participated in summer research programs at the University of California, Los Angeles; Los Alamos; and the University of Minnesota. She maintained a 4.0 average throughout her undergraduate career.

Mariana pursued her graduate education in computer science at Columbia University, where she earned M.S., M.Phil., and Ph.D. degrees, with a dissertation on the topic of secure computation in heterogeneous environments. After a year of postdoctoral work in the Cryptography Research Group at IBM’s Thomas J. Watson Research Center, she worked in the Computer Science Laboratory at SRI International in Silicon Valley, then joined the computer science faculty at Yale University with a concurrent appointment as a visiting researcher at Columbia University.

Her research focuses on cryptography and information security; in particular, on situations in which mutually distrustful parties collaborate, using but not freely accessing each other’s private data. For instance, a client with limited access to computational resources may wish to hire someone with much greater access to carry out a particular assignment; the client may wish to keep information private while still verifying the accuracy of the result, while the worker needs to

prove that work has been carried out correctly while also protecting her own sensitive information. In a similar vein, Mariana’s work on cryptographic code obfuscation allows parties to provide functional access to proprietary software while concealing the details of the algorithms used.

Her coauthored paper “Pinocchio: Nearly Practical Verifiable Computation” received the Best Paper Award at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Symposium on Security and Privacy in 2013 and was reprinted in *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery*, the flagship journal of the main professional organization for computer science. The paper describes an implemented system for efficiently verifying the result of a computation that a client has outsourced to an untrusted computational worker; the system can be extended to keep the worker’s information private from the client. The efficiency improvement over previous solutions is astonishing: what would have taken hundreds of years (or more) with earlier systems can be accomplished in as little as one-hundredth of a second using Pinocchio.

To have done so much in-depth, exciting work within a decade of graduation is impressive and foreshadows a distinguished career of fundamental contributions to the vital field of information security. We are proud to claim Mariana Raykova as a Bard alumna.

Stanley A. Reichel ’65
Trustee Sponsor

S. Rebecca Thomas
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. The 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

Nick Jones '01

Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Nick Jones came to the East Coast to study at Bard and has continued to explore different aspects of life in New York State. For the past several years, he has been a screenwriter for the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*, an acclaimed comedy/drama about a group of inmates at a fictional women's minimum security prison in Rockland County. The series has won four Emmys (out of seventeen nominations) and three Screen Actors Guild Awards, as well as a Peabody Award and an American Film Institute Award, among many others. It has received six Golden Globe nominations and six Writers Guild of America Award nominations.

Jones was a literature major at Bard, but his first passion was theater (his Senior Project consisted of short plays). He staged shows in the Bertelsmann Campus Center and through the Theater Program while completing his undergraduate studies. Shortly after graduating from Bard, Jones and his former roommate, Raja Azar '00, began exploring the world of puppetry. A natural outlet for (and perfect complement to) Jones's absurdist sensibility, puppetry provided an opportunity to develop adventurous comic approaches. "I wanted a variety act I could call my own, and puppets seemed like a good idea," he told the *Bardian* (Spring 2014). His most celebrated puppet show was the pirate rock musical *Jollyship the Whiz-Bang*, which debuted at Ars Nova and received an extended and critically acclaimed theatrical run (performances included two other Bard alumni, Keith Fredrickson '00 and Dan Kutcher '01). The *New York Times* praised *Jollyship* for its "demented brilliance," and it was recognized on the Best of New York 2008 lists of *The L Magazine* and *Gothamist*.

He received a degree from the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program at The Juilliard School and went on to become playwright in residence at the Southampton Writers Conference in 2010. That same year, his eighteenth-century farce *The Coward* premiered at Lincoln Center/LCT3, won two Lucille Lortel Awards, and was acclaimed as a "perfectly structured comedy" by *The*

Village Voice. Jones is collaborating on a film adaptation that is currently in production with Big Beach Films. Jones's deadpan humor and wry irony was equally evident in *Trevor* (2013). Inspired by true events, it explores complex human emotions through a two-hundred-pound pet chimpanzee. He returned to Lincoln Center in 2015 with *Verité*, a dark comedy about a fantasy writer asked by her publisher to write a memoir. Also in 2015, *Important Hats of the Twentieth Century*, a comedy about rival fashion designers, semi-mad scientists, and time travel, opened at the City Center in a Manhattan Theatre Club production. Jones is currently writing and producing on the upcoming Netflix comedy/drama series *GLOW*, about women's wrestling in 1980s Los Angeles.

