



areté

The Newsletter of The Honors College at the University of Houston

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In the Community & On the Move
Honors programs go beyond campus and engage new audiences

THE HONORS COLLEGE UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

Honors by the Numbers



areté is published by the Honors College at the University of Houston. The name is a Greek word designating courage in a warrior and civic virtue in the polis. *areté* has come to mean excellence in character and action.

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Italics indicate current Honors students. Unless otherwise indicated, all photography is by Honors College staff, Michiko McMahon, Thomas Campbell, or Alexander's Fine Photography.



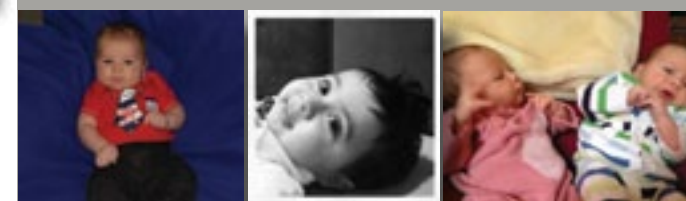
The Honors College was able to dramatically increase student scholarship assistance in the 2012-13 academic year. The College awarded scholarships to more than 350 students this academic year, up from 250 students in 2011-12, for a total dollar amount of \$445,750—an increase of over 60%.



Sophomore Erika Lai created *Time to Say Goodbye* for the spring Ekphrastic Arts Festival. Ekphrastic art attempts to confront, interpret, inhabit, and speak to another work of art. Erika was inspired by her work with *Ilium*, in particular a scene about modern war's impact on a child survivor. The child pictured above surveys the ruins of his home.

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Scholarship support isn't the only number that has multiplied this year — this is also the year of the Honors baby boom. Sarah Bhojani, assistant director of admissions, gave birth to a baby boy in October. On March 14, business manager Ornela Santee gave birth to her second baby boy, followed quickly by communications director Libby Ingrassia, who gave birth to twins on March 25. Congratulations to our Honors moms — please join us in welcoming these future Cougars!

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Dress rehearsal in the Commons

The Making of Dionysia 2013: *Ilium*

Each spring in ancient Athens, citizens would gather to celebrate the god of theater and wine by performing a number of tragedies and comedies, often based on mythologies everyone knew by heart. The Center for Creative Work renews this tradition every April and May by staging a new adaptation and production of a Greek classic. Like those ancient Greeks, Honors College students know the exploits of Odysseus, the bitterness of Klytemnestra, and the complex history of the “human situation.” They gather during the spring semester to rehearse and perform the past and the present, to renew a connection with what has come before by bringing it back to a new life.

To date, the annual production has featured an original adaptation of Euripides’ *The Children of Herakles*, Sophocles’ *Electra*, Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, and Aristophanes’ *The Frogs*. This year, **Dr. John Harvey**, writer-in-residence for the Honors College and director of the Center for Creative Work, created a text inspired by Homer’s *Iliad* by collecting stories from Honors College students and faculty who have been affected by war and its aftermath. Interspersed with these narratives were poems written by Professor Harvey and based on Homer’s original story, as well as imagery from conflicts from the Netherlands to Fallujah, Vietnam to Tehran.

On the inspiration behind *Ilium*, Harvey said, “Over the last few years I’ve met students who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I’ve directed a senior honors thesis by a student who lost her father in the Bosnian War. It occurred to me that these students have been witnesses to some of the worst experiences that can happen to a human being, and yet here they are, studying Homer, Shakespeare, and Locke. I realized that Homer’s *Iliad* always appears, generation after generation, in the stories that young and old tell about war. To tell the story of the *Iliad*, we need look no further than the Honors College family.”

Khon’s performance



Ilium was choreographed and directed by **Jen Sommers** of the School of Theatre and Dance. “What I love about Honors College students,” Sommers said, “is their willingness to take risks. None of the actors were dancers, but they were always willing to try anything I asked of them. And if they were uncomfortable or had a different idea, they never hesitated to speak up. That kind of give and take between a choreographer and dancers, or director and actors, is essential in the process of bringing an original work to life.”

The play also included three laments for Hector from the original text spoken in Greek and an original Latin requiem composed by Honors College and Moores School of Music junior **Alyssa Weathersby**. “The musical score has melodies that build upon each other,” said Alyssa in an interview for the Houston Chronicle’s *Creative Pride* blog. “As the performance’s action increases, so does the urgency of the music. It helps capture the atrocities that are being shown in the play, as well as the lighter moments.”

The play’s diverse elements were brought into a coherent whole around the universal theme—how war affects those involved, directly or peripherally. From the outset, cast, crew, and stage manager **Caitlin Lowe**, a junior in the Center for Creative Work, worked together to

find ways the diverse stories were related. Collaboration continued as actors and directors worked to bring the text to life. They began with the Greek, guided in pronunciation by recordings made by **Dr. Richard Armstrong**. The actors simultaneously worked with Alyssa on singing the



Soldiers from the shores of Asia Minor to Fallujah

requiem and Sommers on creating movement to bring the text to life.

As an ensemble piece, all sixteen actors constantly appeared on stage. At times they spoke as individuals, and at others they acted as a traditional Greek chorus, alternately narrating, observing, and acting. Once each scene had been sculpted, the cast began to focus on shaping the whole. At this point, music, movement and text became one. Music was provided by students from the Moores School of Music, including Honors College junior **Alex Winkler**, a music composition major who played keyboard and percussion. He and the other musicians worked with Alyssa to create incidental music to complement the choreography and text that ultimately made the piece a cohesive whole.

Ilium premiered on Saturday, April 27th, in the Rockwell Pavilion and remained on campus for a second performance on April 28th. **Elizabeth Jordan**, a junior playwriting and dramaturgy major who attended the second campus performance, called the viewing experience “woeful and evocative” and added that “it was

wonderful to see classmates transform into artists lending their voices, emotions, and movements to a work of art.”

After two shows on campus, the production went on the road, moving first to Frenetic Theatre in the East End, then on to G Gallery in the Heights, where gallery owner **Wayne Gilbert** commissioned several visual artists to create large-scale paintings inspired by Homer’s epic poem to coincide with the performance of *Ilium*. The gallery show was called *Backdrop* (www.ggalleryhouston.com/backdrop/), and the paintings appeared in the gallery where the performance took place, serving as a literal backdrop to the production itself. Both the visual and performance art prompted

viewers to think about how the ancient Greek text is applicable in the modern era of pervasive and seemingly never-ending war.

Ilium then closed, as Dionysia has for several years, at Khon’s Bar in Midtown. With the contemporary backdrop of the Houston skyline and the sounds of urban life mixing with the musical score, the actors brought ancient Greece and past and present day conflicts to 21st century Houston.

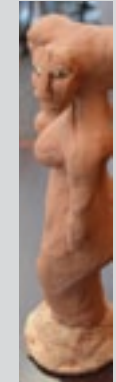
Please visit the Center for Creative Work’s webpage to see a trailer for *Ilium*, a film by **Logan Sebastian Beck** of the May 3 show at Frenetic Theater. You may also view the many images and videos by local videographer **Jenna Frenzel** of the *Ilium* rehearsal process and performances.



Archie Parks

Spring 2013 Ekphrastic Arts Festival

The Ekphrastic Arts Festival celebrates the creative engagement and talent of Honors College students. For the last four years, the Center for Creative Work has used the Ekphrastic Arts Festival to showcase student poems, paintings, sculptures, videos, dance, and musical performances that respond to another work of art. For Dionysia 2013, artists responded creatively to the theme “War and Rage.” Since spring 2012, the Festival has featured a composer’s showcase of some of the best students in the Moores School of Music responding to art through original compositions. These events, part of the Spring Dionysia, are unique in the country, and provide another opportunity for the Center for Creative Work to be a leader in the arts at the University of Houston



Student Workers Take on Leadership Roles

Over the years, working for Honors has always been an important opportunity for students, providing a deeper connection to the College and supplying a steady source of income with a flexible schedule. And now, in the midst of continued growth, the College has opened up even more jobs for students, such as coordinating aspects of the Human Situation, facilitating student support programs, providing freelance tutoring, conducting research, and assisting in the development of Honors minors and programs. In fact, every major function of the College, ranging from fundraising to IT, benefits from the contributions of at least one student worker. And not only are student workers indispensable to the Honors College, but they themselves benefit as they gain valuable leadership skills and expand their practical knowledge of how to work within a professional organization.