Jones's multidisciplinary work has attracted an enthusiastic (and growing) following and we look forward to continued developments.

Elizabeth Ely '65
Trustee Sponsor

Richard I. Suchenski
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

Betsaida Alcantara '05

One of my great hopes for the 2016 presidential campaign was to see Betsaida Alcantara '05 rise to a high-level position within a Hillary Clinton administration. As director of media planning, Betsaida was one of the highest-placed Hispanics in the Clinton campaign, responsible for media strategies, including organizing Clinton's interview schedule. Notable about naming Betsaida to this position is that it reflected Clinton's desire to hire Hispanics, and minorities in general, for positions not necessarily tagged as "minority" positions. But a glance at where Betsaida has come from and what drives her reveals that Clinton's failed presidential bid will likely be only a temporary setback in what is already an impressive public service career.

I have had the privilege to teach and mentor hundreds of students at Bard, few of whom have made as strong an impression on me as Betsaida. She was instantly memorable because she was among the first minority students in my classes here. Like me, she was also the child of immigrants from the Dominican Republic. What I found most compelling, however, was her upbringing. Unlike other Hispanic students I knew, Betsaida was not from New York City but rather from the Hudson Valley. Her father worked as an advocate for immigrants; her mother held various jobs—at a hospital, a cookie factory, and McDonald's. Betsaida was the first member of her family to graduate from college.

After Bard, where she majored in political studies and wrote her Senior Project on migrant workers in New York State, Betsaida set her eyes on Washington, D.C. She got there as a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Public Policy Fellow. In that position, she had the opportunity to work for the press teams of Senators Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Bob Menendez (D-N.J.). She then went to work for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign as deputy press secretary in Florida and bilingual spokesperson. During Obama's presidency, she moved quickly through various high-level governmental positions, including press secretary for Lisa Jackson, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and communications director at the General Services Administration.

Just before joining the Clinton campaign, she became assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), where she worked directly under HUD Secretary Julián Castro.

Through her various professional experiences, Betsaida has had a front-row seat for some of the most critical contemporary debates in American public policy—from immigration to climate change to discrimination in housing and in the workplace. She is very generous in crediting these experiences to her Bard education. In a 2015 profile for the *Bardian*, she noted, “Bard taught me how to think critically, write, and be creative—three important skills for a successful career in media, politics, and communications.”

Charles S. Johnson III '70
Trustee Sponsor

Omar G. Encarnación
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

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

In 1956, a distinguished group of writers, artists, and intellectuals gathered at the Sorbonne University in Paris to inaugurate the International Congress of Black Writers and Artists. Counted among them were Richard Wright, Aimé Césaire, and Frantz Fanon. Among the sixty-three delegates, gathered from three continents, not a single woman, however, was invited to present. Wright spoke on the record about this absence:

I don't know how many of you have noticed it—there have been no women functioning vitally and responsibly upon this platform helping to mold and mobilize our thoughts . . .

Most of the delegates might have been able to acknowledge such a void while still failing to understand its possible consequences. A novelist as gifted as Wright may have imagined a future conference that had women “molding and mobilizing” their thoughts, but I doubt he was ready to imagine that if such a gathering were held today it could stand almost entirely on the work of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a writer whose oeuvre has altered our cultural landscape and dismantled our vocabulary—whether the postcolonial, diasporic, African, immigrant, or migrant—of feminism, identity, and literature.

When Chimamanda published her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, in 2003, there was still so much work to be done. A glowing review published in the British newspaper the *Telegraph* begins with this memorable sentence: “Any child growing up in Africa is bound to know a thing or two about tyranny.” The false innocence of those words has an all-too-familiar ring to them—an innocence that, like silence, shelters the radical reduction of a continent, of a humanity.

I noted earlier that Chimamanda's work dismantles a tired discourse. This is how.

After *Purple Hibiscus*, Chimamanda published her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*—a novel that does the nearly unbearable work of imagining a war shrouded

in political and cultural silence: a novel born out of tragedy but not defined by it. That novel earned her the Orange Prize for fiction, Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, and a MacArthur Fellowship. Three years later she published a collection of short stories that proved she could build a world in twenty pages as easily as in four hundred. Those stories land as gracefully in America as in Nigeria; they are expansive in their range but never anxious. By the time Chimamanda published *Americanah* in 2013, a generation of readers had learned to think about the world in a far more complicated way. They read, watched, memorized her TED Talk and lectures on feminism. In this most recent novel, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, they witnessed how love migrates along with the body, along with cultures.

Through Chimamanda's work, we witness the world as it is. We no longer have to suffer under the tired image of the African child bound to tyranny, and we know that our future, like our past, will be shaped by women who don't mold or mobilize thoughts, but who forge them through relentless labor.

James H. Ottaway Jr.
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

Mario J. A. Bick

Over the past forty-seven years, seldom has a faculty meeting concluded without Mario Bick raising a penetrating insight or provocative question. Whether driven by his deep commitment to fairness and justice or his loyalty to Bard tradition, Mario's voice has been synonymous with the key values of the institution, its history, and its legacy.

Mario's stance—shaped by his early life when his parents were forced to leave Italy because Jews were banned from practicing medicine—has been to advocate for those who were unfairly persecuted or disadvantaged. He was a proponent of bringing exiled intellectuals to Bard, an initiative that has shaped the ethos and public profile of the College. In Liberia at the onset of civil war, he jumped to the aid of the dean of Cuttington College when armed soldiers arrived on campus to take him into custody. Never hesitating to challenge authority or ruffle feathers, Mario has always spoken with unshakable courage and conviction.

In both his research and teaching, Mario's interests have been pioneering and expansive. Writing on topics as diverse as American baseball and fashion long before they came into vogue in academia, he raised new questions and revealed new meanings embedded within the everyday practices that constitute our worlds. Inspired by his doctoral research at Columbia University on power and the allocation of rights over women in African societies, Mario designed a course at Barnard College and Columbia called Sexual Antagonism, one of the first courses related to gender to be offered in the United States. The class created such a stir that his lectures were recorded and broadcast on Columbia's radio station.

In 1970, Mario came to Bard to take on the position of sole full-time anthropologist. He put together an ambitious curriculum encompassing all four fields of the discipline, and regularly taught courses like Human Evolution and Archaeology in addition to History of Anthropology and Anthropological Theory. Since then, he has developed an array of beautifully conceived classes, including Victorians and Their Others, Travelers and the Image of Africa, and Reading Baseball as Metaphor. Both inside and outside the classroom, Mario is famous for pushing

students to sharpen their arguments, but he is equally known for his empathy and kindness. He has spent countless hours advising Senior Project students who initially feel at sea, helping them identify topics that sustain their genuine excitement—in one case, the history of the bagel. Embodying this same spirit of generosity, Mario established the Harry Holbert Turney-High '22 Research Award and the Drs. Taula Siemiatycka Bick and Alexander Bick Fund to support student research in anthropology and Jewish studies. He also instituted the Franz Boas/Ruth Benedict Prize to recognize outstanding Senior Projects in anthropology.

With this award, we honor Mario Bick for the intellectual broadmindedness, dedication, and courage that have been hallmarks of his work in our community for nearly fifty years, and for instilling in us appreciation for the values that distinguish Bard and make it unique.

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Yuka Suzuki
Faculty Sponsor

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Diana De G. Brown

Diana Brown has been a beloved professor and colleague at Bard since 1988. With her eyes always searching for the path least taken, Diana has conducted anthropological research that explores subjects others have ignored or denigrated. Her intrepid spirit was evident from the first, with the publication of her renowned *Umbanda: Religion and Politics in Urban Brazil*, the authoritative text on a controversial Afro-Brazilian religion largely neglected by previous scholars. Throughout her career, Diana has expanded the boundaries of her academic pursuits, resulting in courses that embrace Latin American studies, medical anthropology, religion, and sexuality. Her work is infused with the politics of class and social justice cultivated during her undergraduate years at Smith College and her graduate work at Columbia University in the 1960s.

As a scholar, teacher, and woman, Diana eschews conventional boundaries. Like the Umbanda religion she illuminated, her work engages with divergent intellectual traditions and diverse topics—from spirit possession to cosmetic surgery. Her writing has appeared in flagship journals of anthropology, such as *American Ethnologist*, as well as both popular and scholarly Brazilian publications. *Umbanda* remains in print more than thirty years after its initial publication. Diana’s continued commitment to Brazilian intellectual life—through writing, teaching, lecturing in Portuguese, and advising doctoral students in Brazil—is a quintessential part of her academic as well as her political being. In Brazil, where she returns every summer and winter, she is known as “the mother of Umbanda studies.”