“My positions in Honors have enhanced my development as an undergraduate student,” affirmed **Erika Lai**, an English sophomore who has worked in a variety of jobs for the Honors College. Though just entering her third year at the University, Erika

has already served as a Student Services Office worker and a Human Situation coordinator, and through these experiences, she has made an enormous impact on the Honors environment. Stationed in the Student Services Office, Erika is often the first person people meet when they walk into the College, making her the point of contact for many students who have any questions or concerns. Moreover, as a Human Situation coordinator, she helps to facilitate the course that has become a fundamental part of the freshman experience.

Thriving in both of these roles, Erika has forged lasting relationships with faculty and staff. Erika credits these relationships and experiences as an important part of her own personal growth. “Now I get to be a part of the growth, betterment, and development of our Honors program. These interactions have shaped and enhanced my development because they give me the energy and compassion that is so contagious from both the students and the professors.”

David Zinsitz, a Liberal Studies sophomore, has also worked for the College in multiple roles, contributing



not only as a Student Services Office worker but as a Mentor Executive in the Honors College Mentorship Program. David recognizes that taking on so many roles can be tough, but he has never questioned the value of what he is doing. “It’s difficult sometimes to juggle it all, but it’s worth it since I know I am having a direct impact on students and helping them succeed their first year.”

David has particularly affected the way students experience Honors-specific support services. In addition to assisting students in the front office, David helps to train and manage the mentors who will guide incoming students through the transition to college life. Like Erika, David also credits his Honors work experience for playing an important role in his own personal growth. “I know that my work in Honors has greatly enhanced and impacted my leadership skills.”

Now David has decided to take on even more leadership roles in the Honors community. Next year he serves as president for Honors Ambassadors, a Phronesis Fellow, and co-chair for Honors Retreat 2014.

As the Honors College continues to grow, many students will take advantage of work opportunities within the College. Through these positions, they will continue to impact the Honors community in a variety of ways, contributing to the life of the College and to their own personal development.

by Franco Martinez

“New” Seminar Instructs Next Generation of Lencians

This spring the Honors College held its inaugural Lence Seminar, the first of an ongoing series modeled after courses taught by **Dr. Ross M. Lence**. Joining other efforts to preserve Professor Lence’s legacy such as the annual Lence Master Teacher Residency, the seminar aims to immortalize Lence’s unique teaching style while making use of his syllabi and course materials to engage students in meaningful discussion of great texts.

The Lence Seminar is the brainchild of **Andy Little** (’93, Political Science), academic advisor for the Honors College, Human Situation instructor, and a former student of Professor Lence. “Lence always had a strange, tangential approach to any important idea. One always had to go along for the ride, in the leery hope that it would become clear eventually. After his funeral, I found a little peace by running through one of his books and trying to follow the cross references and marginalia; I felt I had recovered brief contact with that amazing mind, the loss of which was so overwhelming. Hence it made sense that one way to preserve his legacy would be to bring new teachers and students to his book lists and essay assignments, in the equally leery hope that the strange magic of learning from him might be found in the traces of those wonderful courses.”

The inaugural Lence seminar, *Tyranny*, was taught by **Dr. Terry Hallmark** (’75, Political Science). Himself a student of Professor Lence, Professor Hallmark said that he felt “more responsibility than usual” toward the course and its materials. “It was a real honor to teach the course. But at the same time, it’s impossible to live up to the legacy of Dr. Lence,” said Hallmark. “I felt like Andrew Luck replacing Peyton Manning.”

The seminar attempted to tackle the subject of tyranny by finding a

suitable definition for it, analyzing and discussing texts pertinent to the subject matter, and attempting to understand how tyranny is made, sustained, and ended. With this goal in mind, the class read texts ranging from Xenophon’s *Hiero* to Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. On occasion, seminar members were joined by former Lence students—or “Lencians”—who offered valuable insight into the texts and ideas presented in class. “Students of Dr. Lence have a standing invitation to sit in on classes and participate in discussion,” said director of development **Beth Borck**, who hopes to get more Lencians involved in the project.

In fact, Lencians played a pivotal role in the formation and execution of the course. **Nick Noecker** (’82,

“Studying with Lence was about the never-ending quest for clarity and precision of thought.”

Economics) came to almost every seminar meeting. “On the first night of the seminar several of us were in attendance for a discussion on the *Hiero* and to watch rare footage of Dr. Lence speaking on the Declaration of Independence,” said Noecker. “That first day, none of the students said anything. I think we [the Lencians] stunned them into silence.”

Throughout the semester donations from Lencians provided food and refreshment for students as they grappled with sometimes difficult and elusive subject matter. During a reading of Aristotle’s *Politics*, several Lencians treated the class to dinner at The Capitol at St. Germain to enjoy what Professor Lence would have called great food and great conversation. Prior to the meeting at The Capitol, Professor Hallmark requested that his students print out an extra copy of their essays due that week so that the Lencians could read

over their thoughts on the evening’s subject. Naturally, this sparked lively debate that lasted through the evening.

The Lence Seminar was also generously hosted by **Dan** (’79, Political Science) and **Ann Becker** at their bookstore, Becker’s Books. In a back room of a shop covered in bookcases floor-to-ceiling, the Lence Seminar spent an evening discussing Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* in an attempt to discern if the title character was a tyrant and what exactly it meant to be a “man” in the play.

Other essay and discussion prompts for the course asked students to consider such questions as “In what manner and to what extent is the

following true? Although tyranny and the tyrannic man are in one way the furthest from philosophy, they are in another way closest to it.” While essays did not produce many answers, not many were expected. “One of the brightest students in the class told me that she spent most of her time in this course confused,” said Professor Hallmark. “I answered that studying with Lence was about the never-ending quest for clarity and precision of thought—she was supposed to be confused.”

The Lence Seminar will reconvene with a new topic in spring 2014. All former Lence students, as well as alumni and friends who never had the good fortune to study with Professor Lence, are invited to attend.

by Markley Rogers

The Student Services staff takes a photo break.





TEDxYouth@UH: A Conference for Ideas

when people are free to express their ideas, simply for the sake of expressing them.”

Leah Morgan, a doctoral research fellow in the Department of Educational Psychology, gave a talk titled “The Power of Belief” on the importance of self-efficacy in the learning process. “TEDxYouth events empower students to think outside the box and share their ideas with peers and adults,” Morgan said. “Our young people will be the ones developing the ideas that shape the future, so I think it is critical we provide youth with more opportunities, such as TED events, where they can advance and present their thoughts.”

By giving students and educators an opportunity to speak their minds, the event demonstrated that UH is the perfect place for spreading ideas. LeVeaux Haley points out that such events are crucial to recruiting efforts. “When we are able to bring middle and high school students to campus and create a fun and academically rewarding experience, they leave with a favorable opinion of the University that may translate into future applications and positive buzz about UH.”

Judging from the quality of their presentations, many students should expect a recruitment call from the

Honors College. **Jennifer Kangdi Li**, a student at Bellaire High School, gave a memorable talk called “That Awkward Moment When, Instead of Saving Princess Peach, You Save the World.” Jennifer described the benefits of digital teaching tools that cultivate responsibility and humane principles by motivating students with meaningful end goals. Another noteworthy presentation from a group of Houston Christian High School students was titled “How We Learn: The I Do, You Do, We Do Method.” The students described learning as a collaborative effort between teacher and student, with changing roles for each at different stages of learning.

The combination of student, teacher, and faculty speakers provided learning opportunities for everyone in the audience. Junior Honors sociology major **Michael Lenmark** credits Leah Morgan’s talk on “The Power of Belief” for giving him a new way to study, but adds that he learned something from each of the presentations. “Every talk made me think and question,” he said. “I came to be inspired. All of the speakers managed to do exactly that.”

by *Chris Powell*

The author presented a talk titled “Bigworldedness: Redefining Foreign,” inspired by a summer internship in the Ukraine.

If you had 18 minutes to give the talk of your life, what would you say?

This is the question at the core of TED Talks, a set of conferences that began on the West Coast in 1984 and has since spread worldwide. TED Talks, sponsored by the non-profit TED, have accumulated over a billion views on TED.com, YouTube, and other platforms. Initial conventions focused on developments in design, entertainment, and technology have since expanded to include a number of topics—all of which further TED’s mission to share “Ideas Worth Spreading.” And on February 23, this mission reached the University of Houston.

A “big fan of the TED concept,” **Assistant Dean Christine LeVeaux Haley** reached out to members of the University and Houston communities to solicit ideas for an independently organized TED conference, TEDxYouth@UH. Calling on UH faculty, students, and alumni as well as teachers and students in Houston-area K-12 schools, Professor LeVeaux Haley asked potential presenters to submit an eight- to ten-minute talk on the TED theme, “How We Learn,” and narrowed the pool to 14 presentations offering ideas for improved teaching methods, learning tools, and student-teacher interaction.

“This was my first experience at a live TED event,” LeVeaux Haley said. “I was struck by the energy that fills a room



Chris Powell and Michael Lenmark pose for a photo with fellow TED Talkers.

Terry Scholars Program Welcomes Transfer Students

In last summer’s issue of *Areté*, we celebrated the lasting impact the late Howard and Nancy Terry have had on thousands of students statewide with the establishment of the Terry Foundation Scholarship. Since its inaugural class of 17 scholars at the University of Texas at Austin in 1987, the Terry Foundation has extended its reach to include nine universities in Texas, including the University of Houston, where recipients receive funding for four years of undergraduate education.

In fall 2013, the Foundation continues its efforts to provide deserving students with the means to pursue a college degree with the addition of the Terry Transfer Scholarship. Previously, the Terry Scholarship was available only to students entering college straight out of high school. This year, the Terry Foundation introduced the Terry Transfer Scholarship to provide students transferring to select Texas universities with financial aid to continue their education—full funding for up to six semesters.

Natalie Harms, a junior communications major and president of the Houston Terry Scholars Student Association for 2013-14, said the UH Terrys are excited for the changes ahead. “We are all so grateful that this opportunity will be spread to more people. I’m honored to have been appointed as president by my peers at this pivotal time in the Terry Scholar history at UH. We hope to make the transition smooth and will welcome

the new transfer scholars with open arms, the same way we do with our incoming freshmen.”

Interviews for Transfer Scholarships will be held in June of each year. Just as in the process for Terry Scholars entering college from high school, transfer student applications are forwarded to the Foundation by the university to which they are applying. Those selected for an interview are chosen based on three criteria: leadership potential and character; scholastic record and ability; and financial need.

Jodie Köszegi, assistant dean of the Honors College and advisor for the UH Terry Scholars, looks forward to a bigger Terry family. “In general,

transfer students are extremely competitive and motivated, both as students and as campus leaders. We are thrilled to welcome our first class of Terry transfers this fall and anticipate that their experiences and excitement will further energize an already outstanding community of scholars.” In anticipation of a bigger program and to better serve scholars, this year’s officers plan to revamp the existing mentorship program. Natalie said, “We’ve done a paired mentor program for years, and this year we will develop a mentor team. Each of the mentors will post biographies on our website and Facebook page that will break down their specialties, majors, and interests so that scholars can choose who to turn to for their various needs.”

Terry Scholars at the University of Houston are quick to emphasize that the scholarship provides much more than financial aid. The Terry Scholars organization offers a supportive family of dedicated students who participate in a variety of activities together. From major-specific and skill-building workshops to socials, movie nights, and community service projects, Terrys at the University of Houston have formed a strong community over the last nine years. The UH Terry chapter anticipates that the incoming transfer class will bring new ideas and a fresh take on old traditions.

by *Colleen Seitz*



UH Terry Scholars enjoy a sunny Saturday outing at the Houston Zoo.



Lessons from Srebrenica

Dr. Mient Jan Faber, a visiting scholar who teaches a class on military intervention and human security each fall in the Honors College, selected four of his former Honors College students to join him in July 2012 at an annual conference in Srebrenica, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. The students later felt compelled to present a panel on their travels and similar humanitarian crises in the Middle East today. Safa Ansari-Bayegan recounts the experience below.

Being in Srebrenica and on the United Nations compound in Potocari forced us to confront and examine

and reconciliation. We discussed the obstacles of transitional justice and peace-building in an attempt to develop strategies for dealing with the

"The march was just a glimpse into the suffering of the Bosnians around us."

post-conflict phase and to gain a better understanding of how to prevent future atrocities from occurring.

While Honors alumna **Adrienne Huntsman** ('12, Political Science) and

the annual three-day peace march in commemoration of the tragic events of 1995. A group of over 5,500 marched 110 kilometers in three days, retracing

the steps of over 15,000 Muslim boys and men who attempted to flee the Srebrenica enclave in the summer of 1995. Although we were immersed in the wrenching story of the survivors and the victims, I realized that the march was just a glimpse into the suffering of the Bosnians around us. It was the most humbling experience I have ever had. Diane added that she "will never forget the stories genocide survivors told throughout the march or the friendships made during the Summer University Srebrenica conference."

We returned home with a sense of duty to share our experiences in Srebrenica with our community. "I realized I had a responsibility to be an ambassador," said Adrienne. "I couldn't be silent about the rich but sad history we relived in Srebrenica."

Upon our return to Houston, I spearheaded the planning of a symposium, supported by the *Phronesis* Program in Politics and Ethics, which took place on November 13, 2012, at the University of Houston. The objective of this symposium, titled "Assessing International Intervention: Applying

Lessons from Srebrenica to Conflict in Syria," was to examine the crisis in the Middle East that is destabilizing the international balance of power.

Following a short presentation on the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica by the four of us who traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina, faculty panelists Professor Faber, **Dr. Irene Guenther**,

encouraged. Krystafer, who moderated the faculty panel, challenged the room with a troubling question: "Can we say 'never again,' acknowledge the atrocities, continue inaction, and still maintain a position as the moral, political, and social leader of the free world?"

"I realized I had the responsibility to be an ambassador. I couldn't be silent."

Dr. Dina Alsowayel, Dr. Terry Hallmark, and Dr. Cyrus Contractor spoke on the former situation in Srebrenica and current conflict in Syria. The recent history of Srebrenica and the potential outcomes in Syria are strikingly similar. The differences are critical, too.

The panel explored the role of the international community in conflict zones. Various panelists touched on topics ranging from genocide to political solutions that might enable competing ethnic, religious, and political groups to coexist. The format included an open discussion in which audience participation was

Our trip to Srebrenica deeply impacted all of us. The warmth and strength of the Bosnian people left us with a lasting impression. In fact, I hope to gain new perspective on the former conflict while interning with the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague this summer. We are all a little jealous (and proud!) of Diane's summer plans; she will be returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where she will attend American University's two-month Peace and Conflict Studies Program in Sarajevo.

by Safa Ansari-Bayegan



Where She's Headed

Safa Ansari-Bayegan is moving to The Hague for four months at the beginning of June to intern with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. She will work in the Outreach Department, which is responsible for communicating the work of the Tribunal to the people of the former Yugoslavia by engaging with local legal groups, non-profit organizations, victims' associations, and truth and reconciliation commissions. Safa hopes that this internship will provide her with a new perspective on the former conflict in the region, as well as help her better understand how post-conflict reconciliation is achieved. In October, Safa will begin a one-year master's program in Human Rights at the London School of Economics.



Dr. Faber and his students attend the opening of a photography exhibit on the Srebrenica genocide.

firsthand the unresolved mass murders in the location where they happened. We witnessed the burial of caskets containing the remnants of 520 newly identified victims of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide and spoke with survivors, politicians, scholars, and artists about genocide

then senior **Krystafer Redden** ('13, Political Science and History) traveled with Professor Faber to Tuzla, a multi-cultural city where Muslims, Serbs, and Croats managed to live together during the war, and met with NGOs and political leaders, junior **Diane Stout** and I participated in



Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide

Phi Beta Kappa Academy Attracts Elite Students, Faculty

On July 14, 2012, fifty high school students came to the Honors College to attend the Phi Beta Kappa Honors Academy. This free Saturday event featured college-style seminars taught by University of Houston faculty and focused on subject matter central to Phi Beta Kappa, an elite college honor society that advocates a solid curricular foundation in the arts and sciences.