Colleagues in anthropology know Diana as an intrepid fieldworker, engaging all with tales of falling into a possessed trance while studying the Umbanda religion or walking the back country of Liberia to meet healers during a civil war. Her fearlessness and immersion in the field carry over into her teaching and advising of students. Diana’s ever-popular class, Anthropology of the Body, challenges students to think through and beyond their own bodies as they explore other, unknown forms of embodiment, eliciting the discomfort at times necessary for learning. Students speak of her profound respect for them as well as her

“seasoned wisdom”; one of her Senior Project advisees recalls how Diana “forced me to push to the very limit of my abilities.”

Diana values honesty above diplomacy. She is known to point out inequities in ways that others esteem. Her penchant for honesty and her lack of pretentiousness is a gift for students at Moderation and Senior Project boards. We in the Anthropology Program came to depend on Diana’s quirky sense of humor and devotion to rigorous and candid critique that has so often pushed students to explore previously unacknowledged aspects of their work, empowering them as budding scholars and intellectuals.

In conferring the Bardian Award, we honor Diana Brown for her attentiveness to her students, both near and far, and her dedication to exploration, integrity, and meticulous intellectual engagement that lies at the heart of her cherished discipline of anthropology and of the liberal arts we practice here at Bard.

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Laura Kunreuther
Faculty Sponsor

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Marsha Rial Davis

It took a feisty woman with roots in civil rights activism to take on the challenge of creating a full-service, primary health-care clinic at Bard. Until Marsha arrived in 1988, the infirmary was managed by a nurse who handled routine college health distresses. For more dire maladies, students had to travel to an off-campus clinic or the Northern Dutchess Hospital emergency room. The College had no exam tables or laboratory testing. Marsha did the legwork to establish a proper medication dispensary and a state-approved laboratory. She wrote the physician's contract, established protocols, and hired staff. The current health service offers students full care on campus, including gynecological care.

Marsha was born in Aiken, South Carolina, to Tom and Marilyn Rial. Her mother, a nurse, was interviewed on National Public Radio about white activism in the rural south. She is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in recognition of her service as a nurse and an officer in World War II. Marsha and her brothers, Mark and Peter, grew up steeped in stories about the courageous protest work of John Lewis—now a U.S. congressman and this year's Commencement speaker.

Marsha received a degree in psychology from Antioch College. The college's first president, Horace Mann, coined its motto: "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." Marsha was drawn to activism at Antioch, where she participated in her fair share of rabble-rousing.

Given her family's history in medicine, Marsha attended Pace University in an accelerated nursing program, graduating as a family nurse practitioner. She had an early taste of working with undergraduates in the health services at Rutgers University. Next she joined the William F. Ryan Community Health Center, where she provided care to people living in single-room-occupancy hotels on New York City's Upper West Side.

In 1986, at a conference addressing medical care for the poor, Marsha met her future husband, George Davis. He had grown up on a historic river estate in Tivoli and practiced family medicine in Columbia County. He and his two young

sons lived on a farm along the Roeliff Jansen Kill with goats, sheep, chickens, and a cow named Daphne. (In 1995 the couple added a daughter, Kate, to the clan.) George's mother was friendly with Mary Sugatt, Bard's well-known former dean of students, who introduced Marsha to the Bard community. Marsha found her way back to her first love—college health care.

The College went through considerable growth during Marsha's tenure. The student population tripled, and with that diversity came complex medical challenges. One case involved a student who had been in a Rwandan refugee camp. He came to the health service complaining of eye problems. A local ophthalmologist dismissed Marsha's concerns, but she insisted on another opinion. The student had onchocerciasis (river blindness), and Marsha likely saved his sight.

Bard is pleased to recognize Marsha Rial Davis for having the vision and grit to create the robust Student Health Service as it is today. Her dedication to this community and her profession has been inspiring.

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Mary Backlund
Faculty Sponsor

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Larry Fink

Ever since his work first attained prominence with his solo show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1979, Larry Fink has been a driving creative force in photography. His images resonate with deeply human compassion wedded to insight into social mores. For the almost thirty years that he has been teaching here at Bard, he has been an equally powerful force for enriching students' lives both as artists and as young people engaged with the world. His work in the dual fields of photography and teaching is marked by his penetrating insight into our emotional lives.