The seminars covered subjects near and dear to the Honors ethos, from **Dr. Simon Bott's** "The Story of Science: Science as an Interpretive Discipline," to **Dr. Robert Zaretsky's** "How and Why Historians Tell Stories." Meanwhile, **Krystafer Redden** ('13, Political Science) conducted a practical workshop on writing a personal statement for college applications. Krystafer, a UH Terry Scholar and spring 2013 Hobby Fellow who has considerable experience writing personal essays for college and scholarship applications, had some good advice for the students. "Everyone has a story to tell. You



just have to figure out which of your experiences will resonate with your audience."

Drawing on her experience as events coordinator for the College, **Lucy Bonner** organized the academy and recruited rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors in the Houston area through a grassroots letter campaign to counselors at local high schools. "Each high schooler was nominated by a counselor for their academic achievements," Bonner said. "The academy was a great way to bring some of Houston's best high school students into our space, and we hope this experience made an impression on them."

As high school students begin the process of choosing a college and a major, programs like the Phi Beta Kappa Academy expose them to the

Perfecting the personal essay

sort of liberal arts-based university education that Phi Beta Kappa values. Through the seminars, the Honors College hopes to advance a priority that it shares with Phi Beta Kappa: the idea that the arts and sciences are important, and are a solid foundation for studies in any field.

This initiative is also designed to encourage ties with faculty who are alumni of Phi Beta Kappa. "For PBK alumni in the Greater Houston area, the PBK Honors Academy is one of the most exciting events to come along," said **Dean Monroe**. "Most PBK alumni members are teachers at heart—they were excellent students, after all—and they enjoy working with motivated high school students." The program encourages PBK alumni to become involved at the University of Houston, as well as other Houston-area schools. (Currently, UH has advanced to the next stage of consideration for a chapter of its own. Only 10% of universities have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter.)

The Honors College will continue its mission this summer with the second annual Phi Beta Kappa Honors Academy on June 29. Attendance is already on track to increase to seventy-five students, possibly requiring the addition of a second day to the program. As the program evolves, so will Phi Beta Kappa's presence in Honors life.

by *Carolina Fautsch*

Dean Monroe discusses the role of a liberal arts education in everyday life.

Degree Plan Expands Opportunities for Honors Pre-Health Students

In fall 2013, the Honors College welcomes its first cohort of students majoring in Honors Biomedical Sciences (HBS). Although the degree program will be offered through the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, all HBS majors must be members of the Honors College, making the new major the first of its kind.

"This is the first degree program designed specifically for the Honors College, and a very special collaboration between Honors and Natural Sciences and Mathematics,"

"By offering our brightest pre-meds an incentive to stay here, we hope to produce physicians who want to stay and work in Texas."

said chemistry professor **Simon Bott**, director of the Biomedical Sciences major as well as its umbrella program, the Honors Program in the Health Professions. All students majoring in Biomedical Sciences will be pursuing various careers in the health professions, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, and optometry.

The first class of HBS majors has some impressive credentials: of the twenty-three incoming students, thirteen are Tier One Scholars, two are National Merit Scholars, and all received Academic Excellence scholarships from the University. "The competitive scholarship support offered by the University of Houston helped us to recruit some really top-notch students for our first HBS class," said Dr. Bott. "Based on the number of phone calls we're getting from high school students interested in the Program in the Health Professions, these numbers will continue to grow."

In addition to the Biomedical Sciences degree plan, ten of the incoming HBS students have also been selected to

participate in the new 3-4 fast-track to medical school. After successfully completing three years of prerequisites at the University of Houston, the 3-4 students will be eligible to enter the medical program at the UT Health Science Center at Houston or at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. After completing their first year of medical school, the students will receive their Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Houston.

"Many universities offer similar programs for students who have a

clear plan for a future in medicine and want to shorten the time from college to career," said Dr. Bott. "The University's proximity to a number of training institutions in the Houston Medical Center puts us in a unique position to provide such opportunities to our students. By offering our brightest pre-meds an incentive to stay here, we hope to produce physicians who want to stay and work in Texas."

Anchit Khanna, a senior at DeBakey High School who begins the 3-4 track in the fall, is happy that she will be staying in Houston for her education. "Houston is home to the world's largest medical center, and the accelerated BS/MD program is a great opportunity for any student who wishes to pursue a future as a physician. The support and small college feel that Honors and the Program in the Health Professions provide are also really unique."

National Merit finalist **Cinnie Lin**, who comes to the University from Irving, Texas, looks forward to joining the Honors College and Houston community this fall. "I'm so excited to

be a Coog! The 3-4 program gives me guaranteed acceptance into medical school, and the connections that UH offers will change my education and my life into something meaningful to my community."

HBS students applying to medical school will find Honors humanities requirements like the Human Situation especially beneficial when taking the MCAT in 2015 and beyond. The test is changing to better assess an awareness of societal issues and challenges facing doctors of the future. For example, a new "Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills" section will ask students to analyze passages from a wide range of disciplines, including ethics, philosophy, cultural studies, and population health. As a result, HBS students are required to minor in Medicine and Society. Dr. Bott believes that "the curriculum designed by Medicine and Society program director **Helen Valier** is perfectly aligned with these new requirements. Producing better, more empathetic and thoughtful doctors and health professionals is central to the Medicine and Society mission."

"Producing better, more empathetic and thoughtful doctors . . . is central to the Medicine and Society mission."

Although the Honors Biomedical Sciences program will offer only ten 3-4 spots to each incoming class, the program expects to support over 100 HBS majors by fall 2016. As the program grows, plans for development include interdisciplinary labs and facilities, additional scholarship support, more advisors, and dual degree partnerships with dental and optometry schools.





Economic Crisis: Causes, Consequences, and Remedies 2012 - 2013

“Five Myths About America’s Future Economic Decline”
Stephen Rose, September 13

“The Clash of Economic Ideas”
Lawrence White, February 25

What’s Fair: A Lecture Series on Justice and Desert in America 2012 - 2013

“The Ajax Dilemma: Justice, Fairness, and Rewards”
Paul Woodruff, October 4

“Two Levels of Desert”
Thomas Hurka, October 25

“Strings Attached: Untangling the Ethics of Incentives”
Ruth Grant, November 30

“Fairness of People and Procedures”
Thomas Pogge, February 22

“Free Market Fairness”
John Tomasi, March 20

Phronesis Fellows Reflect on a Busy Lecture Season

Dr. Anne Applebaum, Cold War journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, visited the Honors College on April 10, 2013, as the featured lecturer for the *Phronesis* program’s academic speaker series. Other series this season focused on two lecture themes: “What’s Fair? A Lecture Series on Justice and Desert in America” and “Economic Crisis: Causes, Consequences, and Remedies.”

The fairness series brought together classicists, political theorists, and philosophers to explore the notions of justice and fairness that color American political discourse today. Each of the speakers offered differing viewpoints about the nature of justice and how it might be best served. Tackling questions arising from the economic crisis of 2007, economists added their analysis of the political and economic roots of the crisis to the dialogue, commenting on the history of American economic thought and presenting potential remedies for moving forward. Closing out the busy lecture season, Applebaum visited the Honors College to speak about her new book, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956*.

During her visit, Applebaum met in a seminar setting with the *Phronesis* Fellows and members of **Dr. Tamler Sommers**’s Open and Closed Societies class to discuss excerpts from her book about the fall of Eastern Europe at the end of World War II and the alarmingly rapid rise of communist rule over the next decade. Political science sophomore **Nick Fox** enjoyed the seminar’s focus on what went on behind the Iron Curtain. “The discussion provided an excellent opportunity to review and learn more about the history of a forgotten era of Soviet oppression.”

Political science and history junior **Katie Teeters**, another *Phronesis* Fellow in attendance, added, “Anne

Applebaum’s seminar and lecture were perhaps the best all year. Not only was she friendly and fun to converse with, but her focus on the Soviet nation’s use of carefully targeted violence and propaganda was fascinating. The state’s monopoly on economic and civic institutions as a means of suppressing protest was a good discussion starter.”

Following the seminar, Applebaum gave a public lecture titled “True Believers: The Nature of Collaboration and Opposition in a Totalitarian Regime.” She highlighted the ways in which the Soviet Union’s brand of totalitarianism affected those living under the regime during and after its time in power, inviting the audience to question why such a large portion of Eastern Europe failed to mobilize against such a controlling and invasive regime.

Liberal studies sophomore **David Zinsitz** said that “the lecture brought to light many ways that totalitarianism affects people even after a society becomes free again. I was surprised to hear about the current distrust many ex-communist countries still have toward their governments, even after the Soviet Union has fallen.”

Professor Sommers, co-director of the *Phronesis* Program, was pleased with both the lecture and the level of discussion it inspired. “This was a really successful visit. Anne Applebaum was so impressed with the Fellows during her seminar—their intelligence and enthusiasm and the incredible diversity of backgrounds and interests. At dinner afterward, she told me that this [diversity] was what made Houston such a great city.”

by Emily Zinsitz

Iliad Unbound

Fall Convocation is a way to celebrate the success of the University’s students and encourage them to set new goals for the upcoming school year. Last fall, one faculty member was inspired as well. While listening to KIPP founder and former Teach For America corps member **Mike Feinberg** give his keynote address on the inequities in American public education, **Dr. Kimberly Meyer** felt challenged to do something about them. So this spring, with the support of **Dr. Christine LeVeaux Haley** and **Jovanny Orellana** of the Houston Scholars Program, Professor Meyer launched a program for high school students unofficially dubbed “*Iliad* Unbound.”

Based loosely on the Human Situation course completed by all Honors freshmen, the program paired Honors students who have excelled in the Human Situation—the “mentors”—with high school students in the Houston Scholars Program. HSP students are carefully selected from a pool of outstanding applicants from KIPP and YES Prep

“We still have the same emotions as these characters. The *Iliad* is about humanity.”

high schools, but most of them have never been introduced to a “great books” education. Yet this semester they carefully worked their way through Homer’s *Iliad* under the guidance and instruction of Honors students and faculty.

Meeting on select Saturdays throughout the spring 2013 semester, *Iliad* Unbound gave students in the Houston Scholars Program their first taste of an Honors education. Students started the day off by gathering for lectures by veteran Human Sit faculty such as Professor Meyer, **Dr. Iain Morrisson**, and **Dr. John Harvey**. Honors College Mentors continued the conversation in their seminars, directing HSP participants in close



Sara Balabanlilar meets with a group of mentees.

reading, discussion, and creative and scholastic responses.

So far, the results of the program for both HSP students and HC Mentors seem encouraging. According to Professor Meyer, “the high school students really came prepared to plumb the sometimes unsettling depths of which Homer sings. And our mentors were able to use the

skills they have learned in the Honors College and to deepen their own reading of the *Iliad* at the same time.”

Feedback from the high school students was positive as well. Said one student after a recent session, “When you look at a passage, at first glance you think, ‘This is what it means.’ But then you move deeper into the discussion and you see that there is so much more. I really enjoy that part of discussion, and questioning each other, too.”

The Honors Mentors also learned a lot from the experience. **Kevin Meinhardt**, a junior philosophy and sociology double major who is considering a career in teaching, finds

that his work with *Iliad* Unbound has given him incomparable real-world training. But for Kevin and the other mentors, the rewards can also be more intangible.

“Reading the *Iliad* to teach it,” said sophomore English major **Sara Balabanlilar**, “I became less focused on keeping track of the characters and plot and more interested in getting a sense of the language, the rhythm of the book. It was a more beautiful experience.”

Philosophy senior **Seetha Jagannath** agrees. “One of the best things about participating in these conversations is that I went in wanting to learn more. We’re all busy, we all have so much to do, but it’s a nice moment to stop and really read the *Iliad*.” **Nathan Tovar**, a junior in political science and liberal studies, finds this aspect most crucial: “We still have the same emotions as these characters,” he pointed out. “The *Iliad* is about humanity.”

The mentors and Professor Meyer hope to see *Iliad* Unbound continue on, and already have ideas for improving on this spirited start.

by Dr. Kimberly Meyer



Vanessa and friends at Grotto Canyon

A Grand Adventure: Vanessa Alejandro

Vanessa Alejandro, a rising junior in geology with an intended minor in leadership studies, believes you should do what you love. As a geology major, Vanessa applies her love of nature and proactive spirit toward her degree plan, but she decided to take it a step further. In fall 2012, Vanessa completed a Grand Canyon Semester through the Honors Program at Northern Arizona University.

Students in the program were able to attend lectures at the beginning of the week before going into the field to explore. For Ecology of the Grand Canyon, each student also completed a journal about a particular aspect of ecology. "I kept a journal about insects," Vanessa said. She recorded the location, time, habitat, and a description of the insect for each entry. "Instead of killing the insects and

died. The ecology of the river was altered, but the dam is needed for hydroelectricity." She also participated in an independent research project in which she studied contrasting perspectives of the Grand Canyon through the eyes of early explorers and geologists. "Some explorers called the Canyon the 'portal to hell.' But after looking at geologist journals from as early as the 1700s, I know they could see the beauty of the Grand Canyon. Geologists communicating the uniqueness and beauty of the Canyon really turned it

"Some explorers called the Canyon the 'portal to hell.'
But . . . I know they could see [its] beauty."

The program combines unique coursework on topics such as geology, ecology, and environmental policy with excursions into various parts of the Grand Canyon. "We camped a week at the Grand Canyon to start, then camped on the Hopi Reservation and at Flying M Ranch. We also rafted the Colorado River for two weeks and went on daily trips. My favorite part of the program was definitely rafting."

placing them in my journal, I used pictures as my evidence. At the end of the semester I made trading cards for all of the insects in order to share the information with others."

Vanessa also studied some more controversial aspects of the Canyon. "After Glen Canyon Dam was completed in the 1960s, it flooded side canyons and a lot of fish

into a tourist attraction."

A fall 2012 recipient of an Honors College Outstanding First Year Student award, Vanessa stresses that her freshman year wasn't easy—especially not the Human Situation. "I had never struggled so much with a class before. It was harder than Advanced Calculus! But **Dr. Ted Estess** was really helpful. I went to

talk with him a lot, and he encouraged me to keep trying." Vanessa also credits her freshman mentor, **Diego Lopez** ('12, History and French), with encouraging her to participate in all the College has to offer. "Diego drove me to get the most out of everything here at the Honors College." Quick to express gratitude for the support of peers, professors, and administrators, Vanessa has clearly taken advantage of some wonderful opportunities the College has to offer. By participating in activities she finds difficult or intimidating, Vanessa has been able to develop new skills for success. "You need those little uncomfortable spaces to collect the tools you need to really fly out of your comfort zone."

Despite formidable challenges, Vanessa maintains a positive attitude. In September of her sophomore year, while she was in Arizona on her Grand Canyon Semester, Vanessa was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. "I flew back to Houston for surgery at MD Anderson at the end of October,

and after three weeks I returned to Arizona to finish the Grand Canyon Semester. My professors helped me catch up and complete all my classes. Once the experience ended, I returned to Houston and went through radioactive iodine."

Vanessa's positivity and determination to experience all life has to offer is both inspiring and unstoppable.



Vanessa Alejandro rafting the Colorado River

Vanessa plans to explore the world

and join the Peace Corps after college. She is currently involved in several organizations and volunteer efforts on and off campus, serving as president for Warriors of the Wild, a non-profit environmental conservation organization, and tutoring refugee children in English. Vanessa will serve as an Honors Retreat counselor this summer and a mentor to incoming freshmen through the Honors College Mentor Program this fall.

by Colleen Seitz



Students Experience a Night of Great Conversation

As a senior in the Honors College, I have had the opportunity to serve on the student decorations committee and to attend *The Great Conversation* for the past two years. The 21st *Great Conversation* was a record-breaking event both in terms of financial contributions and community engagement. The food was delicious, and the energy in the room was contagious. After mingling over wine and cocktails, guests took their seats in the Houston Country Club ballroom at tables decorated with thematic centerpieces designed by Honors students.