Larry was born into a family of politically active leftists in 1941, and his early political orientation charged both his life and his photography. Eschewing formal education, Larry spent his youth in the company of artists, musicians, and poets. And all along he made pictures. His photographs from this early period have recently been gathered into two books: *The Beats* and *Fink on Warhol*. He had already embarked on his teaching career by the late 1960s.

By the time Larry arrived at Bard in 1988, he was a well-known artist and teacher, having taught at The New School, New York University, Cooper Union, and Yale University; and having had solo shows at the Museum of Modern Art, SFMoMA, the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf, and Werkstatt für Photographie in Berlin. Also by that time, *Aperture* had published his seminal monograph, *Social Graces*—the first of more than fifteen books on his work—which explores two wildly different cultures: the upper crust of New York City and the “down-home folk” of Martins Creek, Pennsylvania. “Pictures are sure,” he says in the book’s introduction. “They remain fixed in the moment they were seized; their reading is always ambiguous, subject to the changing perceptions and intuitions bred by delusion or by experience.” His photographs are often piercing, sometimes funny, sometimes sensual, and always visually inventive. At Bard, he’s brought his unique energy to the classroom, leading several generations of students to find their voices as artists, awakening their passions and social awareness.

During Larry's years at Bard, he has had museum shows in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland, as well as the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Throughout his career, his accomplishments have been recognized and rewarded. He has received two Guggenheim Fellowships, two National Endowment for the Arts grants, the Alfred Eisenstaedt Award for Magazine Photography, an honorary doctorate from the College of Art and Design in Detroit, and, most recently, the International Center of Photography's prestigious Infinity Award for his artistic achievement.

We in the Photography Program are delighted that, even in retirement, Larry will maintain a presence on campus, critiquing student work and sitting on boards. It's hard to imagine his vitality ever diminishing.

Brandon Weber '97
Trustee Sponsor

Stephen Shore
Faculty Sponsor

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THE BARDIAN AWARD

Norman Manea

A good writer is more than a stylist; he or she has to have something to say. That something is not always pleasant. Bad luck in life can be good fortune for a writer.

Norman Manea has much to say, little of it pleasant. Born Jewish in Bukovina, a regional patchwork of cultures and ethnicities, he suffered the horrors of Nazi persecution. For much of his adult life, he also lived through the horrors of Nicolae Ceaușescu's Balkan communism in Romania—less murderous, but still sinister and cruel.

The experience of dictatorship and persecution does not guarantee great art, of course. To think otherwise is a romantic fallacy. Most people who live through dark times do not become fine writers. That takes talent, which Norman has in abundance.

But his art has been shaped by his life. Eyes that saw so much human depravity from a very early age have been sharpened by that experience. Nothing much escapes his gaze. Like other writers from eastern and central Europe—Kafka comes to mind—Norman has a rich sense of absurdity, of a kind that is less common among artists from more fortunate societies.

Citizens in Western democracies may have chaotic private lives, but their social reality is not wildly out of sync with the reality projected by dictatorships. Under a Nazi or communist regime nothing is normal, or, rather, the supposedly normal is invariably absurd.

Norman's dark, impish humor, which drives his essays as well as his fiction, is born from that absurdity. In the 1980s, he moved first to Germany and then to the United States, where he became a citizen and began a distinguished second career of teaching at Bard as Francis Flournoy Professor in European Studies and writer in residence.

The moves cannot have been entirely voluntary. A writer is wedded to his language; in most cases the marriage never ends. Norman is bonded to his mother tongue, whether he likes it or not. And in part of his mind—leaving aside the vexed issue of soul—he is wedded to the nation that tried to disown him. He was attacked by Romanian nationalists when he wrote the truth about Mircea Eliade, a much-revered Romanian thinker who once joined the ranks of anti-Semitic persecutors.

The cultivated optimism of his fellow citizens in America might have seemed refreshing to a man who survived the calamities of twentieth-century Europe. The writer Arthur Koestler, like Norman a child of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, once called Great Britain “the Davos for internally bruised veterans of the totalitarian age.” Perhaps that is how Norman first experienced the United States. Now absurdity has caught up with him here too.

However, seeing Norman’s work as a mere reflection of his life and times would be an error. Even when he is ostensibly writing about the Holocaust or communist oppression, often in veiled terms, he is not writing as a historian. He is an artist. And his art is not about one country, one people, or one time; it is about the human condition.

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