Steve Smith, broadcast journalist, media consultant, and a member of the Honors College advisory board, kicked off the event with a brief introduction before heading to his own conversation table, "Liars, Hackers, Swindlers... and Those Are Just the Journalists." Honors alumni and 2013 event co-chairs **Matthew and Tamara Steele** ('00 and '99 Chemical Engineering) concluded the formal program with thanks to contributors and a challenge to peers to increase support for student scholarships and success.

My favorite part of the evening—as was the intention of event creators **Jane Cizik** and founding dean **Ted Estess**—was the stimulating conversation. This year I was seated at

"Contemporary Art and Wine of Latin America," a table for which I had actually created the centerpiece, using a number of art and wine "artifacts" such as paintbrushes, wine corks, and photographs. The discussion was helmed by **Dr. Rex Koontz**, an art historian and the director of the School of Art, whose depth and breadth of knowledge left me a bit star-struck. The table was filled by long-time friend of the Honors College **Sara White** and several of her closest pals. Initially shy, I was soon drawn out by the warm and fun-loving attitudes of this group of women.

Over the course of the evening, we tasted nine wines from a variety of locales—Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and more—and discussed the ways in which contemporary Latin American wine and art mirror each other in development. We even learned about the types of grapes used, soil quality, and how various factors combine to make more palatable wines.

Throughout the conversation, many of my tablemates mentioned living in France or other exotic locales while husbands served in the armed services. The woman to my left had attended the University of Houston in its early years, and she told me about



Students meet and mingle with alumni.

her schoolwork and experiences. A pioneer before her time, she suggested TV programming possibilities (which would today be considered great daytime soaps) that were dismissed as too unconventional by her professor. The time passed quickly, and I was surprised when the woman to my right informed the table that it was already past 10 o'clock and wished us all a good night.

After dessert, many guests lingered to catch up with friends. Conversation continued as tables dispersed and people congregated once more in small pockets. It was a memorable evening that not only raised thousands of dollars in student scholarships and attracted hundreds of supporters, but also allowed old and new friends—Honors alumni and faculty, members of the Houston community, and some lucky students—to get together to share time and insights. I feel grateful to be a part of a university and college where I not only receive a fantastic education, but also have opportunities like *The Great Conversation* to take part in the Houston community. I hope to return next year as an alumna.

by Catherine Seitz

Great Conversation by the Numbers

- 24 Student Attendees
- 35 Conversation Tables
- 350 Guests
- 180 Supporters
- 100% Advisory Board Participation
- \$317,206 Raised



Dr. Estess leads a discussion of "Grandparenting and the Second Half of Life."

Cougar Dynasty: The Ramsey Family

Bill and Lani Ramsey share many memories of their time at the University of Houston—the cramped—but beloved—Honors space in the library basement, a great education, lifelong friendships, and a chance meeting at a fraternity party just after Lani returned from her freshman Honors Retreat. Nineteen years of marriage later, "the rest is history," said Lani ('94, Interdisciplinary Studies), but the couple remains active in campus life as die-hard Cougar football fans and frequent supporters of *The Great Conversation*.

Bill ('93, Chemical Engineering & '99, EMBA) is also proud to be part of a UH legacy—both his father and grandfather are UH graduates—and it seems likely that the Honors College will soon be welcoming a new generation of Ramseys to the University of Houston. "When we learned about Cougar Junior Scholars, an Honors summer program for 7th and 8th graders, we knew we wanted our children to attend," said Lani. Last year the Ramseys signed up their daughter **Marissa**, and younger son

"Going off to college ideally teaches young people to adapt to new situations and build new relationships," explained Lani. "Programs such as Cougar Junior Scholars allow students to experience these opportunities early, and this early exposure can be a motivator for students to continue to perform well and achieve their goal of going to college."

Marissa's favorite part of camp was the chemistry class taught by **Dr. Simon Bott**, who allowed students to conduct hands-on experiments in one of the science labs. Marissa particularly enjoyed an experiment in which the students turned pennies into "gold" and Dr. Bott declared that she "had the Midas touch!" And despite frequent attendance at tailgate parties and football games, "Cougar Junior Scholars allowed Marissa to experience the campus in a new way" through activities like the scavenger hunt, lunch in the renovated Moody Towers dining hall, and one-on-one interactions with faculty.

According to Bill and Lani, this wide range of experiences was also the highlight of their Honors education. Lani credits her time in Honors with helping her find "creative solutions to daily challenges" in her sewing business. Bill, who currently works for ExxonMobil Chemical, said that while his engineering and business degrees provided him with the academic preparation for his responsibilities, his Honors education gave him a greater perspective on the



with a global team and a multicultural clientele."

Though admitting to some jealousy of the College's "amazing new digs" in its own wing of the MD Anderson Library, Lani and Bill are excited about the progress Honors has made and remain committed supporters of student scholarships through fundraising efforts like *The Great Conversation*. "I remember volunteering as a student when the event first began and thinking that I couldn't wait to be a part of *Great Conversation* after I graduated," Lani recalled. "The event gives us a chance to renew old friendships and continue conversations year after year, and it reminds us how special the Honors College is. There really is no place like it."



Marissa Ramsey cheers on the Coogs at ESPN Gameday in fall 2011.

Kyle looks forward to next summer when he can attend too.

world. "My Honors classes helped me develop the adaptability to work



Where They're Headed

At the annual graduation banquet on May 9th, we said goodbye to another great group of seniors. See what lies ahead for a small sample of our class of 2013.

Chris Powell graduates with a degree in English literature and a minor in public relations. He will intern in Colorado this summer before starting work at PROS, a Houston pricing software company, in the fall. Chris credits Honors with offering many formative experiences, from his first Honors Retreat to his last Coffeehouse. This spring break Chris traveled with Dean Monroe's Artists and Their Regions class to Milledgeville, Georgia, the hometown of Southern writer Flannery O'Connor.

Catrina Kim graduates with a degree in piano performance and a myriad of experiences under her belt. A Phronesis minor, Catrina opted to complete an honors thesis in political philosophy—*The Limits of Civic Virtue in Xenophon's Cyropaedia*—for which she earned an Outstanding Thesis Award. Catrina frequently contributed her musical talents to the College as a pianist at receptions, Convocation, and the Lence Master Teacher Dinner, and in summer 2012 she traveled through Europe for three weeks as a recipient of the



Faber-Economon Scholarship for European Travel (FEET). This fall Catrina begins the MA/PhD program in music theory at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. She has been awarded two prestigious scholarships for her graduate studies—the Sproull Fellowship at the University of Rochester and the nationally competitive Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship.

Sarah Beasley, who graduates with a BS in biology, will be entering the University of Texas at Houston Medical School this fall. She begins a dual degree in medicine (MD) and public health (MPH). Summer plans include a trip to Vancouver, an Alaskan cruise, and a possible trip to London and a hop over to Amsterdam to visit Safa while she is there for her internship.

Krystofer Redden spent the spring semester of his senior year working in the 83rd session of the Texas Legislature in Austin for State Representative Jessica Farrar. Supported by a Hobby Fellowship through UH's Hobby Center for Public Policy, Krystofer served as a legislative aide and communications director for Rep. Farrar. This summer, he will move to New York City to begin his training as a member of the 2013 Teach for America corps. In August, he will begin teaching English Language Learning to elementary students in Providence, Rhode Island, while pursuing his Master's of Education Policy at Brown University.



Safa and Krystofer

Honors Student Authors

Articles in *Areté* are written by Honors faculty, staff, and students. Meet the student contributors below.

Markley Rogers is a senior studying political science. He is a co-founder of COOG Radio, the University of Houston's student-run radio station, and served as a head delegate for the Honors College's Model Arab League team in 2012-13.

Catherine Seitz is a senior marketing major in the Honors Business Program. Following graduation in December 2013, Catherine plans to work for a digital inbound marketing agency in Houston for a few years before attending graduate school. In 2011 she studied abroad in the Netherlands, France, and Italy as a recipient of the FEET scholarship.



Colleen Seitz is a senior marketing major and psychology minor. She has studied abroad with the Honors College in Ireland and Northern Europe.

Emily Zinsitz graduates with a degree in liberal studies and a minor in Phronesis and plans to pursue a career in technical writing. Emily has traveled often with the Honors College, joining two Artists and their Regions trips to Milledgeville, GA, and New Orleans, and traveling overseas to Northern Europe. This summer she is taking a final trip with Honors to England and Ireland.

faculty & staff notes

Richard Armstrong was a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for the Medical Humanities at UTMB Galveston in fall 2012, where he worked on his forthcoming book, *Theory and Theatricality: Classical Drama in the Age of Grand Hysteria* (Oxford UP). Dr. Armstrong was also awarded a 2012-2013 University of Houston Teaching Excellence Award, "one of the highest bestowed by the University of Houston."



Sarah Bhojani ('03, Business, Finance, and Marketing) and husband **Rehal Ali**, on October 2. Ayaan weighed in at 7 lbs 5 oz and is 18.5 inches long. As you can see from his pictures, he is absolutely adorable and a fine representative for this year's Honors baby boom. Mother, baby, daddy, and Aunt Amy Mo are all doing wonderfully. We hope to see Ayaan here in Honors soon! Congratulations to the Bhojani family.

David Brenner was elected this past spring to become a member of PEN, the international association of writers, editors, and translators that works to advance literature,

defend free expression, and foster international literary fellowship.

Honors communications director **Libby Ingrassia** ('94, English and History) and her husband, **Philip Bergman**, welcomed twins **Sophia Alise** and **Tory Andrew** on March 25, 2013.



Last summer, **Kimberly Meyer** was awarded a Vermont Studio Center residency. *The Book of Wanderings*, her narrative non-fiction account of a journey she took with her eldest daughter in which they retraced a medieval pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Mount Sinai, has been accepted for publication by Little, Brown.

Iain Morrisson was awarded a 2012-'13 University of Houston Teaching Excellence Award. Dr. Morrisson found the entire experience exhilarating. "I just won the university teaching excellence award and everyone came into my class to embarrass me. Sweet!"

Dave Shattuck—a.k.a. Dr. Dave—an associate professor of electrical and computer engineering and director of the Honors Engineering Program, won the Career Teaching award at the 2013 UH Faculty Awards Ceremony. The honor recognizes professors who have demonstrated excellence in teaching over the course of their careers. Only one such award is given each year, and eligible faculty must have at least 20 years experience at UH. "This is a great honor," said Dr. Shattuck. "Teaching is what I like the most. When I had the opportunity about 12 years ago to devote basically all my



time to things associated with that, I jumped at it." Dr. Dave adds that his goal is to win this lifetime teaching award, twice.

Helen Valier has been named a University of Houston Faculty-in-Residence for the University's residential 'Living Learning' initiative for pre-health professionals on campus.

Dr. Valier will be accompanied by her partner, **Caroline Novark**, and their two rescue dogs, Oscar and Scout. Dr. Valier was also recently awarded a Provost Faculty Advising Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising for the 2012-13 academic year.

Karen Weber, Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research, won the 2013 George Magner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising.

Last November *Areté* was recognized by the National Collegiate Honors Council as "Best Honors Publication" at the 2012 NCHC Conference in Boston. **Lucy Bonner** and **Mallory Chesser** accepted the award on behalf of **Libby Ingrassia** and the communications team.

Jill Alexander Essbaum ('94, French and Creative Writing) was awarded a major grant by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2012. This is Jill's second NEA creative writing fellowship. jilly.essbaum@gmail.com



Matthew Brawley ('95, Radio, Television, and Video) and wife **Ingrid** welcomed a new addition to the family, **Hudson Elisabeth Brawley**, born on August 2, 2012. She joins big brother **Connor**. Matt was awarded his sixth Lone Star Emmy Award last November in the directing category after previously winning Emmys in photography (2) and editing (3). mbrawley@houstonpbs.org



Steve Brown ('93, Chemical Engineering) and wife **Kelley Robb Brown** ('94, Business) welcomed their second daughter, **Audrey Laine Brown**, on December 11, 2012.

Ellen Thomas Buckner ('08, English) and husband **Jerry** are currently serving in the Peace Corps in South Africa. Their site is a tiny farming town in the Kalahari, 30 km from Botswana. Ellen is busy teaching English and Arts

& Culture to grades 7 through 9 and also has an active girls club. She plans to attend graduate school in the fall. etbuckner@gmail.com

Maria-Vittoria "Giugi" Carminati ('05, Political Science) co-authored *The Laws of Spaceflight: A Guidebook for New Space Lawyers* with Matthew J. Kleiman and Jenifer K. Lamie. Published in July 2012, the book offers lawyers practical guidance and an introduction to space law. For information about the authors, book excerpts, useful space law links, and more, visit www.lawsofspaceflight.com.

Kadhine Fitz-Patrick ('00, French) was awarded the prestigious Marshall Memorial Fellowship for 2012 from the German Marshall Fund of the United States. During October 2012 she traveled for three weeks in Europe, visiting five cities around the continent and meeting formally and informally with a range of policymakers and prominent members of the business, government, political, NGO, and media communities. kayfitzpatrick@gmail.com

Tenor **Joseph Gaines** ('01, Applied Music) is featured in Ars Lyrica's newest album, *La Dirindina*, along with mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton and baritone Brian Shircliffe with the Ars Lyrica ensemble, conducted



by Matthew Dirst. <http://www.arslyricahouston.org/audio.htm>

Martha Ann Knutson ('81, Political Science) recently opened a health law practice in San Diego, California. The prospect of taking another bar exam, 22 years after the first one, was daunting. But that's how much she loves California. mak@mknutsonlaw.com

Robert C. Kramp ('96, Political Science and Sociology) has joined the Jones Lang LaSalle firm's Chicago office as Vice President and Director of Research for the Midwest and Great Lakes regions.



Alan Matuszak ('91, Management Information Systems) was recently promoted to the position of Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at eLynx, a Cincinnati-based software company that specializes in electronic document delivery, electronic signatures, and fulfillment for the financial services industry. Alan was also accepted to the Professional MBA program at Miami University and began courses last fall. amatuszak@elynx.com

Laura Maupin ('95, Spanish) has been elected a partner in the Minneapolis office of Barnes & Thornburg LLP. Laura.maupin@btlaw.com

Robert S. McNeil ('90, Biology) was recently promoted to Clinical Research Manager of the Blue Bird Circle Clinical Research Center

at Texas Children's Hospital. The Clinical Research Center provides infrastructure and support for child neurology research that leads to new treatments and cures for patients. Robert was also recently recognized for 20 years of service at Baylor College of Medicine. rmcneil@bcm.tmc.edu



James Patterson ('02, Political Science) received his PhD in Political Science-American Politics from the University of Virginia in May, 2012 and is currently an Assistant Professor in Political Science at Duke University. He resides with his wife, Julia, in Durham, North Carolina. They were married in Charlottesville, Virginia in June, 2012. Along with teaching, James will continue his research on the relationship between religion and politics and approaches to reforms in university level education.

James Rincon ('09, Print Journalism) has accepted the position of Marketing & Communications Director for Pride of Austin LLC, a holding company comprised of Pride of Austin Capital Partners, Pride of Austin Homes, Pride of Austin Realty and A List Partners. James lives in Austin where, prior to beginning his new role, he wrote for the *Austin American-Statesman* newspaper. jrincon@alistpartners.com

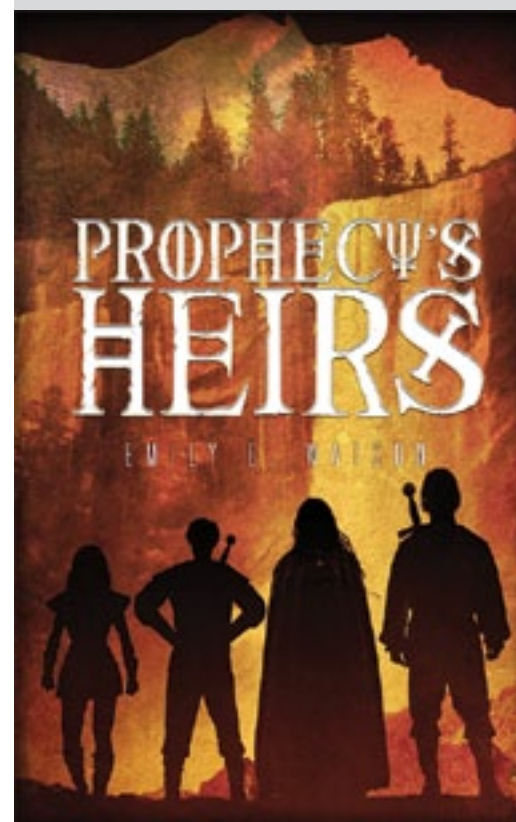
Scott Sonsalla ('93, Business) and his family will move to Fort Jackson, South Carolina to take command of a Basic Combat Training battalion. Scott has served as Professor of Military Science at the University of Texas at San Antonio since 2010. Scott.sonsalla@utsa.edu

Julie (Baumgarten) Pradel ('95, Finance) was named one of the Top Ten Thirty-Somethings by the Association of Corporate Counsel, the national organization for in-house attorneys. Julie.Pradel@williams.com

Recent grad Emily Watson publishes first novel

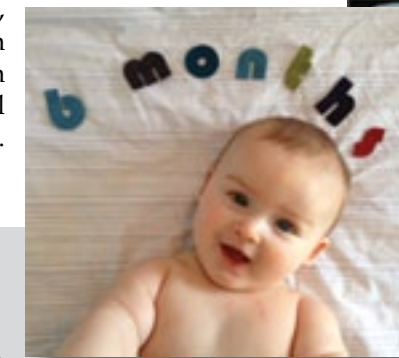
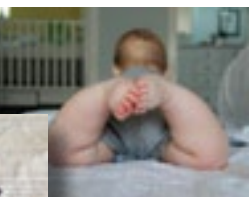
Honors students are even busier than we thought. Look out for *Prophecy's Heirs*, a debut novel by **Emily Watson** ('12, History). A project she started at the age of fifteen, Emily perfected the manuscript during her time in Honors and found a publisher the summer before she graduated.

Of the writing process, Emily said inspiration came from a variety of sources. "Everything prompts and inspires a new story—it's the actual writing that's sometimes hard to accomplish." Writing *Prophecy's Heirs* wasn't without its challenges; at one point the flash drive storing Emily's manuscript stopped working unexpectedly.



Matthew Steele ('00, Chemical Engineering) was featured in an August 2012 *Houston Chronicle* article, "Young energy execs take the reins in fast-paced field." Matt, president of Ursa Resources Group, comments on the challenges and opportunities for young professionals in the energy industry. <http://www.chron.com/business/article/Young-energy-executives-succeed-in-fast-paced-3798631.php>

Alan Wilson ('02) and wife **Emily** joyfully welcomed **Connor Joseph Wilson** to their family on July 31st, 2012. Connor joins big brother **Liam**. arwilson77@hotmail.com



"It was traumatic at the time," Emily said, "but it was really a blessing in disguise. I had to rewrite everything, and it turned out to be better than before." *Prophecy's Heirs* is available starting July 2nd through Tate Publishing. To buy the book or contact the author, visit Emily's official website: <http://emilygwatson.tateauthor.com/>

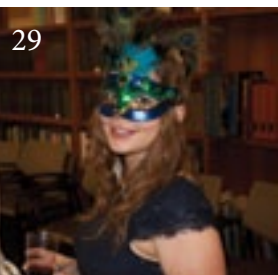
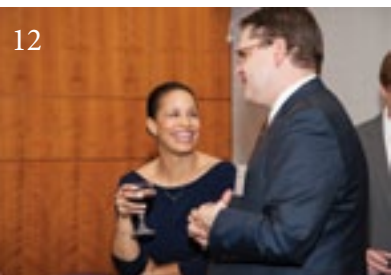
This fall Emily heads to the University of Exeter to pursue an MA in History.



Honors in Action

1. Aly Capetillo ('08) and Frank Thomas ('08) reconnect at an alumni happy hour. 2. Dean Bill Monroe, Chancellor Renu Khator, Honors Advisory Board President Steven Hecht ('88), and Great Conversation co-chairs Matthew and Tamara Steele ('00 and '99) at this year's Underwriters Reception. 3. Professors Robert Cremins and Jonathan Zecher play Sherlock Holmes and Watson at the 2012 Cougar Junior Scholars camp. 4. 2013 Lence Master Teacher William Barclay Allen speaks to a former student. 5. Edward Garza ('13) bids for a stack of books at the Center for Creative Work's annual Book Swap. 6. Dean Monroe took a group of students to Andalusia, the home of Southern writer Flannery O'Connor, during a spring break study-away to Milledgeville, GA. 7. Honors takes Boston: Christine LeVeaux Haley, Mallory Chesser ('08), and David Zinsitz walk the Freedom Trail while in Boston for the 2012 conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council. 8. Nathaniel Stich and Sahar Sadoughi climb the steps of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural Science while in D.C. for the 2013 National Model Arab League conference. 9. Emily Zinsitz ('13) dresses as Willa Cather for a marathon reading of A Lost Lady. 10. Nicholas Heisig and Jeff Mindrebo meet with Jeremy Warren, communications director and senior advisor for State Senator Rodney Ellis, at this spring's Texas Undergraduate Research Day at the capitol building in Austin. 11. Professor Iain Morrison and junior Whitmire Vo at the 2012 Fall Convocation. 12. Professors Jesse Rainbow and Christine LeVeaux Haley enjoy the reception for the 2013 Lence Master Teacher dinner. 13. Outstanding First Year Students for 2011-12.

14. Recent graduates Adrienne Huntsman ('12) and Katie Dugat ('10) relive fond memories of the Den during an alumni happy hour. 15. Students in costume at the Dean's Marathon Reading. 16. Valerie Ban expresses her gratitude for scholarship supporters on Philanthropy Awareness Day. 17. Dean Monroe presents a complete set of Human Situation books to the 2012 Fall Convocation speaker, KIPP co-founder Mike Feinberg. 18. Michael Pettiette ('06) speaks to Career Friday students about passion and continued learning on the job. 19. Professor Terry Hallmark ('75) talks to fellow Lencian Jim Tyler ('75) at the Master Teacher dinner. 20. Kendall Mills, Krystafer Redden ('13), and Edward Garza ('13) tour the Harvard campus on the 2012 NCHC trip to Boston. 21. Psychiatrist and concert pianist Dr. Richard Kogan plays the piano during his talk on the relationship between mental illness and creative genius for Homecoming 2012. 22. Dean Monroe, Christian Schmidt ('04), and future Cougar CJ catch up at the Boston alumni happy hour in November. 23. Human Sit faculty strategize for the new year at the first annual Human Sit Fete. 24. Professor Robert Cremins signs copies of his new short story after giving a reading at Common Ground 2012. 25. Honors students perform at Coffeehouse in the Cullen Performance Hall. 26. Corey Kendrick delivers a sermon at O'Carnival: An Exhibition of Original Work Inspired by the Art and Landscape of Flannery O'Connor. 27. Michi McMahan, Hamza Hallal, and Jodie Köszegi aim to misbehave at the Smithsonian museum in Washington, D.C. 28. Todd Ramey ('94), founding dean Ted Estess, Lani Ramsey ('94) advisory board member Mike Gapinski ('94), and Michelle Noack at The Great Conversation. 29. Peacocks abound at the Flannery O'Carnival. 30. Students practice their networking skills at a Career Friday alumni business mixer with professionals from the Houston area.



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Honors College Fall 2013 Calendar

August 22-23	Honors Retreat
August 29	Convocation
October 10	Undergraduate Research Day
October 19	Homecoming
December 20	End of Fall Semester

For details on alumni events, go to TheHonorsCollege.com/alumni
See all our events on our online calendar at TheHonorsCollege.com/calendar